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Human Rights of the Rural Poor on Media

A paper submitted to Asian Media and Information Communication Centre (AMIC)

by

Sangeeta Lama

Kathmandu, Nepal
1999
MEDIA COVERAGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE RURAL POOR

1. Introduction:

According to the World Bank, "poverty is the inability to attain a minimum standard of living". Hence, poverty means inadequate income, malnutrition, and lack of access to social services like education, health care, sanitation and lack of social and political status. Moreover, the World Bank has termed the countries with per capita income of $370 as poor. In this sense, Nepal falls into the category of extremely poor countries with per capita income of mere $200. With nearly ninety percent of people living in the rural areas, Nepal if viewed in terms of rural poverty, fall in the category beyond extremely poor.

Poverty is chiefly described in two types namely absolute poverty and relative poverty. Those whose income is not sufficient even to meet their basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter are categorized as absolute poor. Sticking to this categorization, majority of Nepal's rural population falls in the category described above.

During the eighth plan (1992-97), poverty level in Nepal was supposed to be 49 percent. According to APROSC (1995), about 50% of Nepalese were below poverty line in 1995. In 1996, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) conducted a study on "Nepal Living Standard Survey" in which about 45% of population were estimated to be poor. World Bank Report (1997) states that poverty level in Nepal is about 53% of the total population of the country. This estimation is based on daily income less than one US dollar.

Poverty is widespread in Nepal but much severe in rural area than in urban areas. Truly speaking, poverty in Nepal is a rural phenomenon. Different studies at different times estimate the poverty line as shown below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal Rastra Bank</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank/UNDP</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Sources: various reports

The table shows the increasing poverty in rural areas from 37.2 to 47%, urban areas from 17% to 19% and Nepal from 36.2% to 45%. Despite various efforts to reduce poverty, nothing significant has been achieved and poverty seems to increase at a greater rate.
Studies on poverty line were also made by different institutions at different periods. Ninth Plan (NPC) shows that the people below poverty line in Nepal are 42% of total population in which 44% in rural areas and 23% in urban areas. The data is based on the required amount of Rs. 4409/- per person per year for food and non-food consumption expenditure. Though the poverty in Nepal cannot be calculated exactly, it is clear that majority of Nepalese people are below poverty line and unable to meet maintain the minimum standard of living.

The rural population in 1991 census was 90.83% of the total population. But the gravity of rural poverty is not always understood, because the urban poor are more visible and vocal than the rural poor. The extent of poverty varies greatly among rural areas within the country Nepal. A rural poor is in scarcity of food, clothes, shelter, health care, employment, education, transport and communication, electricity etc. whereas an urban poor is in squatter settlements, their overcrowding, sanitation, unhygienic food, contaminated water etc.

The human right of the rural poor is an ignored subject in Nepal and as a result very few Nepali are aware about it. Activists involved in human rights sector for a long time have not been able to view this as an exclusive topic distinct from the overall subject of human rights. They have so far not been able to start raising the issue of human rights for the rural poor. It is at present difficult to define human rights of the rural poor and to identify differences between these and human rights of other people.

The human rights sector in Nepal has been emphasizing civil and political rights leaving the social issues of human rights largely unattended. There were hungry, unclothed, uneducated and poor people in Nepal before democracy, and they continue to be hungry, unclothed, uneducated and poor even after democracy. During the Panchayat regime, since there was no freedom of thought, speech and expression, most of the people emphasized on the need to restore democracy. Those days because people were not free to express their grievances and moreover police action, arrest and atrocities were rampant against freedom fighters. Civil and political rights were necessary to be able to express grievances and to protest against suppression. Human rights advocates and activists, therefore, gave higher priority to such political issues.

Now people in Nepal have achieved democracy but it seems that it is only the electoral democracy that people have obtained. The social sector is far away from the dawn of democracy with millions of people falling below the line of poverty everyday. Despite this, human rights advocates and activists give priority to civil and political rights and marginalize the crucial social issues. The rural poor lack food and clothing. They have no access to educate and health facilities. They have no electricity, transportation and communication facilities. Human rights activists and organization have not raised these
issues so far. As a consequence there are very few news, reports and articles related to the rural poor in Nepalese media. Even if some news, reports and articles appear about the rural poor in Nepalese media, they tend to be more event-based and are far from analytical pieces. For example, news reports will be highlighted if they contain sensational items like -- 10 persons died because of drought, 100 persons succumbed to death from fatal encephalitis epidemic due to lack of medical treatment, etc. The rural poor are suffering hardships every day, they are tormented by hunger pangs and haunted by various diseases. The majority of the rural children is deprived of education and most suffer from malnutrition. Such pathetic phenomena hardly get any space in Nepalese media. Only if fifty or hundred persons die in a single lot, or hundreds of persons quit a village, news reports or articles about the rural poor are published in media.

