



हाम्रो पत्रिका

HAMRO PATRIKA & VARI AVIS

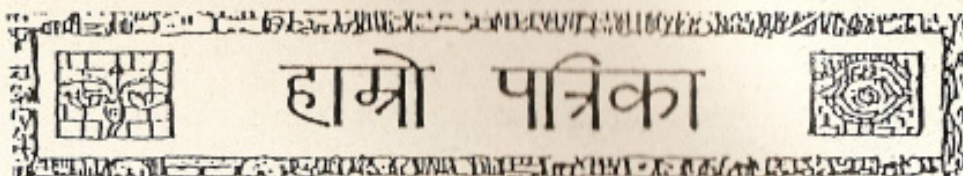
ORGAN FOR NORGE-NEPAL-FORENINGEN

MAI-93

MENNESKERETTIGHETER
I NEPAL

MEDLEMSMØTE
24. MAI KL 19

SE SISTE
SIDE



ENTYDIG RESULTAT AV LESERUNDERSÖKELSEN:

HP "DEEP" ER POPULÄR!

"Dommen" fra leserne er enstemmig: Styrets satsing på et utvidet Hamro Patrika oppleves som et svært positivt tilbud til medlemmene. Ingen mente vi burde kutte ut tema og bakgrunnsstoff og satse på basis-informasjon om foreningen og møtene. Flere etterlyste mer stoff om den politiske situasjonen - det håper vi dere får allerede i dette nummer.

Vel 40 av medlemmene har sendt inn sin mening om HP til styret. Dette er en svarprosent på ca. 20, som regnes som svært bra for slike undersøkelser (vanlig er 5-8%).

Alle som svarte sa de leste tema- og bakgrunnsstoffet. De fleste sa de leste alt i bladet, noen sa "litt av hvert", etter som stoffet interesserte dem. En av kommentarene: "For en liten forening er det avgjørende viktig at HP forblir som det er. En liten info-lefse blir for liten for en forening med ambisjoner."

Artiklene på engelsk er bra, var den enstemmige meningen. Noen få sa artiklene er til tider vanskelige å lese på grunn av liten skrift, men ingen mente dette er god nok grunn til IKKE å trykke dem. Interessen er tydeligvis stor nok til at folk strever og gjennom lite lesevennlig skrift hvis stoffet interesserer. Ett av medlemmene mente hovedspråket i HP bør være norsk.

Alle mente at styrets satsing på et utvidet HP er et godt tilbud til medlemmene. Flere av medlemmene som bor utenfor Oslo nevnte at HP er et svært godt tilbud til dem, siden de ikke kan komme på møtene, og oppfordret styret til å fortsette satsingen på bladet.

Godt og vel halvparten oppga at de hadde HP som hovedkilde for informasjon fra Nepal. Resten hadde bladet som en av flere kilder. Ett medlem sa at HP ikke er viktig som kilde.

Deltakelsen på møtene varierte som ventet, og manglende anledning til å komme på grunn av at møtedagen ikke passet eller at folk ikke bor i Oslo ble oppgitt som årsak til at de ikke deltok. Ingen nevnte at tema på møtene ikke interesserte.

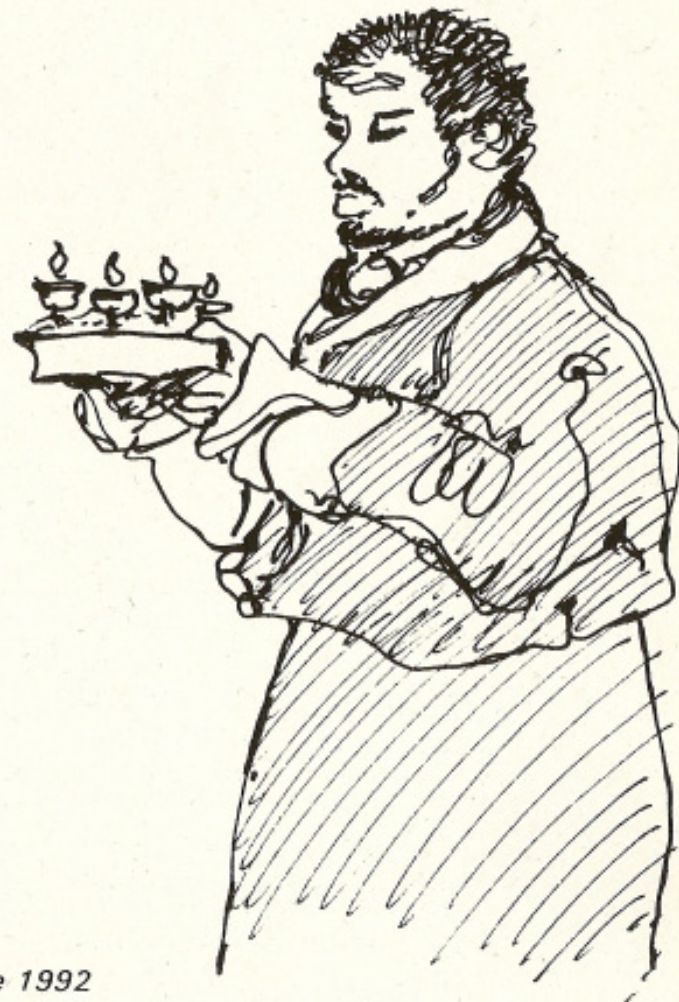
Medlemmenes opphold i Nepal varierte også sterkt - fra de som har vært i landet en gang på en ukes-tur til de som er født og oppvokst der, eller har bodd og arbeidet i flere år. Hovedtyngden lå imidlertid på ett eller flere turistbesøk på mellom to uker og tre måneder.

Forslagene til tema og generell informasjon vi burde skrive om var mange. Flere ville ha mer stoff om den politiske og økonomiske situasjonen, og om utviklingen på denne fronten - både analyserende artikler og "småstoff". Av andre forslag kan vi nevne: Praktisk nytt som oppdatering på visum og helse; Utviklingsnytt med spesiell vekt på Norsk-Nepalesisk samarbeid, og presentasjon av norske hjelpeorganisasjoner i Nepal; Kultur; Situasjonen/forholdene i landsbyene og i områder som vi får høre lite om; Avsidesliggende områder; Turismens betydning for landet; Nordmanns opplevelser og erfaringer i Nepal; Arkitektur; Medisin; Sosialantropologisk stoff/informasjon om etniske grupper (flere nevnte dette); Stoff om sosial endring og miljø, og stoff som trekking-turister bør vite mer om. Ett av medlemmene foreslår en abonnements-lesesirkel på Himal-tidsskriftet - godt forslag!

FORTSETTELSE SIDE 35.

NEPAL

A summary of human rights concerns



Amnesty International June 1992

1. Introduction

The collapse of the government of Prime Minister Marich Man Singh Shrestha in March 1990 and the subsequent lifting of the ban on political parties marked the end of three decades during which political activity was banned and hundreds of government opponents were detained and tortured. Since the coming to power of an interim government in April 1990, succeeded by an elected government in May 1991, hundreds of political prisoners have been released and, as far as Amnesty International is aware, there are currently no prisoners of conscience in Nepal. Reports of torture have also decreased dramatically. However, Amnesty International is concerned that a large number of serious human rights violations, including "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, committed under previous governments remain unclarified and that those responsible have not yet been brought to justice. It is also concerned about periodic reports of human rights violations under the current government, including torture, politically motivated arrests and extrajudicial killings.

A short-lived experimentation with parliamentary democracy in the 1950s ended in 1960 when the king dissolved parliament and banned political parties. Over the next three decades, widespread human rights violations took place. Hundreds of suspected government opponents were arbitrarily arrested and detained, often without charge or trial. Many suffered torture and ill-treatment, particularly in police custody; and in 1985 several detainees "disappeared" from police custody. There were also persistent allegations of extrajudicial execution. The full extent of human rights violations between 1960 and 1990 remains to be officially clarified. These human rights violations culminated in February to April 1990, with the killing by the security forces of scores of demonstrators and the detention of thousands of opponents of the then *panchayat*¹ (assembly) system of government under which political parties were banned. Hundreds of these detainees were tortured and ill-treated in police custody.

In response to expressions of concern from Amnesty International, successive Nepali government officials repeatedly denied serious human rights violations, and pointed to legal and constitutional safeguards. However, safeguards proved both inadequate and often ineffective and widespread human rights violations continued until the fall of the non-party system in 1990.

On 20 April 1990 a coalition interim government was sworn in, led by Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, a member of the Nepali Congress party, who had spent over nine years in prison because of his opposition to the non-party system. Several other cabinet members had also been detained for their political activities. The interim government was mandated to establish parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch and had a stated commitment to protecting human rights. It oversaw the drafting and promulgation in November 1990 of a new Constitution which transformed Nepal from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy and provided increased human rights protection. Hundreds of political prisoners were released, including scores who had sustained injuries as a result of torture in police custody. Many were prisoners of conscience, including 32 people who had been detained for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs.



¹Under the previous, non-party system, known as the *panchayat* (assembly) system, elections were held to assemblies at local and national level, but those standing for election were forbidden from joining a political party. The king was head of state and ministers were appointed and removed by the palace, which also controlled the police, the army and the administration, including at the local level.

Amnesty International submitted a memorandum to the interim government (see Nepal: Memorandum to the Government, AI Index 31/10/90) recommending measures to create a structure for long-term and effective protection of human rights. During the interim government's one year in office Amnesty International welcomed the implementation of several of these measures, including increased constitutional human rights protection, the establishment by the government of two independent inquiries into alleged human rights abuses under previous governments, and Nepal's accession in May 1991 to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its optional protocol, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Following multi-party elections, held in May 1991, a Nepali Congress government took power led by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who reiterated his party's commitment to the protection of human rights as stated in its election manifesto.

Amnesty International recognizes the improved human rights situation in Nepal and the positive steps already taken to provide long-term human rights protection, but remains concerned that there are some areas in which the Constitution may not provide sufficient human rights protection, notably the right to life, the right to freedom of religion and the protection of human rights during a state of emergency. Moreover, Amnesty International believes that constitutional safeguards, while certainly important, do not in themselves guarantee human rights protection: it is essential that the elected government demonstrate its determination to prevent future human rights violations by introducing further legal and procedural measures to provide effective mechanisms for the enforcement of those human rights standards guaranteed in the 1990 Constitution and in international human rights instruments to which Nepal is a party. These further measures should include the establishment of an effective mechanism for investigating allegations of human rights violations.

Finally, Amnesty International believes that the government should fully clarify the serious human rights violations which occurred under both previous and current

governments and take action to bring the perpetrators to justice. Two commissions were appointed by the interim government to investigate past human rights violations, but their findings have not yet been acted upon. Human rights violations allegedly committed under the interim and current governments have not, to date, been the subject of independent impartial investigations, and there have been no cases to date in which human rights violators have been brought to justice. Amnesty International believes that the facts about human rights abuses under previous and current governments should be established and made known in full, and that the bringing to justice of those responsible would be an important step in helping to prevent the recurrence of such human rights violations.

2. Background

Nepal, with a population of around 19 million, remained closed to the outside world, until the overthrow in 1950 of the hereditary Rana family which had ruled the country for over 100 years. In the 1950s Nepal experimented with a multi-party democratic system under the then head of state King Tribhuvan and his successor King Mahendra. In 1959 King Mahendra oversaw the drafting of Nepal's first Constitution, which provided for a party-based parliamentary system. Multi-party elections held in 1959 were won by the Nepali Congress party, but the government was short-lived, and in December 1960 the king revoked the Constitution and dissolved parliament. The prime minister and other politicians were imprisoned and the nascent democratic system was replaced by absolute monarchy. Political parties were banned and a system of non-party

rule was established, centred on the king supported by key figures in the army, the police and the administration. The next three decades saw the evolution of a body of laws, such as the Organizations and Associations Control Act (1963), the Treason (Crime and Punishment) Act (1961 plus later amendments; repealed in 1989 and replaced by the Anti-State Crimes and Penalties Act. Both of these Acts are generally known as the State Offences Act) and the Public Security Act (1961, plus later amendments), used to curtail freedom of expression and to imprison government opponents. A massive growth in the bureaucracy and an expanded police force reinforced the repressive apparatus of the state.

