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► Analysis of situation of the freed-*Haliyas* in Karnali Province of Nepal

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Karnali Province of Nepal**



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► Foreword

The formal abolition of bonded labour in Nepal in 2008 marked a significant step toward social justice and human dignity. The declaration that ended the Haliya system—a long-standing form of agricultural bonded labour—was a milestone. Yet, for thousands of freed Haliya families, the journey toward full rehabilitation and equality has been slow, complex, and incomplete.

Recognizing the deep-rooted injustices faced by the Haliya community, the Government of Nepal launched a rehabilitation framework in 2013. More than a decade on, however, the promise of that framework remains only partially fulfilled. Many freed Haliya families continue to face profound challenges: insecure housing, lack of access to education and healthcare, exclusion from formal employment and finance, and persistent caste-based discrimination. The intergenerational impacts of bondage still linger.

This report, *Analysis of the Situation of the Freed Haliyas in Karnali Province of Nepal*, offers a timely and comprehensive assessment of the situation in three districts—Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla. It examines the implementation of rehabilitation measures, the socio-economic and political inclusion of freed Haliya families, and the deeply concerning prevalence of child labour.

The findings are sobering. Although nearly all verified families have received some form of government rehabilitation support, most have not received the full spectrum of assistance originally envisioned. Skills once passed through generations are now obsolete, income opportunities are sparse, and social stigma persists. Particularly worrying is the heavy burden placed on women and children, with many girls dropping out of school and a significant number of children engaged in hazardous labour.

These realities call for renewed urgency and commitment. A rights-based approach to rehabilitation is essential—one that ensures not only access to land and housing, but also to education, healthcare, sustainable livelihoods, and political voice. The recommendations in this report serve as a clear guide for government agencies at all levels, development partners, and civil society actors to reinvigorate efforts, build inclusive systems, and safeguard against regression into exploitative conditions.

This study is the result of close collaboration and commitment. I wish to thank the Purple Foundation and the entire study team for their tireless efforts and professionalism. I am also grateful to our colleagues from the FUNDAMENTALS Branch at ILO Headquarters, the Decent Work Technical Support Team in New Delhi, and the ILO Country Office in Nepal for their coordination and technical support.

Most importantly, I thank the freed *Haliya* families who courageously shared their experiences and insights, and the local partners who continue to work relentlessly to promote justice and dignity.

Let this report be both a mirror and a map: a reflection of the injustices that persist, and a guide for building a future where every individual can live and work in freedom, dignity, and hope.

Numan Özcan

Country Director

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The study aimed to evaluate the progress of the government's efforts to rehabilitate freed-Haliyas, uncover the challenges influencing the effectiveness of these efforts, and examine the prevalence of child labour in the freed-Haliya communities. The study focused on three districts of Karnali Province, named Surkhet, Jajarkot and Humla. It marks a significant milestone, providing vital insights, data, and suggestions to guide future initiatives. It also serves as a beacon, illuminating the path forward and inspiring the creation of impactful interventions.

The report would not have been possible without support from the Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation (RMHSF) the Chairperson Mr Ishwar Sunar and his entire team who provided enormous support and input in the planning and implementation and finalization of the study. The authors would like to extend deep gratitude and appreciation to all survey and in-depth interview participants for agreeing to sharing their thoughts, opinions and experiences about the previous and current situation, progress and challenges. Also, acknowledgements to key informant interview respondents, focus group and validation workshop participants for providing valuable information.

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► Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abbreviations	viii
Executive summary	x
► 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Research questions	2
► 2. Methodology	3
2.1. Research design	3
2.2. Sampling methods and approaches	3
2.3. Data collection and analysis methods	4
2.4. Quality assurance	4
2.5. Limitations	5
► 3. Background of agricultural bonded labour in Nepal	6
► 4. The legal framework	9
► 5. Findings and analysis	11
5.1. Rehabilitation access and delivery status	11
5.2. Types of rehabilitation package received by ID categories	12
5.3. Access to additional rehabilitation support except land and house	14
5.4. Time taken to access the rehabilitation package	15
5.5. Access to 'full' delivery of rehabilitation package	16
5.6. Utilization of rehabilitation support	17
► 6. Socio-economic and political status of Freed-<i>Haliya</i> families	20
6.1. Existing main livelihood sources	20
6.2. Skill training and opportunities	21
6.3. Access to banking services	22
6.4. Access to social protection	24
6.5. Situations inherent in forced labour	30