2. Media Reporting About Poverty:

News reports, articles, radio and TV programs about the rural poor are scarce in Nepalese media. At present, there are four national language dailies and two English language dailies in Kathmandu. There are more than 30 weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies. The Radio Nepal and The Nepal Television are state owned broadcast that are operated on a countrywide scale. The newspaper with the largest circulation in Nepal is the "Kantipur" daily. Its circulation is reported to be about 80 thousand copies every day. A month long analysis of this paper revealed that there were no news reports and articles about the rural poor in this period of 3rd October to 3rd November. "Kantipur" daily focused its reporting on Kathmandu mainstream news items, political news items, market economy, recreation and entertainment, sports and Maoist (Mao Badi) activities.

However some preceding issues of "Kantipur" month had published news items, investigation and analysis about starvation due to drought and hundreds of deaths due to encephalitis in remote Himalayan region of Nepal. "Kantipur" reporter had visited the affected areas for this purpose. Other papers could not undertake such spot visits. "Gorkhapatra" daily, which has a history of 100 years of service, in reality is acting as a state mouthpiece, did not feature any news report about the rural poor throughout the whole month of October. It published only Government news, speeches and sports news during the month.

The other national daily "Samachar Patra" published some news reports about the rural poor during the month. It reported that the people of the remote hill district of Humla could not have essential item like salt, even though the Government subsidized salt and sent through helicopter. It also reported the fact that poor children from western Nepal, who left their home for wage labour in Simla in India, did not return even for a great Nepalese festival like Dashain, because they couldn't earn enough to observe the festival. It published a comment that porters engaged in mountaineering sector should get
organized. The paper also reported that fishermen in Rautahat district had to give up their traditional occupation and had to switch over to fuelwood selling in order to make a living.

But issues of human rights for the rural poor were not raised by the media. The analysis of daily program of Radio Nepal the only station endowed with the capacity to reach the population throughout the country, confirmed that it broadcasts few programs regarding the rural poor and their human rights. So far Radio Nepal is the only radio station of the country, that has continuous transmission for seventeen hours a day from 6 o'clock in the morning till 11 o'clock at night and its service is utilized more by rural people than by the urbanites. Therefore there is so much this radio station could do for the rural poor. Unfortunately it allocates very little time for the cause of human rights of the rural poor.

Almost 60 percent of Nepalese people are uneducated and very few rural people have access to electricity. Radio Nepal has proved to be more widespread and powerful than NTV and papers. But it had not been able to prepare and transmit effective programs to impart education to rural people in general and the rural poor in particular. Radio Nepal programs are mostly entertainment oriented. Although some programs have the objective of educating the people they are not as effective as they should have been. Radio program called "Hakaahaki" is in transmission these days with the aim to educate and empower rural people. It has become very popular at rural level. One of the reasons its growing popularity is that its reporters move from village to village and contact rural people to prepare this program. Moreover the villagers are allowed to talk about their problems themselves during the transmission. For the present, Radio Nepal is the only media that reach the entire country. Some FM stations have also been started in private sector subsequent to the restoration of democracy in 1990, but all these are urban oriented and carry only programs for entertainment.

Nepal TV, the only television channel in operation in Nepal, transmits programs eight hours a day. Sometimes programs designed exclusively for rural people are also transmitted from NTV. The program called "Aankhijhyaal", which is being operated by the Nepalese NGO Nepal Environmental Journalists Group with half an hour's time purchased from NTV once a week, features some rural problems and reports new activities undertaken by rural people. But lack of electricity, it reaches only about 17% people of Nepal.

At present, principal items in Nepalese media is mostly related to political trends, speeches delivered by leaders, Maoist movement launched by Maoist guerrillas in remote districts of Nepal, Police killing of Maoists, or Maoist killing of policemen, police posts set to fire by Maoists, Nepal's relation with foreign countries, etc. There is plenty of
reporting about accidents, murder and arson, natural calamities, seminars, inauguration, sports and recreation.