Political party members gradually reorganized themselves into underground networks and continued to function despite regular arrest. Over the years, underground opposition continued despite repression, and as Nepal's economy stagnated despite the increasing amounts of foreign aid, the *panchayat* authorities came under growing pressure to make economic and political changes and to improve human rights protection. During the 1980s some modifications were made to legislation, taking account of international human rights standards, but these were largely ineffective. Detention and torture of government opponents continued; the ban on political activity

remained; and significant reforms failed to materialise. Opposition to the government and the system gathered momentum, fuelled by persistent rumours of government corruption, misappropriation of aid money by officials, and a growing awareness of the extreme poverty of most Nepalis.² Opposition from members of banned political parties was increasingly matched by opposition from the professional classes, including doctors, lawyers, teachers and journalists. Human rights groups became more active, and people who had accepted the system for many years became increasingly critical of the government.

In January 1990 the main political parties began to plan a joint campaign for the restoration of democracy. The aim of the 1990 Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) was the establishment by peaceful means of a system of multi-party democracy in Nepal, and it gained widespread support throughout the country, including from professional groups who in the past had not openly opposed the non-party *panchayat* regime. A series of nationwide demonstrations and strikes was scheduled to be launched on 19 February 1990. The authorities responded as they had during earlier campaigns in 1979 and 1985 by making mass arrests. Most arrests were made under the Public Security Act (PSA), which at that time allowed up to 18 months' imprisonment without charge or trial. By mid-February, even before the launch of the MRD campaign, over 350 people, including members of banned political parties, lawyers, journalists and students, were detained without charge or trial under the PSA. After the start of the campaign, repression increased with the closing of newspapers, the arrest and torture of hundreds of MRD supporters and the shooting of demonstrators in which at least 63 people are believed to have been killed.

By the end of March, thousands of people were in detention including students, agricultural workers, doctors, nurses and academics, and there were reports from throughout the country of detainees being severely ill-treated and tortured in police custody. Incidents in Chitwan and Dhanusha in which police shot dead several demonstrators were followed on 6 and 9 April by incidents in Kathmandu in which security forces opened fire on demonstrators killing a total of at least 45 people. These mass arrests, torture and killings precipitated the fall of the *panchayat* regime and the advent of multi-party democracy under a constitutional monarch.



A M N E S T Y N Y T T

Opposisjonelle torturert

NEPAL: Åtte medlemmer av Nepals opposisjonelle kommunistparti ble torturert under isolert varetekt hos politiet i Sindhuli. De åtte ble arrestert i november for å forhøres om to mord etter at politet ikke greide å finne den hovedmistenkte.

De fleste fangene ble med makt ført til politistasjonen av medlemmer fra det regjerende Kongresspartiet i Nepal. Seks av de åtte ble alvorlig slått av politiet i et forsøk på å tvinge dem til å undertegne erklæringer som ville skade dem selv eller andre. Flere måtte ha legebehandling på grunn av skadene de ble påført. Alle de åtte ble senere tiltalt for mord.

Opposisjonspartimedlemmer i Nepal er i en rekke tilfeller blitt holdt i isolert fangenskap og torturert. Ingen av disse overgrepene er blitt offisielt etterforsket.

PRESSEKLIPP FRA NEPAL

(Nepali Patra, March 19, 1993)

According to the Forum for Protection of Human Rights, Baburam Ghimire and Guna Prasad Acharya had been arrested during the general strike of March 14 and kept in police custody without any warrant. The report added, "Both these detainees have been denied rations. They were also forced to sign statements against their will at the office of the Government Prosecutor. Guna Prasad Acharya was beaten with a stick and has been seriously injured in the left arm. They were photographed with placards bearing the words "We have thrown brickbats" on their chests." The Forum, therefore, demanded the immediate release of these two detainees.

(Rising Nepal, March 30, 1993)

The Nepal Chapter of the Amnesty International held its annual general meeting in Kathmandu recently. The meeting expressed gratitude to the Amnesty International for granting full membership to the Nepal Chapter. The meeting also decided to launch a human rights campaign in Nepal, give top priority to the human rights and awareness programs, and introduce human rights education and training programs. In addition, the meeting called on HMG to ratify the United Nations Protocol on Refugees.

SØKELYS PÅ BARNEARBEID I NEPAL



BANNING IS NO SOLUTION

Although child labour in the carpet industry is a fast growing phenomenon and one of the most popular and hotly debated topics for discussion, other areas or forms of child labour in Nepal are perhaps equally distressing. In rural areas children of poor families are heavily involved in farming, livestock rearing, fuelwood and water collection, and various other household chores. Their living conditions, workload, clothes, food, and access to education and health care are no better than those of the children working in informal urban sectors such as the carpet industry. The situation is worse for girls who have a higher workload (because of additional household chores) but less access to food, education and health.

Those who argue that children would be better off if they lived with their poor parents in villages have a romantic and unrealistic view of the situation of rural poverty in Nepal, and it is getting worse.

Other informal urban sectors, such as brick factories, restaurants, construction, domestic service etc., also employ child labour and offer extremely low wages (mainly in kind) for back-breaking work. Physical and sexual abuse, by employers and others, is frequent in all areas of child employment, and especially of girls. Most child labour exists because of the inability of the parents to provide them with the bare minimum necessities for survival. Some children are abandoned, or orphaned, or forced to work by their own guardians, but most children have to support themselves, their parents and siblings by selling their labour as well as their future.

Employing children is attractive to the employers and labour contractors because of their special abilities (small, thin and flexible fingers and better eyesight are an advantage in the carpet industry) and their innocence and vulnerability to various forms of exploitation.

Exploitation of child labour cannot be stopped by preaching or by passing laws against it. It is the result of extreme poverty, rapid population growth, lack of education and awareness among rural people, and lack of opportunities. The opportunity cost of child labour for society is enormous, but, for the poor child and its parents, alternatives either do not exist or are worse. Therefore, the long-term strategy for alleviating and ultimately eliminating child labour is through poverty alleviation, effective family planning and provision of primary and adult education and vocational training and education to out-of-school children in rural areas.

The short to medium-term strategy for improving the life of poor children who have to work for survival is to ensure, through strict legal and administrative action by the government and the active support of social workers, that all employers provide adequate wages and benefits, better working conditions, insurance and necessary health service, and training and education, so that the children they employ might have the opportunity of finding better employment in the future.

-KKGG

Kilde: Quarterly Development Review
Vol IX No 11, januar-mars 1993

BARNEARBEID I NEPAL

Av menneskerettighets-temaene som diskuteres i pressen og blant de intellektuelle i Nepal i dag, er barns vilkår og rettigheter kommet sterkt i fokus. Særlig sterke reaksjoner har det vært på bruk av barn under 14 år som arbeidskraft i teppeindustrien. Dette har igjen tur bidratt til å sette søkelyset på hele fattigdomsproblemet: mishandling, gatebarn, prostitusjon.

Child Workers in Nepal
Concerned Center (CWIN) har vært i gang siden 1987 som aktivistorganisasjon og talerør for barns rettigheter. Alvoret i situasjonen understrekes av statistikken som CWIN legger fram.

For mer informasjon og abonnement på Voice of Child Workers (USD 25) kan du skrive til CWIN,
P.O.Box 4374,
Kathmandu.

Olav Myrholt

BRIEF FACTS

Statistics on Child Labour Involvement

- Agriculture & Cottage Ind.	49,02,000	86.0%
- Industry	1,36,800	2.4%
- Business	1,71,000	3.0%
- Services	3,42,000	6.0%
- Construction	34,200	0.6%
- Other	1,14,000	2.0%
Total	57,00,000	100

Bonded Labour

16.7% of the total children in Nepal are bonded labourers by birth, and 35% of the total child labour force are regarded as semi-bonded. The average working hour of a bonded labourer is 18 hrs. a day.

Child Marriage

7% of the women in Nepal are married by the age of 10, and 40% by the age of 14.

Trafficking in Young Girls

About 153,000 young Nepali women have already been trafficked into India by 1987 at an annual rate of 5,000 to be forced into the flesh trade. Among them, 20% are girls under the age of 16.

Migrated Child Labour

Every year, about 1,120 children in 12-16 age group migrate to India for various work and about 25,000 children in the age group of 10-14 yrs. are currently working in Banaras District of India.

Child Mortality

The infant mortality rate in Nepal is 150.38 per 1,000 for girls and 144.50 per 1,000 for boys

Child Illiteracy

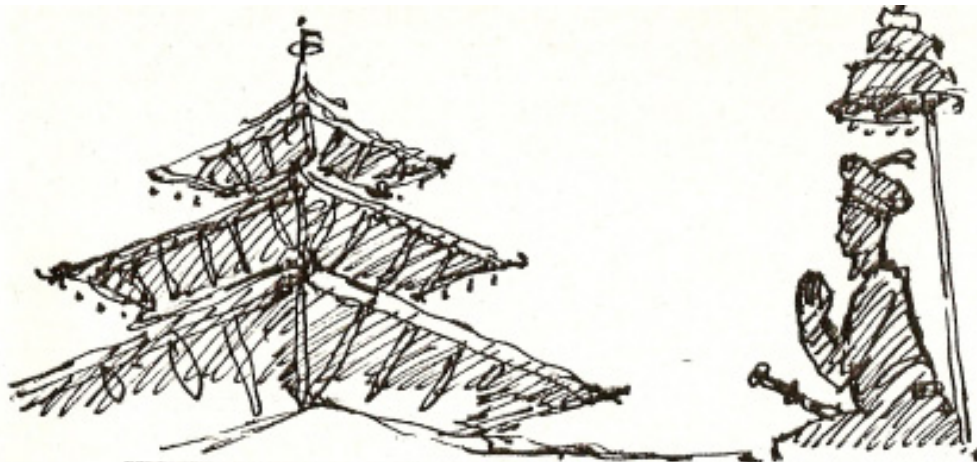
More than 60% of the male child population and 88% of the girl child population of Nepal are illiterate. Primary school drop-out rate is more than 50%.

Street Children

There are nearly 1000 street children in Kathmandu alone and 89% of these children are originally from the countryside. Most of the street children in the urban areas are either migrated or from broken families.

Sexwise Child Labour Involvement

Age Group	Working Hours	
	Boys	Girls
05-09 yrs.	2.33hrs.	3.39 hrs.
10-14 yrs.	4.93 hrs.	7.31 hrs.



Editorial

Human Rights Vol No 11 September 1992

FOPHUR Urges the Government and the Parliament not to be Indifferent

In order to consolidate the rights which the Nepalese People got as a consequence of the constitution of Nepal 1990, the article 15 (2) of the constitution has stipulated: "Any person held under preventive detention shall, if his detention was contrary to law or in a bad faith, have the right to be compensated in a manner as prescribed by law."

Even after the promulgation of the constitution and the end of the third session of the Parliament formed in accordance with the same constitution the government and the parliament both appear indifferent towards making laws that protect human rights by providing for compensation. The type of laws that have negative bearing on the public life and violated the human rights are being passed one after another in the name of majority.

If we give a serious thinking to this we find that there has been a growing feeling among the people of the Parliament moving against spirit of the constitution. Expressing his concern about this chief Justice Bishwa Nath Upadhyaya had opined at the Third National Conference of the Forum for Protection of Human Rights that the preservation of human rights had become difficult in the absence of such laws.

The leaders of Six Parties (The Nepali Congress, the CPN(UML), United People's Front, National Democracy Party, Nepal Sadbhawana Party, and CPN, (United) which participated in the seminar held by FOPHUR on the Situation of Human Rights in Connection with the Bills Passed in the Current Session of the Parliament, were unanimous in realising that there was a lack of laws designed to protect human rights.

