

society and vehemently engaged herself in convincing the parents to send also the girls to school. She was questioning the prevailing dowry tradition that often goes much beyond the means of the bride's parents. Although Sarala

originates from the central part of the Terai and is most concerned on the rights of the Madheshi people, she firmly rejects the "One Madhesh One State" slogan promoted by so many Terai groups.



Sukdaiya Chowdhary, 30, Kailali District.

CA women delegate, representing the Tharu community in the Maoist party (Maoist).

Sukdaiya originates from the Far Western region of Nepal. She was bonded labor from her childhood in form of

Kamalari. Though now banned by laws, the *Kamalari* practice is still found in mid and far western Terai districts of Nepal where poor Tharu parents sell their daughters to the landlords. Some of the girls have to serve as domestic slaves from the tender age of five to six

until they get married, of course without any kind of formal education. Sexual abuse is often reported.

Sukdaiya joined the Maoists when she learned about their liberalization policy for *Kamaiyas*, *Kamalari* and bonded laborers. Her work focused on extending the party basis for the local Maoist branches within the Tharu community in the Far and Mid Western Regions of Nepal.

Sukdaiya is now a Maoist proportionate CA member, representing the Tharu community which is considered the most indigenous community of Nepal. She is considered the most outspoken Tharu women leader in Far West. Sukdaiya sternly rejects the idea of "One Madhes One State".

The interviews were later redacted by Markus Ruckstuhl with the approval of the interviewees. Unfortunately not all of the most interesting thoughts and reflections could be printed here and some of the statements had to be shortened due to space limitations. We sincerely hope that we were able to properly reflect the views and feelings of our respected dialogue partners.

What are the major opportunities of "Naya Nepal"?

Laxmi, NC:

The Nepali society is going through a transition phase that brings the society from a feudal past into a participatory future. We have just abolished the feudal Monarchy, which was instrumental to all kinds of exploitation with widespread discriminations. Nepali people are now sovereign citizens and not just subjects for the ruling class. We have the chance to address discrimination with wider acceptance from the entire society. In order to correct the past unjust towards castes, sex and ethnic groups, we shall uplift these marginalized people providing them reservations and quotas. With the new open atmosphere, we can focus on investing on good education on vocational skills, which is badly needed to produce the desired human resources for the country.

Sukdaiya, Maoist:

With the abolition of the Monarchy, we all became citizens with equal sovereign power. Now, most of the people are concerned about what is going on in the country. This political awareness alongside the prevailing culture of negotiations and dialogue within Nepali society and the political parties are major opportunities for Naya Nepal. We have to bring economic revolution together with political revolution. After the end of the armed conflict, we have seen a promising boost in tourist arrivals and this can easily be enhanced with improved facilities as well as promoting new areas, especially in the Far West.

Sarala, CPN-UML:

I see a different political atmosphere where every person can talk about his/her grievances, the end of the feudal system, friendly nations concerned with helping Nepal in developing economically, and the huge natural resources such as the almost unlimited hydro power as great opportunities for a prosperous future of Naya Nepal.

An unseen thief is like an uncle.