3. Reasons Why Nepalese Media Ignores Rural Sector:

Modern Nepalese journalism has a history of 10 years only just like that of Nepalese democracy. During 30 years of one party Panchayat regime after the Rana period, various kinds of restriction were imposed on the press. There was no freedom of expression and no press freedom. The national daily "Gorkhapatra" and the English language daily "The Rising Nepal" were published by the State. Radio and TV were controlled by the State. It was very difficult for private sector papers to be registered. Despite such a difficult situation, some dailies and weeklies came up in private sector. Harassment from the Police and Administration were severe for them. As soon as there were rumors about the publication of reports regarding the corruption in the Panchayat regime and corrupt activities of Panchas, the Police used to invade the press, snatch away papers, arrest and imprison the concerned editor and reporter, file case against them and ban the press and the paper. Journalist had to escape the scrutiny of Police and Administration. When one editor ventured to continuously publish reports about corrupt activities of Panchas, he was shot while in bed but fortunately could be saved with the operation. The memory of this serious crime is still fresh in the minds of Nepalese people. These condition continued till the end of Panchayat regime in 1990.

Journalists during Panchayat period gave higher priority to democracy and endeavored to remove one-party Panchayat system than to raising issues of poverty, issues of rights of women and children and other social issues. Therefore, they adopted a kind of missionary journalism. Their main objective was to restore democracy on the ashes of Panchayat system.

Only after the restoration of democracy in 1990, a more liberal press act was framed and promulgated. Journalists are free to publish any news report supported by factual evidence. The State does not possess the authority to ban newspapers on the basis of any report published. Encouraged by the new Press Act that followed the restoration of democracy in 1990 and the new environment resulting therefrom, some business houses and enterprising individuals with adequate means ventured to invest in publishing papers. Various political parties and party leaders also started indirectly investing in this sector in order to propagate their views and their party's activities as well. As a result, the number of papers that came to be published during the last ten years proud to be beyond the capacity of Kathmandu market. Publication of some of these papers had to be stopped after some time because of continuous losses. Prior to 1990, it was difficult for various issues like poverty, rights of women and children, environment, etc. to get space in Nepalese media. Pro-Panchayat papers used to eulogize Panchayat system and Panchas,
while anti-Panchayat papers used to protest. But, Nepalese media have now started to embrace various social subjects, in addition to political issues. News items and reports relating to various subjects, including reports relating to various subjects, including environment, rights of women and children, ethnic issues, sports, health, recreation and entertainment, etc. have been started to be published. News item and reports on various kinds of economic, social and natural problems that are faced by the rural poor from time to time are also given space and time these days to some extent. But, reports focused and specialized on human rights of the rural poor and issues of this empowerment have not still come up in Nepalese media. In fact, these subjects constitute a new realm not only for media persons but also human rights advocates and activists in general. Apart from raising human rights issues of the poor individually, media and human right organizations should coordinate with each other so that the underlying issues could be dealt with sensitivity.

Nepalese media are still predominated with commercial and political matters. Therefore, reports about villages and issues related to the rural poor rarely appear in the media. For example, since agricultural production cannot sustain a farm-family for entire twelve months of a year and there are no possibilities of alternative employment within the country, thousands of youths in the hills and the Terai are leaving their hearth and home every year in search of seasonal employment abroad in 'India' and other countries. This trend is accelerating. But the government has no statistical record of such emigrants. Human rights advocates and activists have failed to raise any issue regarding these trends and about various problems of the emigrants to be faced in foreign countries. It is true that emigration brings direct benefit in the form of remittances from abroad. But the flight of youth force is bound to indirectly exert an adverse impact on the country. Its socio-cultural impact and the problem their families have face must be taken into account. Human rights advocates and activists have failed to raise these issues.