What follows from this is that all People have not been able to exercise these rights, neither have any positive steps been taken to this direction. It has become a question of common concern as to whose fear has created such a confusing state of affairs. The people had selected their representatives with a lot of enthusiasm. But it is being increasingly felt that the people's representatives are becoming ever more indifferent towards the spirit of the constitution which was drafted in accordance with the aspiration of the people's movement. The indifference of the parliament shows that the symptoms of its becoming crippled and the government becoming dictatorial has begun to emerge.

If the parliament becomes a play thing at the hand of bureaucracy the latter will prevail everywhere making it difficult to protect human rights. Bureaucracy will render the constitution only a scrap of paper by exerting unconstitutional influences. Law is necessary to avert a situation of making bureaucracy the overlord of the people and depriving them of their natural rights. Realising this grave situation, Forum for Protection of Human Rights urges the Government and the people's representatives to make laws conforming to the aspiration of the people in accordance with article 15 clause 2 of the constitution.

Finally, we want to remind that the government can provide its democratic identity only if it embodies the spirit of the constitution by rising above the entangling snare of bureaucracy. we, therefore, request both the government and the parliament to make laws that protect human rights.

FOPHUR:

Objectives

1. Strengthen, as partners the international movement for human rights by promoting, among the people of Nepal, the ideas and values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. Protect and promote fundamental human rights and values;
3. Promote popular consciousness and popular will in favour of human rights by conducting regular public discussion and training and research programmes;
4. Publish literature on human rights; and
5. Carry out all necessary activities in pursuance of the above objectives;

The 1980's was a period of deep political and social contradictions and turmoils. The king-dominant polity was passing through an extremely uneasy compromise with a system of universal adult franchises and direct elections to the legislature. The state bureaucracy-including the security apparatus had extended its arms far and wide and was attempting to defame people's representatives as well as peoples at large. A small but ascendent urban middle class was clamouring for commensurate political space. Political parties, which were banned, were redefining their aims and strategies were intensifying the struggle against the autocratic regime. The private press was playing a much more active role despite high Censorship and press laws. The vast majority of Nepalese in rural areas were groaning under poverty and indebtedness and were having a difficult time trying to match the words and deeds of the government as well as their representatives. While there were only a few large scale organized struggles, there were many struggles at the levels of the

individual, the family, the village and groups of settlements. The reaction of the state was often very harsh. Not only did specific laws systematically violate human rights but the government and its officials often stretched the legitimate domain of such laws. The climate of overwhelming fear from the state and the bureaucracy and the tendency to perceive human rights violations as incidental and isolated, inhibited claims of redressal. The process of redressal, when claimed, was extremely tardy and expensive.

FOPHUR, which is the first human rights activist organisation in Nepal, was a product of this historical setting. In addition, the forum also drew its inspiration from the UN universal declaration of Human Rights and from post 1950 global experiences on human rights. The Forum constituted by prominent personalities in the fields of politics, economics, academics, social work, law, journalism, medicine, etc. was given due attention to the non-government-owned media and attracted immediate public attention. Transformation of the undemocratic state, freedom to political prisoners and their welfare while in jail and freedom from police abuses received the topmost priority in its agenda. The government was extremely intolerant of the Forum and systematically harassed, issued warrants for house-search and arrests and imprisoned its office bearers and disturbed public gatherings sponsored by it. The Forum nonetheless, survived such assaults and continues to be an effective voice for the protection and promotion of human rights.

For more information:
FOPHUR,
P.O. Box 5457,
Maitighar,
Kathmandu, Nepal

Human rights

THE Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Daman Nath Dhungana, had only reiterated the obvious when he said that respect for man was the foundation of human rights as we know them today. Liberal democracy which has taken the form of parliamentary democracy in our country is meaningless without adequate safeguards for human rights of each and every individual. Respect for human rights means that the state must yield, whenever possible, to the rights of its citizens. In short, the state is for man and not vice versa. But everywhere, including countries with long traditions of liberal democracy, reports of violations by state of human rights of its citizens are not uncommon. The third world countries, particularly, are not well known for their human rights record.

However, in Nepal with the restoration of multi-party democracy, human rights as a crucial subject of democracy has been given top priority. The general elections of May 1991 and the subsequent installation of a democratically elected government have further enhanced the human rights situation in Nepal. But nonetheless, there may be stray cases of violations of human rights here and there and these to must be monitored and such violations prevented from recurring in the future.

In this light and in view of the comparative inexperience in this field, the suggestion put forward by Speaker Dhungana for an all-party human rights commission is worth delving into and, after a careful examination of the proposal, setting up of such a commission might do a world of good to the Nepalese human rights scene. This is because groups, individuals and institutions, too can create situations when human rights are trampled and indeed they themselves can indulge in the violation of human rights. Some groups in the Kingdom have in the past been thought to be responsible for either provoking or indulging in mutual violations of human rights. Apart from this being damaging to the overall human rights picture of the Kingdom, this can also set a bad precedent. The proposed all-party human rights commission can eradicate the unwanted tendency to a large extent and thus the proposal needs a careful examination by all concerned, including individuals, political parties and the government. For surely, a clean and spotless human rights record will be a pride not only for the political parties of the country but for the country itself.





Den Norske Advokatforening i fokus under IBAs Sørøst-Asia konferanse

Uhjelp-utvalgets formann, Alf Skogly rapporterer fra Nepal

International Bar Association arrangerte i tiden 17.-20. januar i år en regional konferanse for Sørøst-Asia regionen. Konferansen ble lagt til Kathmandu, ikke minst som følge av at samarbeidet mellom advokatforeningene i Nepal og Norge nå har vart i fem år. Ett av hovedtemaene under konferansen var samarbeidet mellom de to advokatforeningene.



Av Alf Skogly

Kusum Schrestha og jeg ble tildelt ansvaret for avviklingen av denne del av programmet. For de såkalte "Twinning Projects" ble presentert og redegjort for - både hva som hadde skjedd og hvilke forventninger vi hadde for de neste fem år - hadde en representant for hvert av de deltagende utviklingsland redegjort for de spesielle problemer som vedkommende land møtte.

Grove brudd på menneskerettigheter

Tragisk, men interessant var det å høre representanten fra Kashmir, som beklaget seg over grove brudd på elementære menneskerettigheter i denne delstaten i India. Det var her en dissens mellom representanter for andre deler av India og Kashmir hvor debatten til tider gikk nokså livlig.

Dersom de eksempler på menneskerettsbrudd som ble redegjort for av representanten fra Kashmir er riktige, snakker vi om svært grove brudd med til dels mange tapte menneskeliv. Dette er i så fall en særdeles tragisk utvikling.

Norge i fokus

IBA-konferansen var forøvrig sterkt preget av Den Norske Advokatforenings initiativ såvel hva angår prosjektet i Nepal som prosjektet i Uganda. IBA hadde finansiert reisen til Nepal for to representanter fra Ugandas advokatforening - the Uganda Law Society som den korrekte heter - dels for å delta i konferansen og dels for etter denne å ha møter og kontakter ellers med sine kolleger i Nepal, og nyte godt av de erfaringer Nepals advokatforening har gjort gjennom de fem år prosjektet i samarbeid med Den Norske Advokatforening nå har vart ved.

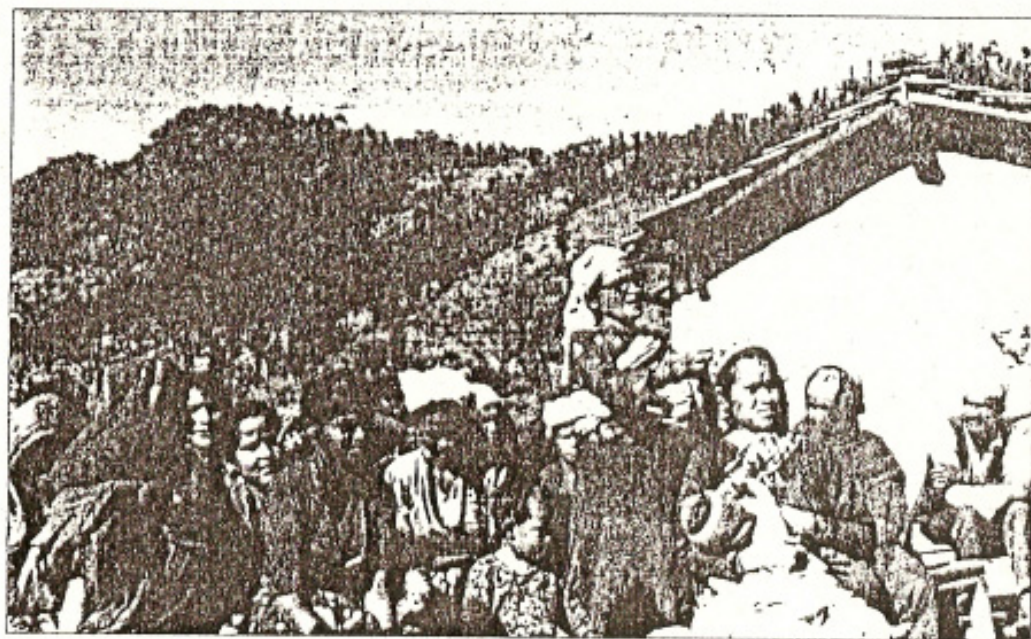
I det hele tatt sto Den Norske Advokatforening særdeles sterkt i fokus under IBAs konferanse. Selv om det har lyktes IBA å få i stand en rekke "Twinning Projects" mellom andre partnere, er det ingen av de øvrige prosjekter som kommer i nærheten av det norske hva gjelder omfang såvel i tid som i beløp. At vårt land har vært i stand til å mobilisere slike midler skyldes naturligvis den gunstige ordningen som NORAD har vedt å 80 prosent av den totale prosjektkostnad etter søknad kan dekkes av NORAD, og her har NORAD fulgt opp gjennom alle år på en mønstergyldig måte.

Nedtrapping

Forøvrig var besøket i Nepal denne gang - etter at IBA-seminaret var slutt - preget av en rekke møter vedrørende to forhold, nemlig ny avtale for de fem år som vi nå begynner på, og med utfasing i løpet av de tre siste årene i fem-årsperioden, slik at den endelige sluttstrek settes ved utgangen av 1997. Utfasingen skjer ved at de to første år fortsetter som hittil hva gjelder omfang og beløp, mens de tre siste nedtrappes med 25 prosent årlig. Ett av resultatene av det arbeid som hittil er gjort i Nepal, er at landets advokatforening har fremmet et lovforslag om fri retts hjelp. Forslaget er oversendt fra advokatforeningen til parlamentet, og ventes å bli behandlet i inneværende år.

Nytt bibliotekbygg

Et annet forhold som både formannen og sekretæren i Nepals advokatforening var særdeles ivrige på, var å få hjelp til å reise et bibliotekbygg for advokatforeningen. Man har et slags bibliotek i Høyesteretts bygning i dag, hvor foreningen er tildelt ett rom, men dette er svært lite tilfredsstillende. Høyesterettsjustitiarius har tilbudt Nepals advo-



Samarbeidsprosjektet mellom advokatforeningene i Nepal og Norge omfatter blant annet såkalte «grasrotkurs». På bildet overfor ser vi deltakere under ett av disse kursene.

katforening en tomt i tilknytning til høyesterettsbygningen i Kathmandu, men byggekostnadene må foreningen selv finne dekning for.

Grunnet de politiske omveltninger, samt problemer med India hvor grensene ble stengt og det ikke var drivstoff, var det i lengre perioder stillstand i rettshjelpsprosjektet. Dette førte til at midler som var bevilget ikke kunne anvendes som de skulle, og de står på bankkonto i Nepal. NORAD har samtykket i at midlene omdisponeres til bibliotekformål med inntil NOK 400.000,-. Dette vil dekke det vesentlige av kostnadene til bygget, dog slik at Nepals advokatforening også bidrar så langt den er i stand til det.

Bibliotekbygget var noe Nepals advokatforening la særdeles stor vekt på, og var svært takknemlig for at man fra norsk side kunne akseptere. Dette ble sterkt understreket både av formann og sekretær i foreningen, og jeg ble bedt om å rette en spesiell takk til de norske advokater som gjennom sin forening bidrar til dette, og til de norske myndigheter som bidrar.