6.6. Different reasons for being in forced labour	31
6.7. Land ownership status and risks of forced labour	36
► 7. Working children and the child labour situation in the Freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	39
7.1. Prevalence of child labour	39
7.2. Children working for someone else for pay	42
7.3. Types of payment made to children	44
7.4. Children working in businesses or on farms to generate income	45
7.5. Children helping their family members in businesses or farms	45
7.6. Access to education for Freed- <i>Haliya</i> children	49
7.7. Impact on quality of education among Freed- <i>Haliya</i> children	52
7.8. Main health issues among working children in Freed- <i>Haliya</i> communities	52
7.9. Causes of child labour	53
► 8. Recommendations	55
► Annexes	57
Annex 1. Demography of the respondents	57
Annex 2. FGD participants	61
Annex 3. KII participants (various stakeholders)	67
Annex 4. FGD checklist	69
Annex 5. KII checklist	75
Annex 6. Case study interview checklist	83
Annex 7. Photos of field study	86

► List of tables

Table 1.	Different situations faced by Freed- <i>Haliyas</i> working in a forced situation [N=638]	32
Table 2.	Reasons behind being obliged to be in a forced labour situation [N=638]	33
Table 3.	Work compulsion situations stated by respondents in Humla [N=248]	34
Table 4.	Land size owned by respondents' HHs by district	37
Table 5.	Land sizes owned by respondents' HHs by ID categories	37
Table 6.	Number of hours worked by children in a week for pay/income by sex and age group [N=900]	43
Table 7.	Percentage of children working for unpaid activity by age groups, multiple responses	46
Table 8.	Percentage of children performing HH chores, multiple responses	48
Table 9.	Number of hours worked by children in a week for HH chores by sex and age groups [N=900]	48
Table 10.	School attendance status of children performing HH chores [N=900]	51

► List of figures

Figure 1.	The specific objectives of the Freed-Haliya Rehabilitation Action Plan 2070	10
Figure 2.	Percentage of respondents whose family received government rehabilitation support	11
Figure 3.	Percentage of respondents by ID categories [N=638]	12
Figure 4.	Percentage of HHs receiving additional government rehabilitation support except land and housing [N=638]	14
Figure 5.	Percentage of HHs receiving non-government rehabilitation support [N=638]	15
Figure 6.	Time taken to receive rehabilitation support from the date of application [N=632]	16
Figure 7.	Per cent of 'Ka' (Red) ID holders now living on the new land in rehabilitation	17
Figure 8.	Reasons for not living in the new land and house [N=21]. multiple responses	18
Figure 9.	Sources of livelihood and income [N=638], multiple responses	21
Figure 10.	Percentage of HHs with skilled members [N=638]	22
Figure 11.	Percentage of HHs which have taken a loan [N=638]	23
Figure 12.	Percentage of HH with bank accounts [N=638]	23

Figure 13.	Sources of loan [N=383], multiple responses	24
Figure 14.	Types of SSA received [N=356], multiple responses	25
Figure 15.	Types of social organization affiliated [N=356], multiple responses	25
Figure 16.	Percentage of respondents as candidate/elected [N= 638]	26
Figure 17.	Percentage of respondents who faced caste-based discrimination and violence during the last 12 months by caste and ethnic groups [N=638]	27
Figure 18.	Types of chronic disease in FH families (percentage) [N=638], multiple responses	28
Figure 19.	Types of work done in the last seven days, even for one hour [N=638]	30
Figure 20.	Respondents working in a forced labour situation in the last three years, either in Nepal or while working abroad [N=638]	30
Figure 21.	Individuals who were in a position to refuse the situation of compulsory working conditions [N=13]	33
Figure 22.	Percentage of children who work for someone else for pay in the last 12 months by sex and age [N=62]	42
Figure 23.	Mean working hours of children working for someone else for pay [N=62]	43
Figure 24.	Types of payment made to children (percentage) [N=638]	44
Figure 25.	Number of children working in business, farm or other activities for income	45
Figure 26.	Number of children helping family members in business or farm	46
Figure 27.	Number of children in hazardous work [N=388], multiple responses	49
Figure 28.	Children in school during current year by sex and age [N=900]	50
Figure 29.	Types of negative impact on education (percentage) [N =555], multiple responses	52
Figure 30.	Main health issues among working children (percentage) [N=521]	53