The "Maoist People's War" started by the radical communists from remote and far western districts of Nepal about three and half years ago in the name of "Maoist Movement" has now spread to almost 30 districts in the hills. According to official figures, about one thousand persons have been killed so far. In this respect, human rights activists have protested with slogans and banners that people should not be killed in the name of Maoist movement and person arrested on charges of being Maoists should not be tortured under Police custody. But they have hardly raised their voice about sufferings the people in Maoist affected villages and districts have to undergo both from the Police and the Maoists, about their security arrangements, about their right to have homely life in their villages, and about schooling rights of their children. Nepalese media also mostly publish news items with captions such as "So many Maoists have been killed by the Police" and "Police posts have been set to fire by Maoists". Because of Maoist Movement,
people are suffering from both sides, from the police as well as the Maoists. Schools, health posts and non-government organizations have to be closed. In search of peace & safety, villagers have to migrate elsewhere leaving behind their houses, land and cattle. Reports about these trends and about grievances of affected villagers appear negligibly in Nepalese media. Migration elsewhere from Maoist affected areas for fear of Maoist and the Police is mounting rapidly. Migrants have increased from a couple of families to a substantial number. But, only when 100 families from one Maoist troubled village of remote "Jajarkot" district in western Nepal moved to "Surkhet" in a single lot three months ago, Nepalese media hastened to publish the news once. But there is no follow-up and nothing has come to notice about their whereabouts and their present condition.

The Nepalese media give very little attention to issue related to rural people and rural poverty. A small scale research was conducted to ascertain reasons for this phenomena. Editors and reporters of some leading papers, human rights advocates and activists, and some responsible persons of non-government organizations were interviewed and a focus group discussions was held for this purpose. I have attempted analyze the findings of this study from political, social and economic points of view.

A. Political Reasons:

The history of Nepalese journalism started about 100 years ago. The objective was to propagate the words and wishes of the then rulers of Nepal. For this reason, Nepalese media have still not been able to balance political, social and economic issues. Political news items are predominant in Nepalese media. social, economic and human rights issues are consider lightly in comparison to political issues.

Most of the papers in Nepal are directly or indirectly financed by various political parties, leaders and businessman. Papers financed by politicians give priority to publish their own political agenda, while those financed by businessmen give priority to salable items and reader's preferences. Not only issues relating to rural people and the rural poor but also numerous social issues of urban people are relegated to the background without being published. Editors and publishers particularly think that political news items are more salable than other corrupt activists of politicians, there is always plenty of political news items.

Editors do not encourage their reporters to report on issues relating to human rights, poverty and various other social aspects. Reporters also lack enthusiasm to investigate and report on issues of poverty, problems of rural areas, successes and failure of rural endeavors and various other social issues, because reporting on these subjects requires lot of hard work but yields less returns. Further, numerous items prepared by reporters on poverty and social issues have remained unpublished, because editors have not given due priority to them. Items on political issues and subjects of public interest like crime, corruption, etc. that attract the attention of readers become easily popular.
Reporters who cover political items become close to the political activists and can get many favors from them. Moreover they are considered more capable in journalism circle. Therefore, many reporters prefer to report along this line. It is difficult for those who write about poverty and human rights with their own interest to have their articles published, even though they approach four-five papers. Media and human rights advocates are not genuinely sensitive to human rights issues. They are more interested to write about chairs smashed in the Parliament than about hunger and starvation.

In practice, Nepalese media is less sensitive to human rights in general and human rights of the rural poor in particular. This, however, does not mean that all the journalists have no understanding of human rights issues. Nepalese journalism has undergone many changes during last ten years. Besides politics, other subjects also have started to emerge as areas of interest and investigation in Nepalese journalism.

B. Social Reasons:

Most of the media in Nepal are urban oriented. General issues of human rights come up from time to time. But issues of poverty and human rights of the rural poor have not been able to come up. One of the main reason for this is that most of the urban centered journalists are not empathetic towards the marginalized villagers. The indifference in the part of Nepali media personnel is the cause of ignorance of the issue of human rights of the rural poor.

The entire mainstream media of Nepal are concentrated in Kathmandu. Although some local papers are published from other districts and other urban centers of the country, there are mainly politics oriented. Circulation is also limited to urban market. At present, only 75% of Nepalese districts have road link. Since Nepal has a rugged terrain, papers are bound to be limited to urban market centers. Literacy ratio in rural Nepal does not exceed 37%. There are very few people who are interested to read papers and seek to know about what is happening in the country. Since most of the poor live in villages, they have no means to buy and read papers. Papers can not reach many villages in the Terai and most of the districts in the hills because of difficult geo-physical condition and lack of transportation facilities. This is proved by the fact that "Kantipur" daily which is said to have the largest circulation in the country has not still been able to attain a daily circulation of even one hundred thousand copies, although the country has a population of 22 million. Whereas, Norway in Europe with a population of only 4.5 million has a daily newspaper circulation is excess of five hundred thousand copies.