Norske Kvinnelige Juristers Forening

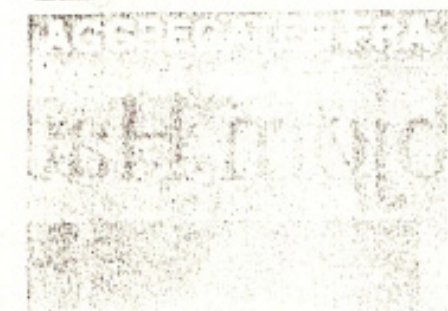
Ved hovedkontoret for rettshjelps-

prosjektet i Kathmandu er det etablert det som har fått navnet "Women's Wing" med en kvinnelig advokat som leder. Det har vært skifte i ledelsen for ca. en måneds tid siden, så den nye leder var i en innkjøringsfase. Hun virket dyktig og interessert. Praktiserende kvinnelige advokater i to andre byer - Biratnagar og Pokhara - den ene i øst på grensen mot India, den andre ca. 220 km vest for Kathmandu, har på eget initiativ startet lignende "Women's Wing" under tilsyn av hovedkontoret i Kathmandu. Jeg hadde anledning til å besøke Pokhara i løpet av oppholdet. Selv om det bare er 220 kilometers avstand mellom Kathmandu og Pokhara, ristet vi i vei i godt og vel syv timer på turen. Deler av veien minnet langt mer om et bekleleie enn en vei. En strekning på 100 km var imidlertid etter alminnelig norsk standard etter at britiske bistandsmyndigheter hadde gitt midler til istandsetting av veien. Dette var midtveis mellom Kathmandu og Pokhara. På begge sider hadde vi en temmelig ubehagelig reise. Imidlertid hadde Redd Barna stilt en Pajero med 4-hjulstrekk til disposisjon, så vi kom da godt og trygt både frem og tilbake.

Samarbeid med Redd Barna

Straks etter at den opprinnelige avtale ble inngått for vel fem år siden, inngikk DNA en avtale med Redd Barna om at denne organisasjonens stedlige representant i Kathmandu skulle føre et visst tilsyn med at virksomheten synes å gå som den skulle. Under mitt besøk i Nepal nå hadde jeg samtaler med stedlig representant og assisterende stedlig representant for Redd Barna, samt en indier som vi var enige om skulle fungere som kontaktperson mellom prosjektet og Redd Barna. På denne måten har vi en form for stedlig presentasjon som kan varsle oss dersom det er ting som tyder på at prosjektet ikke går som det skal. Jeg understreker at det naturligvis ikke er meningen med denne avtalen å legge noe ansvar på Redd Barnas skuldre, men en mulighet til oppfølging på stedet, slik at vi i tillegg til de avtalte rapporter vi får om virksomheten, også har et visst stedlig tilsyn med at rapportene avspeiler virkeligheten.

Som konklusjon må det være god grunn til å si at Den Norske Advokatforening har gjort seg fordelaktig bemerket, ikke minst i IBA-sammenheng, som følge av lærst og fremst Nepal-prosjektet, men deretter også Uganda-prosjektet.



gir ny hverdag for folk i Nepal

Av Mette Hjelmark

■ Husker du de gamle aggregatene fra Mesna Kraftselskap? De som ble gitt gratis til Nepal da kraftverket moderniserte? Aggregatene er nå i full drift. Strømprøduksjonen har revolusjonert hverdagen for mange mennesker i Nepal.

Ringvirkningene etter at elektrisitetsverket kom i drift, er ikke mindre enn revolusjonerende. Blant annet får skolebarn muligheten til å gjøre lekser i et land hvor det er mørkt klokken 18.00. Det betyr at barna kan jobbe lenger på familiens små åkerlapper, før lekselesing. Og det igjen betyr at foreldrene i langt større grad er villige til å sende barna på skole i et land der barn sees på som billig og nødvendig arbeidskraft.

Rovdrift på ved

En annen ringvirkning av elektrisitetsproduksjonen, er at maten nå kan kokes uten ved. Brensel begynner å bli mangelvare i landet. Det har vært – og er fortsatt – stor rovdraft etter ved som brensel i Nepal. Fordi skogen forsvinner fra åssidene, går det hvert år store jord-skred i Himalayas stup-bratte fjell- og åssider under monsunregnet. I flommen som oppstår fordi jordsmonnet ikke lenger er festet i

trærnes røtter, forsvinner også verdifull matjord. Jord-skredene i Nepal skaper årlig oversvømmelser i bl.a. India og Bangladesh. Dette er flomkatastrofer som år om annet tar tusenvis av menneskeliv.

Misjonærer står bak

Det er norske misjonærer som har vært initiativtakere bak elektrisitetsverket, et av de få som finnes i Nepal. Prosjektet kalles Andikhola-prosjektet. Misjonær Odd Hoftun og Asbjørn Holm har vært noen av de sentrale personene i arbeidet. Prosjektet, som har hatt en byggeperiode på rundt ti år, ble hovedsaklig finansiert av NORAD, men den nepalesiske stat bidro også litt økonomisk. Tibetmisjonen, som både Hoftun og Holm er tilknyttet, skaffet til veie arbeidskraft og materiell. Andikhola-prosjektet, som bl.a. innebar bygging av en ca. to kilometer lang tunnel gjennom Nepals høye og taggete fjell tinder, begynte å produsere strøm i fjor. Tre av aggregatene fra Lillehammer er innstallert i Andikhola.

Skogreising

Også spillvannet etter elektrisitetsproduksjonen utnyttes. Vannet ledes ut på jomfruelige nydyrkingsområder som skaffer mat til en sultende befolkning.

Tibetmisjonen har også sørget for treplanting i åssidene for å forhindre videre erosjon. Slik sett kan man med rette si at prosjektet både indirekte og direkte er med på å redde menneskeliv, ikke bare i Nepal, men også i de flomherjede nabolandene.

Andikhola-prosjektet har dessuten en unik organisering: Verket ansetter jordløse nepalesere, og alle som arbeider ved verket er «medeiere». Eventuelle overskudd kommer arbeiderne direkte til gode. På den måten utvikles ansvarførelse, samhold og solidaritet.

PROBLEM OF GIRL CHILD

BADIS, AIDS & THE AUCTION OF VIRGINITY

By Dr. Pushpa Bhatt

IN THE farwestern and midwestern regions of Nepal, there is a unique community of women and men called the Badi. Among the Badi, the birth of daughter is celebrated as much as the birth of a son is elsewhere in Nepal, for from an early age, Badi daughters are compelled to support their families by engaging themselves in sexual practices.

Most Badis come to stay in major Terai towns during the winter and live in the hills during the summer. Others have settled permanently in the Gogonjanj area of Nepalganj, Satti in Kailali, Patiraya in Dang, and Rajapur in Bardia.

The Badis were not always sex workers. Historically, they were an untouchable caste whose occupation was to dance and play music. They had relationships with the wealthy landowners of the area. The Badis used to participate in religious and social ceremonies such as Jattras, Royal visits, and Royal weddings, at which the women would dance and sing. Both men and women would play flutes and drums in processions and also while entertaining guests. In return, the landowners supplied the Badis with enough food to eat. The Badis never engaged in agriculture and dislike it even now. Traditionally, men have occupied themselves with making fishing nets and drums.

After the fall of the Rana Dynasty, this social balance began to change. Radio and films became more popular. So the skills of the Badis were less in demand. At the same time, landowners became less willing to supply the Badi with sufficient grain partly because the size of landholdings decreased. As a result, majority of the Badis turned to prostitution to survive. This is not an age old occupation.

Badi grandmothers tell stories of a time when they were not prostitutes. But as the demand is growing, so is the practice and its dangers. In developing areas such as Arjun Khola, Badis have started offering their daughters who are so young that they are still children. This is partly because the work is seasonal. Most clients come during the winter months. So Badi girls are forced to take as many customers as they can in order to live for the rest of the year.

When a girl child is born, the Badis celebrate. They prefer daughters to sons. After a girl reaches the age of 8 to 9 she begins to learn the "tricks of the trade" from her older sisters and female relatives. She learns songs and dances, and her appearance changes as she begins to use lipstick and nailpolish, wear Western-style haircuts and cheap-looking Western clothes. Dressed up as a woman, the girl is readied for her first sexual acts. But her body is still the body of a child.

A ceremony marks the sale of a Badi girl's virginity, which usually takes place when she is 11 or 12. The girl is dressed as a bride, and her "bridegroom" buys her for the night for 1000-15,000 rupees (the terms vary widely). From the next morning she begins her daily life as a prostitute.

Brought up to be sex workers, Badi girls see prostitution and sexual acts taking place around them from their infancy. For them, sex has no emotional element nor any comfort. They accept it as the work they, their sisters and their mothers must do in order to live.

What does have meaning for them is motherhood. Teenage pregnancies are common and are encouraged. Badi women love their children and try to have enough of them to ensure security in their old age. Due to lack of education they have not learned the benefit of limiting or planning their pregnancies.

Recently, Badi women have begun to express sadness over the fate of their children. They desire to have some alternative to a life of prostitution. A primary level school for the Badi children has been started. But there is an immediate and pressing need for a hostel for girl children. This is to have them in a healthy environment for studying. It is impossible for young Badi girls to concentrate on their books when their mothers and sisters are engaged in sexual practices in the next, or even the very same, room. Women in the Badi community are often heard pleading "We are already ruined. It is too late for us, but please take our daughters away from all this".

A major effort now could cure this social disease. A special approach to the girl children, so that they can learn their ABC's at school instead of S-E-X at home is what is needed. Older Badi women, used to life as sex workers, have not been able to adjust to work as ordinary laborers.

Although occasional trainings for in-come generation have been organized by the government for the Badi women in Nepalganj, our concern should be on the younger Badi girls who have not yet entered prostitution. Education for them will end the isolation and ignorance that in the past have prevented them from choosing a different way of life.

The Badis are aware of their sexual problems and willing to talk. Sexually transmitted diseases are commonly found among them, including (but not only) syphilis, venereal warts, and herpes. Syphilis is known as Bhirangi, and gives the Badis a lot of trouble, as they usually seek ineffective treatment from local traditional healers. The healers make a big show of giving large tetracycline injections, that are dyed bright red, or oral antibiotics. Since only penicillin is effective against syphilis, 70 per cent of the Badi women tested were found to be suffering with the chronic disease.

None of the Badi women tested, however, were carrying the HIV virus that causes AIDS. This means that there is an opportunity that must not be missed to take strong preventive measures, immediately, or AIDS will inevitably enter the Badi population. The Badi women work in heavily populated border areas and their clients are Indians as well as Nepalis. In India, the HIV virus is spreading at an alarming speed. Since there is a general perception among the public that Indian sex workers are heavily infected with HIV and Nepali sex workers are safer, there is much greater demand for sex workers in Nepal. This greatly increases the likelihood of infection with HIV among the BAdis. Furthermore, studies from other countries have shown that sex workers of low socio-economic status are at much greater risk. Syphilis, gonorrhea, and other venereal diseases left untreated as they are among the Badi also enhance the transmission of the HIV virus.

The Badi community is in terrible danger. At any time they may be infected with the deadly HIV virus that causes AIDS, which is fatal, and which in a few short years could wipe them out completely. And the implications for society, are devastating. Only the use of condoms is known to prevent transmission of HIV. An aggressive health education and community development programme is urgently needed to protect the Badis and society at large. Special programmes must be implemented right here and now. For the time being, we must acknowledge that we cannot eradicate prostitution immediately, and so must provide education about safe sex practices, as well as alternatives to prostitution.

Courtesy :- Rising Nepal September 11, 1992

Women and AIDS in Nepal

Dr. Pushpa Bhatt

The first Nepali woman with AIDS was diagnosed in 1988. Since then the number of HIV positive persons has been on the rise. Conservative estimate puts the number around 3000. So far, 114 HIV positive, including AIDS cases, have been detected in Nepal. Out of 14 AIDS cases, 75 percent are female and 25 percent male whereas, ratio of HIV positive men and women is 1:1. In 1988, the number of HIV positive was 3 male and 1 female. By 1992, this increased to 14 in the case of male and 10 in the case of female.