► Abbreviations

CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industries
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DLRO	District Land Revenue Offices
DMHS	District Mukta <i>Haliya</i> Samaj
FGD	Focus group discussion
FH	Freed- <i>Haliya</i>
FHC	Freed <i>Harawa-Charawa</i>
FK	Freed-Kamaiya
FKM	Freed- <i>Kamalari</i>
GoN	Government of Nepal
HH	Households
ID	Identity card
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key informant interview
LG	Local government
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MFI	Microfinance institutions
MoLCPA	Ministry of Land Management, Cooperative and Poverty Alleviation
MoLESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
NGO	Non-government organization
RMHSF-N	Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation, Nepal
SSA	Social Security Allowance

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► Executive summary

Debt bondage or bonded labour – reflects an imbalance in power between the worker-debtor and the employer-creditor. It has the effect of binding the worker to the employer for an unspecified period of time, anything from a single season, to years, or even successive generations. It bears no resemblance to taking a “normal” loan from a bank or other independent lender, for repayment on mutually agreed and acceptable terms. When this debt is passed down from generation to generation, employees force the family members including children to labour in the same situation as their parents (or other family members) in order to pay off their parent’s debt. This unusual binding passes from generations to generation because the debt is always growing or manipulated so the debtor can never pay it off.

In Nepal, there are communities of agricultural bonded labourers who have traditionally been forced to work for landowners under the pretext of repaying an ever-increasing debt. *Haliya* is one of such communities that existed in Nepal, among *Kamaiya* and *Harawa Charawa* in mid and far-western regions and eastern Tarai in Nepal. In 2002, the Parliament of Nepal approved the policy to end any form of bonded labour with the promulgation of the Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002 which banned the practice of bonded labour. The *Haliya* system was officially abolished by the government in 2008. Following the abolition, a rehabilitation plan and framework were introduced in 2013, five years later. The execution of the plan began in 2015, two years after its formulation. However, the attempt to eradicate the practice and roll out the rehabilitation package has been met with mixed results. The evidence articulated in the reports produced by government and non-government stakeholders states that bonded labour communities are still struggling to see their fundamental rights realized.

The Purple Foundation, with the technical and financial support of the ILO country office in Nepal, conducted this analysis of the situation with the objective to assess the situation of freed-*Haliya* communities in three districts of Karnali Province named Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla. This analysis of the situation has assessed the status of implementation of government freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation and identified the factors affecting the effectiveness and timeliness of the rehabilitation process and examined the situation of child labour. The study also provides policy recommendations on strengthening freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation initiatives and preventing child labour.

The study has employed mixed methods. The household survey has been conducted with 638 households of 18 municipalities of the three study districts. The survey collected information about 900 children of sample households via guardians or parents as the survey respondents. Altogether 17 focus group discussions (FGDs) with the freed-*Haliya* community and children were conducted. Three case studies were developed on child labour. In total 43 key informant interviews (KIIs) were done with various stakeholders. The study has ensured basic research ethics including informed consent, voluntary participation, trauma-informed interviews, and safeguarding. The education level of respondents, the time constraints, unfavourable climate, and difficult geography constituted limitations of the study.

Key findings of the study

1. Access and delivery of the rehabilitation package

- (a) The study found that the majority of verified Freed-Haliyain the study districts were able to access the government’s rehabilitation support successfully. According to survey data, almost all (99.1 per cent) of the families holding ID cards received government rehabilitation support. Despite this fact, the study found serious issues with the identification and categorization of the Haliya families and the delivery of the rehabilitation package.
- (b) Only 9.2 per cent of the respondents received additional support from the government, along with the land or cash grants. The study revealed that out of the five objectives outlined in the rehabilitation action plan, only two were addressed: the identification and issuance of

ID cards, and the provision of land and housing support. The remaining objectives were not addressed. The survey data showed that only 18.5 per cent of respondents' families received rehabilitation grants within one year from the date of application. A total of 36.4 per cent were received within two years. More than one-fourth of the respondents had to wait for more than five years.