C. Economic Reasons:

After the press freedom granted by the post democracy constitution, leading papers have been published from the private sector. Their main objective is to publish salable news items and reap profits. It is easy and inexpensive for mainstream media to report on political matter, crime and various other subjects. It is expensive and difficult to report on
rural areas and about poverty situation. Since mainstream media do not deliver to readers
issues of poverty and human rights of the rural poor in proper package, interest of readers
also has not be habitually roused on these subjects.

According to editors and publishers of Kathmandu, it is expensive to send
reporters to affected rural areas and collect these items for reporting. Some papers have
contacts in some districts. But their contacts are limited only to such places that have
telephone, fax and electricity facilities. Only when hundreds of people die of flood, drought, landslides, diseases and starvation in remote rural areas and people are overtaken
by disaster, mainstream media other to send their reporters to affected areas to collect
materials and prepare reports relating there to. Or, if any reporter with rural household
happens to visit his rural home, or if any reporter happens to go on trekking or undertake
village excursion, news items that come to their notice may be reported in media. Or, only
if any NGO or INGO provides necessary fund for rural reporting on a particular subject,
items and articles about rural areas and rural poverty come up to be published in media.
But media are not guided by any policy to report about rural areas and rural poverty.

According to most of the editors and reporters, items and articles relating to rural
areas and rural poverty are not salable. According to them, readers are the educated
middle-class urbanites who are not concerned with human rights of the rural poor. They
are not confident of possibilities of papers to survive on the basis of reporting about the
rural poor. It may be for this reason that, even when 10 villages in various parts of Terai
submerged under flood and crops were damaged during this year’s monsoon downpour,
there was no clear reporting in media. This year, pest invasion has destroyed guava crop in Dhatling district, which was a source of substantial income for rural people in that district. This news also has not been published in media. The remote Chhaprak village in Gorkha
district has suffered from flood and landslide this year. Only when papers were constantly
pursued to publish this news, some bothered to publish it briefly under caption, “flood in Chhaprak”. It subsided with that.

4. Some Issues that need to be addressed:

There are numerous problem in rural areas. Villagers succumb to starvation death
during famine. They die of various diseases without the most basic medical facilities.
Their children have no schooling facilities. People of “Chepang” tribe who live on roots
from jungles are suffering because of destruction of Chitwan forests. This makes no news
in papers. Because of poverty, lack of education and open border between Nepal and India,
robbery has become rampant in Terai districts adjoining India. Murder and looting goes on
every day. There is no security of life and property. Economy of the affected areas has
deteriorated. Development process has retarded. Nepalese media have failed to give
adequate coverage to these phenomena. But, news items relating to arrest of robbers by
the police and robbers or policemen killed during confrontation appear abundantly in media.

According to Hindu caste system prevailing in Nepal, birth determines social status. Some persons have higher status while others have lower status by birth. "Damai", "Kami", "Saarki", "Pode", etc. caste groups who constitute almost five percent of Nepalese population are regarded as untouchables, though they are also Hindus. It is not permissible for them to use water taps used by higher caste people. Numerous temples are not permissible for their entry. Higher caste people do not drink water or eat food touched by them. Higher caste people do not have marital relations with them.

Almost 50 years ago, legislation was promulgated that abolished untouchability and discrimination on the basis of casteism. It was declared that contravention would constitute a penal offense. But this legislation has failed to be effective in practice. Human rights of people of these lower caste groups, poor and uneducated, are more infringed in rural areas than in urban areas. Because of this caste discrimination, children of lower caste groups can have very rare chance to read and write and play with children of higher caste groups. There are numerous cases of lower caste students expelled from schools because they touched drinking pots used by higher caste children. Surprisingly, all so-called lower caste groups have traditional skill endowment of their own. For instance, "Saarkis" are good shoe makers, "Damais" are good tailors and specialize in playing traditional musical instruments during marriage ceremonies, and "Kamis" make utensils and arms. It is difficult for higher caste people to pull on their life without using the specialized skills of lower caste people. Industrial development has been difficult in Nepal also because of the tradition that people with skills are relegated to lower status.

Even in this modern world rapidly advancing to 21st century, one human being is disdained as untouchable by another human being, and food touched by one human being is scorned as inedible by another human being. The so-called human rights advocates and activists do not openly protest against this inhuman tradition, because most of them belong to higher caste groups and are occupying powerful posts of privileges.