A study conducted in 1992 has shown that HIV infection is highest among sex workers and lowest among blood recipients. Next to the sex workers, HIV infection was found in those women who had been treated for sexually transmitted diseases. The life of a HIV infected person, particularly a woman, is full of difficulties. Majority of them are poor and belong to minority groups. They are generally identified in our society as risky persons rather than as women. Poverty seems as a potential factor which lures them into prostitution. Education is limited to certain class, caste, and geographical area. Children of Devakis never go for higher education. They have no employment skills. Prostitution becomes the easy options for them to sustain their lives.

Some of the HIV positive women are very young—below 20 years. Poverty and illiteracy expose women to HIV infection. Some of the women are forced to sell their bodies for money in order to support their families. Some of them even do not have the slightest idea that they are suffering because their husbands are infected by the virus.

At present, approximately 11 women with symptomatic HIV and AIDS are being cared and observed by different people. Fifty percent of

these women have dependent children.

The children are being looked after by social organizations of Nepal and India. In spite of knowing that they are infected with HIV, they are forced to continue to beget children. The basic reason does not lie on themselves but on the poor condition they are bound to live in.

The average longevity of HIV infected patients is expected to be between 8 to 10 years but in the context of Nepal; AIDS patients die within less than 18 months after the diagnosis.

There is no cure for HIV virus or, the caution is the only preventive measure found effective so far. Common infection noted so far among the Nepali women diagnosed with AIDS are:

Seborrheic Dermatitis, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and extensive oral and vaginal fungal. AIDS cases with respiratory distress, haematemesis, dehydration due to diarrhoea

and for haemorrhagic shock etc. These sometimes need emergency care so emergency facility for such patients should be made available in each and every health institutions.

The terminal stage of AIDS cases need more sympathetic attitudes from others. Emotional and psychological care provides the opportunity to the people to die with dignity. These patients need pain killers. Most of the patients at the last stage of their lives feel intense pain. These cases do not need hospitalization. Non-Governmental Organization and voluntary support groups can provide some relief to the patient at terminal stage.

Although, women have equal access to family planning, the pregnant women with HIV should be given extra attention during their pregnancy period. Such pregnancy should

be avoided. Facility should be made available to those women who prefer to continue pregnancy. But women in general need to know the outcome of pregnancy in HIV infected stage. After delivery the HIV infected women should be advised contraception and use of condoms.

Noted Impact

It has been found that since 1989 on wards, many women are coming back to Nepal with HIV positive. Those women, if returned back from the Indian brothels without any substantial amount of money they are usually unwelcome in their families. Thus once again they are forced to continue sexual practices for their livelihood. This further helps the fatal disease to spread more rapidly in our society.

Poverty is one of the major factors for HIV transmission among rural group. But innocent urban housewives are also becoming the victims.

This is happening either because of their husband's ignorance about the diseases or their unrestrained illicit relations with HIV infected women.

The government and concerned institutions are committed to reduce the growing ratio of HIV patients in our community. First of all, women should be made aware of the catastrophe the AIDS virus can cause. Besides that AIDS virus infected patients should also bear the responsibility of confining the virus within themselves. And an awareness programme against AIDS should reach to each and every individual in the community. Let's not take it as health or medical problem only, it is also a very grave social and political problem at the same time: fighting against ignorance, poverty and adultery is also fighting against the fatal disease called AIDS.

NEPAL OG ANDRE LAND: EN SAMMENLIGNING

	BNP/innb. USD	BNP-vekst %	Utenlandsgjeld Milliarden USD	Innb. telefon	Innb. pr lege	Barnedødt. pr 1000 fødsle	Levetid år
Sveita	35.100	-0,3	0	1,1	329	7	100
USA	22.550	4,8	382	1,3	404	8	95,5
England	17.738	-0,1	0	1,9	611	8	100
Japan	27.236	1,1	0	1,9	609	5	100
Singapore	15.200	7,4	0	2,2	753	6	90,7
Sei-Korea	6.635	5,0	40,2	2,9	1078	21	96
Malaysia	2.965	8,0	15,8	10,1	2.656	13	78,5
Tybetia	1.660	1,5	41,4	6,6	1.189	62	81
Thailand	1.660	7,4	27,3	31,1	4.361	24	93
Filippinene	835	0	29,8	58,3	1016	40	93,5
Indonesia	645	5,5	70,1	166	7.238	65	85
China	360	12,8	60,5	89,5	724	27	73,3
India	310	2,5	73,5	150	2.075	88	52,1
Bangla Desh	208	4,0	11,9	465	6.166	108	35,3
Nepal	170	3,1	1,7	275	20.234	118	26
Afganistan	ca 150	-2,2	1,6	443	4.797	162	29,4
Mongolia	ca 100	-16,2	7,1	36	390	60	89,5
Kampuchea	150	5,0	1,4	790	27.000	116	48

Kilde: Asiaweek, 17 mars 1993



BARN MÅ IKKE DØ PÅ GRUNN AV VÅR UVITENHET.

I det lille forsamlingslokalet sitter det 13 kvinner og 1 mann. En av kvinnene er Bishnu Karki. Hun er ansvarlig for helseprogrammet i Redd Barnas tre prosjekter i Palpa; Arung Khola I og II og East Palpa. Bishnu Karki holder opp en plansje og forklarer. Plansjen viser en gravid kvinne like før hun skal føde. Praten går livlig. Snart tar en annen av kvinnene over plansjen. Hun forteller de andre hva hun kan og har lært. - "Dette er et oppfriskningskurs", forklarer Bishnu Karki. - "Alle deltagerne har vært her en gang før, dette er andre gangen".

Vi befinner oss i Jyamire i Palpa. De 13 kursdeltagerne og den ene instruktøren diskuterer måter å stille fødende kvinner og å ta i mot nyfødte barn, særlig der hvor det er komplikasjoner. Meningen er at kursdeltagerne skal ta med seg lærdommen hjem til landsbyene sine, fortelle videre hva de har lært og selv trå til ved kompliserte fødsler. Mange av deltagerne har gått 7-8 timer for å komme hit. Kurset varer i flere dager. At såpass mange deltar, viser at emnet er viktig og alvorlig. Deltagerne

har så mye arbeid å gjøre hjemme at de ikke ville ha kommet hvis det ikke var viktig.

Når vi spør kursdeltagerne hva de har lært kommer svarene på løpende bånd. - "Vi lærer å bruke kokt vann, hvordan vi skal kutte navlestrengen, hvordan babyen ligger i morens mage og hvordan vi skal hjelpe til slik at det

blir en trygg fødsel", sier en kvinne. Hun fortsetter:
- "Nå vet vi om barnet er levende eller dødt før det blir født. Sykehuset er langt borte og mødrene kan lett dø hvis det oppstår store komplikasjoner. Før kjente vi ikke vår egen kropp. Derfor er vi her for å lære for våre egne barns skyld. Barn må ikke dø på grunn av vår uvitenhet". Den eneste mannen i forsamlingen tar ordet. Han sier: "Vi har blitt klar over mange ting vi ikke visste fra før. Vi vet nå mye om årsakene til at spedbarn eller mødre dør. Lærdommen vil jeg bruke til å hjelpe kvinnene i vår landsby".

En historie fra virkeligheten

En annen kvinne har noe viktig på hjertet. Hun vil gjerne fortelle en historie som viser at hun har fått bruk for det hun lærte på det første kurset. - "En gravid kvinne i landsbyen vår hadde komplikasjoner. Jeg hjalp henne. Først masserte jeg henne bak, og ikke foran. Jeg passet også på å gi henne næringsrik mat. Da fødselen startet

hadde babyen en blåaktig farge. Jeg ble først redd, men jeg vasket babyen og tok pent og forsiktig på den. Jeg var så redd ungen skulle dø. Den var helt stille og verken smilte eller gråt. Jeg husket fra kurset at jeg skulle dunke babyen i ryggen. Da begynte barnet å gråte. Da visste jeg at det vi hadde lært også var virkelighet. Så kuttet jeg av navlestrengen med et sterilt redskap. Jeg passet på å være ordentlig ren på hendene mine. Til slutt vasket jeg både den nyfødte og moren i vann som var kokt. Det gikk bra med begge to".

- "Hva skal dere gjøre med alt dere lærer?" spør vi.
 - "Det er veldig fint på kurset her", forklarer en av deltagerne. - "Her lærer vi fra illustrasjoner og plansjer. De er fine også fordi de fleste av oss ikke kan skrive og lese. Når vi kommer hjem til landsbyene våre prøver vi å forklare så godt vi kan. Men det hadde vært mye lettere hvis vi hadde illustrasjoner og plansjer vi også", sukker de. Deltagerne føler tydeligvis ansvaret. De føler at de ikke bare lærer for seg selv, men for hele landsbyen.

Høy barnedødelighet

Nepal har fortsatt en høy barnedødelighet. Også for moren kan det innebære en stor risiko å føde. Alt for mange mødre mister også livet under fødselen. Risikoen kan

reduseres ved at kompliserte svangerskap blir identifisert på et tidlig tidspunkt og at fødslene foregår under hygieniske forhold. De nepalesiske helsemyndighetene har satt i gang et program for å bedre på disse forholdene. Programmet går ut på opplæring i å identifisere kompliserte svangerskap til den lokale helseposten, samt å bistå der det er nødvendig og å bringe videre kunnskaper om faremomenter ved fødsler. De som gjennomgår denne treningen blir kalt "tradisjonelle fødsels-våkere", eller Traditional Birth Attendants som det kalles på engelsk. Redd Barna har siden 1988 en avtale med myndighetene om å være ansvarlige for denne opplæringen i 26 distrikter i Nepal.

The Call of the Wild

Royal Bardia National Park

by Dinesh Thapa



Every visitor to Nepal's jungles dreams of being one of the lucky ones to spot the magnificent Royal Bengal tiger. But the tiger is an elusive creature, and most jungle visitors are more likely to encounter tiger tracks than the mighty cats themselves. Those who are adventurous, however, can greatly increase their chances of a close encounter with the king of Nepal's jungles by making the journey to Royal Bardia National Park.

Bardia is known as one of the best places—not only in Nepal, but in the entire Indian subcontinent—to see tigers. Located in the remote lowland Terai belt of far west Nepal, the park is an untouched preserve, ideal for those with a serious interest in nature and a desire to really get out into the wild.

Once a royal hunting preserve, Bardia was gazetted as a national park in 1988. It is in an area that was lost to British India as a result of the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814-1816. The British later returned the land to Nepal for the help the country gave them during the Indian mutiny.

The park, which covers nearly 1,000 square meters of land, is bounded by the Siwaliks to the north, the eastern branch of the Karnali River to the west, and the Nepalgunj-Surkhet road on the east. A large part of Bardia is hill country, covered by a dry deciduous forest dominated by the sal (*Shorea robusta*) and similar trees. The *bhabar*, or flatlands, are covered with grasses, including the short grasslands called *phantas*, which are excellent for viewing wildlife. Water channels have created numerous small and large islands. Together, the islands, grasslands, and riverine forest create a mosaic in which wildlife thrives.

Among the distinct types of vegetation found in this mosaic is the silk cotton tree. With the beginning of spring, the silk cotton trees display beautiful large scarlet flowers that attract nectar eating birds. These birds are among the more than 350 bird species that have been recorded in the park and make it a paradise for bird watchers. Ducks, geese, cranes, and cormorants are a common sight, and endangered species

such as the sarus crane (*Grus antigone*) and the silver-eared mesia (*Leiothix argentauris*) have been recorded in Bardia. Walks along the river are especially good for spotting birds.

The park supports two kinds of crocodiles and nearly fifty species of mammals in addition to the many types of birds. The crocodiles found in the park are the gharial, with its distinctive long, thin snout, and the marsh mugger. Among the mammals are the Great One-horned rhinoceros, the Royal Bengal tiger, wild elephants, leopards, wild boar, swamp deer, barking deer, sloth bears, hog and spotted deer, the black buck, and the blue bull.