Higher caste groups dominate and harass lower caste groups. They exploit the labour of lower caste groups. When persons of lower caste groups enter temples, touch water and food to be taken by higher caste persons or marry higher caste persons, they are publicly tortured physically and mentally in many cases. Nepalese media rarely publish analytical articles to make policy makers aware of the situation. But news items on torture over lower caste people and discrimination against them appear in papers from time to time. Nepalese media have failed to give coverage to rights of various ethnic groups and minority groups and the problems they have to face. The rural poor suffer from lack of food and clothing. They are steeped in unemployment and do not have access to
educational and health facilities. They have to live under poor security condition. All these constitute the infringement of their human rights. Nepalese media and human rights advocates and activists have not still been able to raise voice against this infringement of their human rights. Advocates and activists are spending much of their time in dharna demonstration and relay fasting in protest against police arrest, imprisonment and torture of their fellows and leaders, against rising price and mounting corruption, and on such other issues. They have hardly any time to think about hungry and unclothed people in rural areas. Further, They and their organizations are divided in various political camps and their views and stance are also divergent accordingly. They have not been able to raise strong voice on right to food and clothing, right to shelter, right to education and various other economic and cultural rights.

5. Conclusion:

So long as Nepalese media aim at a few educated persons in urban areas and remains only profit motivated, it will not be possible for them to play any substantial role in overall development process. It will never be possible for Nepalese media to fulfill their responsibilities, if they give space and time only to items and articles or demand in the market. In fact, they can play a really great role in strengthening democracy and in assisting overall development process. For this purpose, media reporting should embrace all sectors and sections of the country. Publishers, editors, leaders and reporters of media houses should have the capacity to do so from their respective realms.

But, not only media men but also human rights activists are equally responsible for scarce publication of items and articles about rural areas and the rural poor at present. Particularly speaking, media persons have not been able to give attention to reporting about the rural poor also because of the fact that human rights organization and activists have not been able to move forward on this subject efficiently. Since leading mainstream media are at present run by private sector, it is natural for them to publish only salable items on the basis of reader's preferences. But, human rights activists and organizations should not be moved by considerations of profit and loss. They should dedicate themselves to human rights pursuit with genuine spirit of social service and should be capable enough to guide and cooperate with media as and when necessary. Similarly, human rights activists should move forward also to put pressure on policy makers to make them carry programs in rural areas that benefit the rural poor. But this does not mean that media persons should always devote themselves to reporting on salable items only and should always be stimulated and pushed by persons of non-government organizations to report on subjects like human rights, poverty and rural problems. It is necessary for media to be capable, strong, dynamic and responsible on their own in their respective fields.
6. Recommendations:

Development of Nepal is not possible without the development of rural areas and rural people. It is, therefore, highly important that human rights of the rural poor should be safeguarded. Nepalese media can play an important role to empower the rural poor, to familiarize urban readers with various rural problems and to attract the attention of policymakers towards this sector. For this purpose, it is necessary for them to publish plenty of items and articles about the rural poor. Following measures should be taken to increase the publication of items and articles about the rural poor in Nepalese media:

- Human rights education should be included in school curriculum.
- Human rights courses of study should be prescribed for students who take up journalism in colleges. During practical lessons, they should be made to undertake reporting on human rights of the rural poor at low cost, and this should be published in various papers and propagated through transmission on radio and TV.
- Human rights organizations should go beyond political civil rights and should raise voice about the need to implement international instruments and convenient signed by Nepal. They should bring effective program to awaken media, policy makers and people.
- Human rights activists should not remain limited to speech making, demonstrations and dharna only. They should bring other effective program to make common people aware.
- Human rights activists should move forward and give prominence to human rights issues in such a manner as to attract the attention of media.
- Human rights activists should bring effective programs to catch the attention of politicians and policy makers towards problems of the rural poor.
- Leaders, editors, publishers and reporters of various media should be made sensitive to human rights issues.
- Possibilities for publication houses to send their reporters to rural areas at their run cost to collect stories about the rural poor are very slender. Therefore, national and international organizations aiming at poverty alleviation and directly involved with the poor should provide some funding support to reporters in order to enable them to report about the rural poor.
- Publication houses and national and international organizations providing support to Nepal for poverty alleviation should have mutual networking arrangements in order to increase reporting about the rural poor in papers and other media.

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DAY TWO
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