Although Bardia was once home to many rhinos, they became extinct, largely due to poaching. In 1986 thirteen rhinos were translocated to the park, and more were brought in 1990. There are now about forty rhinos living in the park, and they have adapted well and are breeding.

The Karnali river offers a good fishing adventure for the angler. Most famous of the Karnali's fish is the mahseer, a hard fighting opponent. A catch of thirty pounds or more is not uncommon!

But it's the tiger that seems to hold the greatest allure for Nepal's jungle visitors, and Royal Bardia National Park is undoubtedly a place you must visit if it's the tiger you want to see. Here in west Nepal, in and around the Bardia area, there are about fifty breeding tigers. Baiting is still allowed, but most tiger sightings come during elephant rides, walks, boat trips, and vehicle safaris.

Apart from an indepth wildlife experience, Bardia also offers the visitor a fascinating look at tra-

ditional Tharu culture. The Tharus are primarily farmers but raise cattle and fish in the rivers to supplement their diet. Anthropological studies suggest that the Tharus originated in India but have been in southern Nepal for hundreds of years. The Tharus of the Bardia area have not become as absorbed into mainstream Nepali culture as those in other parts of the Terai.

October to May is the best time to visit Royal Bardia National Park. There are several ways to reach it. By car or bus, the ride takes roughly twelve hours and passes through some very scenic parts of the Terai. A quicker option is to fly from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj where a pre-arranged pickup takes you to your park lodging. Finally, you can raft down the Karnali river, which passes through the park. Those who've done it say the rafting-jungle trip is the best, but it requires more time, and the Karnali is not for the inexperienced rafter.

As for lodging, there are three possibilities. Camping near the park warden's office is permitted, but it appears that no one has yet tried this option. Upscale Tiger Tops was first in the park and operates a lodge on the edge of the forest along with a tented camp on the banks of the river. Karnali Safari Lodge, offering thatched-hut accomodations near the park warden's office, is a new addition.

Royal Bardia National Park offers an intimate and rewarding jungle experience in one of Asia's best wildlife viewing areas. Accessible yet off the beaten path, it's the destination of choice for those who are beckoned by roar of the tiger and the call of the wild.

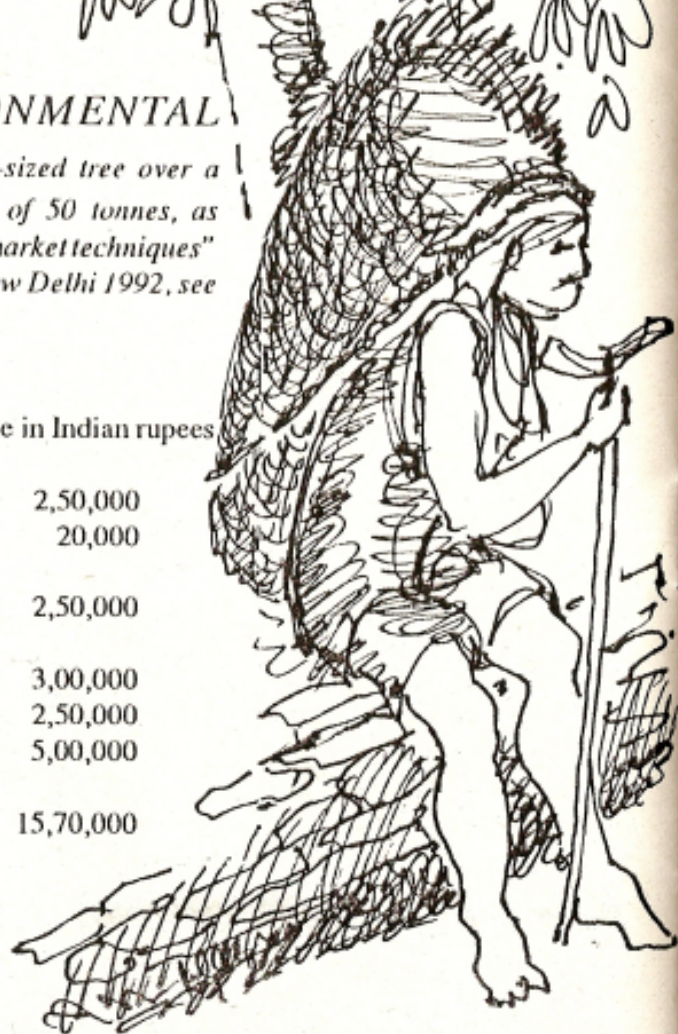
Kilde: Nepal Traveller





VALUE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES provided by a medium-sized tree over a period of 50 years, with biomass yield of 50 tonnes, as calculated by T.M.Das, using "surrogate market techniques" in the new book, *Price of Forests* (CSE, New Delhi 1992, see page 25).

Benefits	Value in Indian rupees
Production of oxygen	2,50,000
Conversion to animal protein	20,000
Soil conservation and maintenance of soil fertility	2,50,000
Recycling of water and control of humidity	3,00,000
Sheltering of birds	2,50,000
Control of air pollution	5,00,000
Total	15,70,000



At the moment I am in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project office in Ghandruk, a Gurung village at 1950m above sea level. I have been conducting a case study of Tad Pani (Far Water), a village that has sprung up in response to tourism. The village consists of seven lodges and until nine years ago, when the first lodge was set up, the area was covered in rhododendron forest. A considerable strain is being placed on the forest resources due to the need for firewood for cooking and heating in the lodges. Deforestation is one of the major problems of the Annapurna area and one of ACAP's priorities is to find ways of combating this.

Forest Management Committees are run by the local people with assistance from ACAP, and forest guards are employed to monitor the activities of the local people and impose fines on anyone cutting down green wood. All lodges and trekking groups in this area have to use kerosene, which has alleviated the strain on the forest, and a kerosene depot has been set up in Chomrung to supply the fuel. There have, however, been some problems with availability, and everything has to be carried to the area by man or mule.

Large areas of forest have been cleared for agriculture and terraced hillsides make up large areas of the landscape. Soil erosion is evident, and there is the risk that paths and houses will be swept away as the soil slides down the mountain when the monsoon comes. Reafforestation has begun and several forest nurseries have been established which supply fodder and fuel wood saplings for private and community planting. The FMC's inform ACAP which type of saplings are required by the local people and they are planted accordingly. The nurseries have also set up vegetable gardens to try to introduce people to a wider variety of crops so that they may be less reliant on supplies brought in from lower down the mountains.

Educating local people is of key importance if ACAP's efforts are to be sustained. Audio-visual equipment is used to teach health and sanitation in a number of villages in the area. The people are also taught how to install basic latrines. These measures, coupled with the supply of drinking water, have helped to bring more sanitary conditions to the villages.

Training for lodge operators is also offered by ACAP, including simple accounting, medical care for trekkers, latrine systems and hygiene, kitchen and food preparation such as the use of filtered water in cooking and the provision of varied meals. A discussion on cultural differences is also held so the Nepalese can hopefully begin to understand why people trek and differences in lifestyle of people from the West.

Educating trekkers is another important area. When applying for a trekking permit each person is given a copy of ACAP's 'Minimum Impact Code'. Information centres at Ghandruk, Ghorepani and Sikles provide information on ACAP's activities, but trekkers need to be better advised, as most of the people I have spoken to have little knowledge of the area and the effect they are having.

Tourism is obviously having an effect on this fragile environment, but the effects are not always detrimental. Much needed employment for the increasing population has been created such as women running tea shops. Previously, they were restricted to work in the home. Porter and guide jobs have also increased, although the monetary benefit is limited as most are hired outside the area. The production of local handicrafts has also been stimulated, such as the carpets woven by local women.

Independent trekkers generally bring more revenue to the area than agency trekking groups, as they stay in lodges and eat local food. Organised groups usually stay on camp-sites for a minimal fee and have porters who carry most of their food supplies from the city.

Some people blame the tourists for the change in cultural values of the young who have started to emulate Westerners. Tourism is not solely to blame for these changes. Nearly every household in Ghandruk has some connection with the Gurkha army, so many have travelled overseas and brought back Western products and ideas. Trends among the young people for popular music can be attributed to trips to Singapore and Hong Kong, and to Pokhara and Kathmandu, and not necessarily to observing the tourist. The aspirations of the young are changing, they no longer want to follow the traditional agricultural way of life and many leave school early to go into the army or lodge business.

The introduction of electricity has also brought changes. Ghandruk only received electricity about three weeks ago from a 50KW hydro electric plant. There is endless hydro electric potential in Nepal and for a country which depends on firewood for fuel, this would seem to be the ideal way to cut down the depletion of this resource. However the implementation of hydro-electric power is slow and costly.

Now electricity has finally arrived in Ghandruk there is a project to install electric pressure cookers into homes. The scheme is already successful in the East of Nepal and it could allow some of the strain on natural fuel to be lifted.

The Annapurna area is experiencing many changes and tourism is contributing to these, although it is not wholly responsible. ACAP is working hard for positive changes. The involvement and co-operation of the local people is essential if their work is to be sustained. The pilot area is working well, but more workers are needed if the project is to be successful over the whole 4600km of the Annapurna area.

Tracey Gregory

(Tracey Gregory was on placement at ACAP for three months as part of her HND course in Business, Leisure and Tourism).



NEPAL HIMALAYAN INFORMATION CENTRE



10 AM - 5 PM SUNDAY - FRIDAY PH: 418755

- WHERE CAN I TREK ? ■ WHAT DO I NEED TO TAKE TREKKING ?
- WHAT CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD I MAKE ?
- WHAT IS ALTITUDE SICKNESS ? ■ WHAT IS DEFORESTATION ? ■
- WHERE CAN I SEE FESTIVALS ? ■ WHAT ARE THE IMMIGRATION
- DEPT'S TREKKING RULES ? ■

The negative effects of tourism in Nepal are now widely recognised. Several organisations have been set up in Kathmandu to combat this problem, encouraging proper management and control of the Industry for the benefit of the Nepalese people, their environment and visitors to the country. The effect that tourists can have on the fragile environment of the Himalaya is enormous and often the tourists themselves are unaware of their impact. The Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) has been set up to bring that awareness to tourists, and in particular the trekker. Together with the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) who's aim is to educate trekkers in the dangers of altitude sickness and to promote mountain safety, KEEP has set up an information Centre for trekkers. Whilst providing reliable, up to date information on all aspects of trekking in Nepal KEEP will be informing visitors about cultural and environmental concerns.

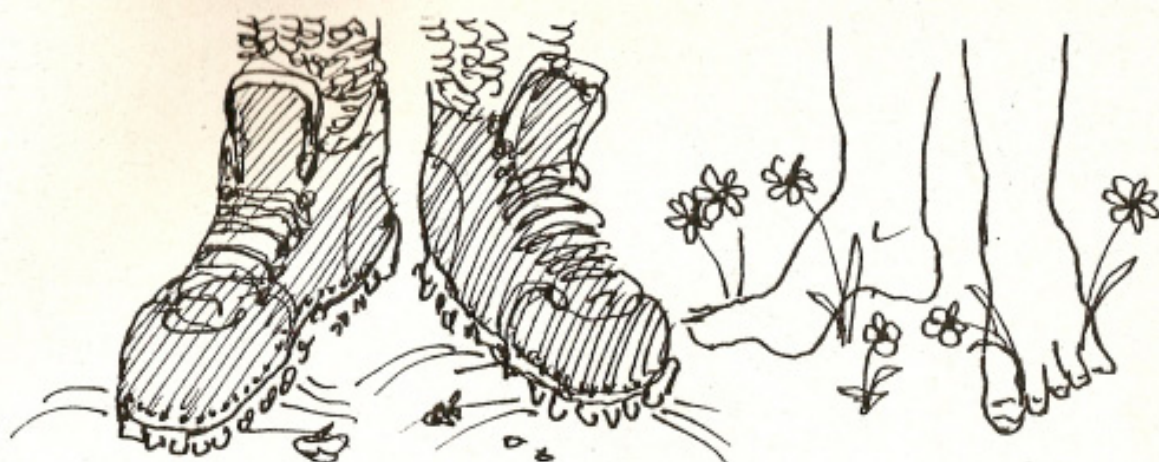
Trekkers will be given help and advice on how they can "trek gently" by following simple guidelines such as those set down in ACAP's "minimum impact code." Advice on how to deal with beggars, how to establish fair prices for souvenirs and services and how to query trekking agents on being responsible can all be given by staff. KEEP will be introducing visitors to a culture and environment which is quite different from their own, and one which requires visitors to respect particular codes of behaviour if it is to be preserved for future generations.

The centre's facilities include a library and reading room, a lecture hall and a pleasant cosy coffee shop. Displays and notice boards give details of Nepali environment and culture, responsible trekking practices, together with weather reports and health and safety information from the HRA. Biodegradable goods such as soaps, sun lotions and rechargeable batteries will be on sale along with T-Shirts and hats. KEEP's messages are beneficial to everyone and all visitors are welcome.

KEEP is collaborating closely with ACAP, the Woodlands Mountains Institute, IUCN and other environmental organisations in Nepal and KEEP's parent in the UK, the TTY Mountain Trust is coordinating with conservation efforts in other countries. The KEEP Information Centre hopes to serve as a resource and educational centre which can facilitate the exchange of environmental information between the tourism industry and environmental groups both in Nepal and overseas. Being of charitable status, a good part of KEEP's energy is spent on raising funds to keep it going. For an annual fee of US\$20 anyone can become a supporting member and receive the newsletter. Donations from International and Local sources have assured KEEP's operations for at least the first year but assurance are being sought for subsequent years. Eventually the project strives to be self-sufficient supported by donations and sales at the centre.

KEEP, PO Box 4944 Tradevi Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal Ph: 977-1-418755 Fax: 977-1-227628





Learning to Trek Gently

by Yogendra Kayastha

Whose responsibility is it to control the negative effects of trekking in the Himalaya? Does it belong to trekkers? Trekking guides? Trekking agencies? Or the government? The responsibility belongs, in fact, to all of these groups, as was clearly demonstrated at a recent workshop on eco-trekking.

The two-day workshop in Kathmandu in September was organized by Eco-trekking, a non-profit organization, the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), and the Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN). Seventy-six people (primarily field staff such as guides, sirdars, and cooks) representing twenty-two trekking agencies participated in the first day of the session at Gokarna Safari Park. The participants learned about ways to reduce litter and firewood use, proper sanitation procedures, and other aspects of environmentally sound trekking. Dr. Chandra Gurung, Director of KMTNC, used a slide presentation to explain the environmental problems in trekking areas and asked that all participants think about ways to solve these problems. He used the Annapurna Conservation Area Project as an example of how local people can participate in helping to save their environment and run an ecologically sound tourism industry.

The participants viewed *Soft Paths*, a film that advises concentrating trekking in areas that have already experienced high impact and avoiding places where the impact has been negligible or non-existent. The film emphasized that trekkers should "pack it in, pack it out" to avoid litter, and it suggested proper waste disposal methods if that is not possible. Another theme of the film was "leave what you find", that is, do not remove items from the natural environment (harvesting orchids, for example, is becoming a serious problem in Nepal).

Trekking professionals provided participants with practical training in such matters as campsite management, stove repair, and the treatment of litter. Dr. Buddha Basnyat of Nepal International Clinic discussed altitude sickness and ways to avoid water and food contamination. He stressed that boiling water for two minutes is enough to kill all germs. In a group discussion later, possible solutions to several problems were put forward. The first day's session concluded with an environmental song written especially for the workshop.

On the second day more than one hundred people, including field staff, agency managers and government representatives, joined in the session at a local hotel. A two hour discussion of environmental and cultural problems suggested solutions such as helping villagers build small hydro-electric projects; opening new kerosene depots in several remote areas; opening bottle and can collection centers in the Everest and Annapurna regions; and the possibility of requiring trekking groups to bring back all waste. The need for better coordination between the government and the tourism industry was emphasized, and it was suggested that similar workshops be organized in the future.

The Minister and the Secretary of Tourism, along with other officials, distributed certificates, eco-tourism T-shirts, trash sacks, and copies of the Gokarna Eco-trekking Declaration to the participants.

Visitors to Nepal can help by following sound environmental practices when trekking. One way to do this is to use trekking agencies that send their staff for ecotourism training—give support those companies who demonstrate a real commitment to preserving Nepal's environment. By doing so, trekkers are setting a good example, encouraging more trekking companies to work for a better environment, and making a valuable contribution to Nepal.

TREKKING GENTLY IN THE HIMALAYA



Essential Tips for Trekkers

ANNAPURNA CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT



CONSERVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

MINIMUM IMPACT CODE

As visitors and friends, we invite you to help conserve the sanctity and beauty of the Annapurna region for generations to come. Here's how to "step gently" in this fragile area, and make your visit a positively memorable one for all or to step gently in this fragile area, we ask that you:

***CONSERVE FIREWOOD.** Be self-sufficient in your fuel supply and make sure your trekking staff uses kerosene and has enough warm clothing. Make no open fires. Limit hot showers. If possible, stay at lodges that use kerosene or fuel efficient wood stoves and space heaters. Kerosene is available in Chhomrong village near the Annapurna Sanctuary.

***STOP POLLUTION.** Dispose of all trash properly: Paper products, cigarette butts, toilet paper, food scraps etc. should be burned or buried. Bottles, plastics and other non-biodegradable items should be packed out or deposited in rubbish pits if available. Use toilet facilities provided -- if none exist, make sure you are 20 metres from any water source and carry a small shovel to bury wastes. Don't use soap or shampoo in any stream or hot spring. Supervise trekking staff to make sure they cover toilet pits and dispose of garbage properly.

***BE A GUEST.** Do not damage, disturb or remove any plants, animals, animal products or religious artifacts. Respect Nepali customs in your dress and behaviour -- women should not wear shorts or revealing blouses and men should always wear a shirt. Avoid outward displays of physical affection. Ask permission to take photos and respect people's right to privacy. Begging is a negative interaction that was started by well-meaning tourists--please do not give ANYTHING to beggars. Don't barter for food and lodging--many areas have lodge management committees that have set standard rates to ensure a more equal return for their efforts.

Encourage young Nepalis to be proud of their culture.

Above all, remember that your vacation has a great impact on the natural environment and people who live off its resources. By assisting in these small ways, you will help the land and people of Nepal enormously. **THANK YOU!**

**NEPAL IS HERE TO CHANGE YOU,
NOT FOR YOU TO CHANGE NEPAL.**

TURIST-INFO

VISUM-TIPS

(April 1993)

Våre utsendte kolleger rapporterer:

Det er for tiden lettest å skaffe seg visum ved ankomst på flyplassen i Kathmandu. For USD 20 får man et 30-dagers turistvisum. Ta med ett passbilde (men ha flere i reserve - de trenger du til trekking permits etc.). Det forventes at man har returbillett og nok penger - dette må bekreftes på immigrasjonsskjemaet.

BLANDET TURIST DROPS

Vi har klippet de siste månedene litt om turismens muligheter og ulemper. Mens turistbrosjyrene fremhever mulighetene, finner vi hjertesukk fra nepalesere selv i "Brev til redaktøren"-spaltene i avisene.

LETTERS

The Rising Nepal

March 16, 1993

A disturbing trend

Tourism industry is no doubt, one of the biggest foreign currency earning industries of the country giving employment opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people directly and indirectly. The elected government has also given top priority for the development and protection of this industry by forming a Tourism Development Board headed by Prime Minister Girma Prasad Koirala.

However, there are some disturbing factors to be eliminated by the government to protect national identity and national economy. Thus, I would like to draw the kind attention of the concerned government departments to the following areas:

- The government should take necessary action to keep the city and historical areas clean and also should launch programmes for the development of the public awareness in this sector.

- The garbage container kept in front of Department of Immigration should be taken away from that place as this is the main street to go to popular area of Thamel.

- Thamel, one of the most popular areas for tourists is always

crowded due to an increasing number of curio shops, non-star hotels and lodges. On top of that the street is also crowded due to random vehicle parking in the streets. The parking area should be fixed by the government to control the pollution of the area.

- The most important task to be performed by this government is to control the increasing number of curio shops owned by Indian nationals, mostly Kashmiris, which shall in the long-run affect the economy of the country.

- These curio shops were not registered at the Tax Office resulting the loss in government revenue. The government can not assess income tax from them as they are not registered.

- All these shops sell their goods in the name of Nepalese handicrafts, whereas these goods are imported from India. If this fact is known to the buyers and importers of third countries, our handicraft export business will be directly affected, which shall also affect the national economy of the country.

- These shops also accept foreign currency from the buyers without having any authority from Nepal Rastra Bank, which is in violation of the Foreign Currency Act.

- Though, they are paying maximum rent to the house owner, the government is losing income tax from house rent due to non-registration of their shops.

There are more than thousands of such shops in Kathmandu's tourists area which is also affecting the livelihood of local shop-keepers as they also had to pay same level of rent and also income tax to the government. Therefore, I request the concerned authorities to check all these matters in time in order to protect the economy of the country. If the government fails to do so then the people themselves should think and act to protect their national economy. I hope the government will look after the interest of the people and country.

Pradip "Sabera"

Min Bhawan,
Kathmandu



VISUM TIL NEPAL

Det er nå offisielt avgjort at Norge ikke lenger skal ha noen visumutstedende myndighet for Nepal. Generalkonsulatet nedlegges. Skal du ha visum nå, må du henvende deg til Nepals ambassade i London.

Dersom du skal på et vanlig besøk i Nepal - inntil 3 måneder - vil det lønne seg å få visum på flyplassen i Kathmandu. Det koster 20 USD, du trenger 2 passbilder og visum blir utstedt på flekken gjeldende for én måned. Det kan forlenges inntil 3 måneder. Prisen for forlengelse av visum er imidlertid blitt ganske høy.

I den senere tid har det versert historier om agenter ved immigrasjonskontoret i Kathmandu som angivelig skal hjelpe turister med å få visum for så å lure dem trill rundt ved å ta kjempehonorar uten å lykkes med å skaffe visum. Moralen er: Sørg for at du oppholder deg legalt i Nepal selv om du reiser på egen hånd og ikke har noen turoperatør til å ordne opp for deg.

London-ambassaden har følgende adresse:

The Royal Nepalese Embassy,
12A Kensington Palace Gardens,
W8 London

Tlf: 095 44 71 2291594.

Olav Myrholt.

SVARTEBØRSHANDEL MED NEPALESISK VALUTA SKRUMPER INN

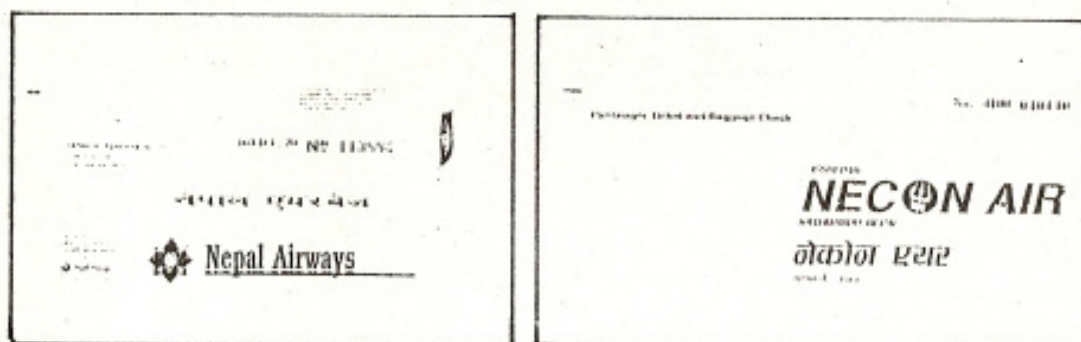
Etter at Nepals valuta har vært devaluert flere ganger samtidig som kursen på indiske Rupies (som den nepalesiske Rupi tradisjonelt har vært knyttet til) flyter fritt, har den offisielle vekslingskursen etterhvert nærmet seg den før så attraktive svartbørskursen. Begge kursene ligger nå nær 50 NRS for 1 USD. Derfor er det ikke lenger noe hissig penge-marked som møter turistene i Thamel. Omgangen med utenlandsk valuta på private hender virker også mer avslappet. Det blir sjelden spurt etter de offisielle vekslingskvitteringene ved utreise, men ta vare på dem for sikkerhets skyld! Legal vekslings bidrar også til å skaffe Nepal valutainntekter!

Olav Myrholt.

LIBERALT OGSÅ I LUFTEN

Liberaliseringen i Nepals politiske liv har gitt seg utslag i luften også. Royal Nepal Airlines har fått minst 3 konkurrenter i innenriks luftfart. Nepal Airways, Necon Air og Everest Air har med hell utfordret RNAC's tidligere monopol i luften. Særlig er Necon Air blitt kjent for god service og punktlighet mens Everest Air har satset stort på varetransport, både innenlands og til det indiske marked. RNAC har også fått konkurranse såvel på charter- som på mountain flight-markedet. Nye flyruter er opprettet ut fra Pokhara. De nye selskapene konkurrerer delvis med RNAC på veletablerte ruter, prøver seg med nye ruter og utfyller RNAC bra på flygninger til flere steder i Nepal. For besøkende er tilbudet blitt svært bra. Prisene er regulerte men kjøp av flybillett er blitt mye enklere enn før.

Olav Myrholt.



TURVETTREGLER I HIMALAYA

Mens det i Norge snakkes om øko-turisme og reiselivets innvirkning på natur og miljø, gjøres det noe i Nepal.

Wendy Brewer Lama i Sagarmatha Pollution Control Project har utgitt en hendig liten brosjyre med tips om hvordan man kan innrette seg etter lokale natur- og kulturforhold under trekking. Brosjyren "Trekking gently in the Himalaya" kan kjøpes for NRS 30 i trekkingsentra og bokhandler over hele Nepal.

Flere organisasjoner er aktive med miljøtips for turister og turoperatører i Nepal. Både i Pokhara (Lakeside) og i Kathmandu (nær Central Immigration Office) finnes det informasjonssentra med utstillinger, litteratur og gode råd. Ved senteret i Pokhara ble antallet tomme vannflasker som ble kastet langs Jomsom-ruta anslått til 500.000 hvert år. De solgte også billige flasker med jod til desinfeksjon av drikkevann. Og med på kjøpet: Tips fra ACAP om hvordan du bør gjøre ditt toalett for ikke å skape problemer for andre.

Cease This Cremation Circus!

By Kanak Mani Dixit

Every day, there is tragedy and travesty at the ghats of Pashupati. Hindus from all over the Valley and beyond bring their dead for cremation. But the package tours are there first, waiting to participate in a gruesome version of 'cultural tourism'.

A cremation is one of the most solemn and sobering of rituals. To families of the deceased, particularly the sons who have to light the funeral pyre, this is a time of all-consuming grief. It should be the most private of moments. But there are those among us who do not seem to be aware of this need — among them, the honorable Mool Bhatta of Nepal's premier temple, members of the Pashupati Chhetra Bikas Kosh, the officers of the local police chowki, and the travel agency overlords in their Durbar Marg offices.

Why have these persons of authority and influence allowed our burning ghats to degenerate into a tourist vaudeville? Do the Hindus among them realise that they too will one day burn on one of these funeral platforms? And as they proceed from dust to dust, ashes to ashes, a tourist will sneak up close with handycam or auto-rewind camera, recording it all for the folks back home. "On Tuesday, after buying some *thankas*, a cremation was organised for us..."

A day when there are lots of deaths/burnings in the Valley seems to be good for tourism. It adds to the charms of the Kathmandu Half-Day Culture Tour, with the Pashupati stop appropriately spaced between Boudha and the Tibetan Refugee Camp. The cameras click and whirl, click and whirl, and the tour guide receives extra- hefty tips as the clients are unloaded back at the hotel.

What a thrill for the tourist to be allowed such an unobstructed insiders' view of Nepal! For there is no closer you can get to 'culture' than when you take close-up wide-angle pictures of a corpse as it is consumed by Agni. As a bonus, there are also the rituals, the open grief, the head-shaving, flowers in the water, and the smoke as it curls up past Pashupati's eaves. These are shots that are normally the prize of intrepid photo-journalists, and hence the tourist's satisfaction of having bettered *National Geographic* so easily as part of a tour group.

There are two ghats at Pashupati, the Arya Ghat just below the Pashupati steps, and the Bhasmeswor Ghat downstream. The opposite bank and the two bridges over the Bagmati provide grand-stand views of the pyres. The tourists jostle each other for a proper angle. Through the smoke, on the opposite bank I spot a blonde in a halter-top. She has a telephoto on one hand and a can of Pepsi with straw on the other. While a Pashupati tout explains the significance of the funeral rituals, she sips, nods and clicks casually.

Small mercies that on Arya Ghat, at least, the ritually unclean Western tourists are not allowed to mingle with the funeral party. On the downstream Bhasmeswor Ghat, however, the touts will lead the tourists right up to the corpse. If family members are too distraught to care or too innocent to make demands of tourism etiquette, the circus will proceed. The tourists will take a place on the *satal*, which is meant for family and friends to wait out the ceremony. They will even engage in small talk with the family members. In hushed tones, they will ask questions of the burning. Then one of them spots a head being shaven, and the entire group will rush over to record the event from all angles.

This *satal* is topped by a platform which seems to double as an observation deck for tourists who want unrestricted visual access. From here, it is possible to photograph and videotape cremations without the mourners below getting any wiser. In the face of such unexpected photographic bonanza, who cares for the right to privacy of these grief-stricken Nepalis?

The problem, of course, lies not with the tourists but with our awareness and self-image. But such is the Nepali lack of 'exposure' to new issues of the day that we do not even appreciate that what is being perpetrated every day at the ghats of Pashupati is an invasion of privacy. We do not know enough to demand from tourists the same respect they would expect from us in theirs.

And the poorer you are, the more you are on show. The well-to-do and the worldly-wise at least know to recognise the perversion and to ask the camera-wallas to depart from the



Six tourists, four cameras and one corpse at Pashupati.

Photo: Bikas Raut

immediate pyre area. A police havaldar in uniform standing by an excited group of Spanish shutterbugs says he has never been directed by his superiors to keep tourists away from the pyres. But when a minister's relation was recently cremated, the police did clear the near bank of tour groups.

The responsibility to think over the privacy question lies not with the mourners but with the custodians of Pashupatinath and gentlemen of the tourist trade. What would I suggest that they do? At the risk of displeasing some travel agents and a few touts, I would demand that the entire ghat area — both banks of the Bagmati as well as the two bridges — be made off-limits to tourists. Nepal's overall tourism income, including that presently being made from Pashupati-viewing, will not suffer. This suggestion is made not for any reason of religious prudery, but in order to respect the right to privacy of mourners.

A special access up the Bankali forest might be constructed so that tourists can walk from their coaches on the Ring Road and come up on Pashupati from the highest ledge on the opposite bank. This space is spacious and green, and provides a grand and wide vista of the temple complex. In fact all the picture postcards of the temple are taken from here, so there is obvious touristic value to the spot. True, the tourists will not get close-ups of the burnings, but that privilege is not theirs by right.

Meanwhile, lady with the Pepsi can, I hope your meter setting was wrong and your negatives are completely over-exposed. Hope you get no satisfaction. ■

FORTSETTELSE FRA SIDE 2....

I tillegg var det flere hyggelige bemerkninger om at folk setter pris på bladet, at redaksjonen gjør en god jobb, etc. Takk!

Vi takker for positiv respons til spørsmålet om å bidra til oversetting og redigering - flere av medlemmene har sagt seg villige til å gjøre dette. Det betyr at redaksjonskomiteen kan spre arbeidet på flere hold, og vi kan forhåpentligvis få et enda bedre blad!

Undersøkelsen har gitt redaksjonen god motivasjon til å fortsette arbeidet, og mange nyttige tips om hvordan dere gjerne vil at bladet skal se ut og hva det bør inneholde. Vi bruker fritid og energi på HP - og undersøkelsen viser tydelig at det er godt kanalisert energi, og at vi bør fortsette utviklingen. Vi skal gjøre vårt beste - nå med enda flere krefter!

De mange forslagene til tema/artikler skal vi prøve å følge opp så godt vi kan. Vi håper imidlertid at dette ikke blir eneste gang vi hører fra dere: Vi tar gjerne imot stoff fra medlemmene - det kan være utklipp av artikler dere kommer over, ideer dere har - utkast til en artikkel du ikke har tid til å skrive, men som kanskje noen andre kunne skrive om de fikk din gode ide pluss tips om kilder til mer informasjon, osv. Når dere reiser til Nepal, setter vi stor pris på om dere tar med noen av de siste avisene pluss magasiner/blader på veien hjem, og sender dem til redaksjonen: Jo flere kilder vi har, desto bedre blir bladet!

Undersøkelsen gir også nok en bekreftelse på at Nepal er et land som griper tak i oss på en sterk og spesiell måte: Selv etter bare en uke eller to i landet blir folk motivert til å finne ut mer, til å holde kontakten, til å finne andre å dele opplevelsen og spørsmålene med, og til å lære mer.

Det er dette Norge-Nepal-Foreningen vil fortsette å arbeide med - som en av dere sa - vi er en liten, men ambisiøs forening! Vi håper på fortsatt støtte fra dere til å nå vårt ambisiøse mål med HP som et godt oppdatert og engasjerende talerør.

Deltakelsen på festmøtet var flott - vi var 80! Alle referansene til foreningen og møtet på NUPI-seminaret dagen etter gjorde mange av seminar-deltakerne nysgjerrige, har vi hørt. Det er slik vi vil ha det - vi vil bli lagt merke til, og vi vil blande oss i debatten. Vi regner med at vårt neste møte om menneskerettigheter i Nepal vil sterkt bidra til dette, med mange og spennende innledere fra Nepal og Norge. Vel møtt!

Ane Haaland

OBS OBS KATASTROFEN RAMMET OBS OBS

Da Ane flyttet til Geneve i midten av mars, hadde hun de første innkomne spørreskjemaene med seg for analyse. De kom vekk under flyttingen, sammen med en del andre ting; Anes kommentarer egner seg ikke på trykk... Heldigvis hadde hun lest igjennom skjemaene og gjort en rask analyse før hun reiste, og skjemaene som kom inn siden bekreftet tendensene fra den første analysen. Ulykken har dermed ikke hatt konsekvenser for resultatet av undersøkelsen.

MEN - vi har ikke navn og adresse på de som sa seg villige til å hjelpe til med redigering og oversetting. De navnene vi har er Bjørn Roar Bye, Sylvi Dysvik, Olav Myrholm og Yngve Causlá. Kan dere andre være snill å ta kontakt med redaktør Dag Norling og oppgi navn og adresse en gang til?? Vi regner med at ingen har forandret mening i mellomtiden!

B-post

"Hamro Patrika"

Norge-Nepal Foreningen
Boks 1278, Vik
0111 Oslo 1

Postgirokonto:
0802 4202438



Dag Norling
John Collets Alle 46
0852 Oslo 8

VELKOMMEN I
NORGE-NEPAL
FORENINGEN!



MEDLEMSMØTE 24. MAI

Tid: Mandag 24. mai kl 1900

Sted: Lektorenes hus, Wergelandsveien 15, Oslo

Tema: **MENNESKERETTIGHETER I NEPAL**

Advokat Bishwa Kant Mainali fra FOPHUR (Forum for the Protection of Human Rights) vil redegjøre for menneskerettighetssituasjonen i Nepal 3 år etter revolusjonen.

I tillegg vil

Julian Kramer fra Redd Barna,

Kristin Høgdaahl fra Amnesty International, avd. Norge,

Per Kværne fra Den Norske Tibet-kommiteen

og en representant fra Institutt for Menneskerettigheter

redegjøre kort for det arbeidet de gjør i Asia. Paneldiskusjon følger.

Forum for the Protection of Human Rights er presentert et annet sted i bladet.