- (c) Overall, 13.3 per cent of Ka (Red) ID card¹ holders (receiving both land and housing support) were not living in the house constructed on the land and house built under the package.
- (d) Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the respondents answered 'daily wages' as a major source of livelihood and income. Families that depend on daily wage labour face high vulnerability, primarily due to the limited availability of wage-earning opportunities in the local market, which are often seasonal and predominantly found in India. This geographical context further compounds the challenges faced by these families. The second and third largest sources of income were farming (43.3 per cent), and sharecropping (Adhiya, Battaiya) on a master's land (27.1 per cent).
- (e) A total of 63.8 per cent of respondents stated that their family members possess one or other kinds of skills for income. However, half of them were construction-related skills like mason, carpenter, and tailoring, mostly traditionally transferred skills which are replaced by modern technology-based skills and productions. The indigenous knowledge and skills respondents carry is no longer effectively applicable in the communities.

2. The Socio-economic situation

- (a) The study showed that a Freed-*Haliya* family's access to the banking system has increased. However, the study also showed that they are not able to access bank loans/facilities, instead using various sources to access the loan such as relatives, landowners, micro finances, and cooperatives. A total of 12 per cent of respondents' families had taken loans from local landlords, with the interest rate starting from 16 per cent to 60 per cent per annum.
- (b) The study showed a total of 97.6 per cent of respondents have received their citizenship certificates, and 97.4 per cent of respondents have their voter ID.
- (c) The political participation of the Freed-*Haliya* (FH) was found poor and low in leadership and decision-making levels, only 5.3 per cent of respondents stated that they were candidate/elected in the local, provincial, and federal elections held in 2022.
- (d) The caste-based discrimination was found rampant across all study areas. A total of 37 per cent reported facing caste-based discrimination and violence during the last 12 months.
- (e) Approximately two-thirds of freed-*Haliya* households (HHs) had at least one family member with chronic disease. Limitations to women's reproductive health were found seriously concerning.
- (f) As noted above, the study found very limited opportunities to earn for Freed-*Haliyas*. Of the total 638 respondents, only 32.8 per cent were engaged in any work for a wage, salary, or any other pay in the last seven days.
- (g) The survey's findings indicate that the Freed-*Haliya* community no longer feels enslaved with a small percentage (2.2 per cent) reported being in a bonded labour situation. However,

¹ The types of FH ID cards are categorized into the initial four Nepali alphabets. Different colors are also used for each category: red for 'Ka', brown for 'Kha', green for 'Ga', and white for 'Gha'.

the qualitative data, observations, and cases collected during the study confirmed that the majority of the freed-*Haliya families* are at high risk of falling back into bonded labour situations.

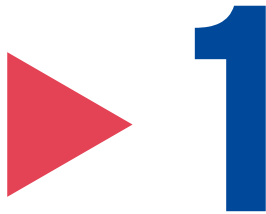
3. Child labour

- (a) Out of 900 children in the sample of the freed Haliya families in this survey, 599 (66.6 per cent) were working children in the FH community.
- (b) A total of 24.4 per cent of children from 5 to 17 years did not attend school in the current school year, indicating a serious issue of children being out of school in the freed-*Haliya* communities.
- (c) The study data showed that a total of 6.9 per cent of children aged between 5 to 17 were working for someone else for pay. Likewise, 8.1 per cent of children worked in business or on farms to generate income. Similarly, a total of 35 per cent helped family members in business or on a farm.
- (d) Of the children working for someone else pay or profit, 24.2 per cent were paid only in kind, while 50 per cent were paid in cash and 22.6 per cent were paid in both cash and kind. Additionally, 3.2 per cent of children were not paid at all. Out of those who received payment in cash, only 62 per cent received full payment, while the rest were either not paid or paid partially.
- (e) At least 54.4 per cent of children were involved in some type of HH unpaid activity to produce goods for consumption by their own household or family.
- (f) Out of 900 children, 192 (21.3 per cent) are involved in hazardous work, and 131 (14.6 per cent) are in heavy work such as construction or agriculture work. A total of 67 (7.4 per cent) work with fire or hot machinery.
- (g) The study showed that, among the freed Haliya families in the survey a total of 39 per cent of children were found in a situation of child labour.
- (h) Approximately two-thirds (66.6 per cent) of the FH children in the study areas were involved in HH chores. It is also noticeable that in contrast to paid work, a higher proportion of girls (69.3 per cent out of 437) were engaged in household chores compared to boys (63.9 per cent out of 463). Four out of every five working children faced a negative impact on their education because of work. A total of 21.4 per cent of working children were irregular or absent from school.
- (i) When asked about health problems, the largest share of the working children (31.3 per cent) faced headaches or stomach-aches. A total of 20 per cent feel unhappy, downhearted, or tearful. The proportion found to be very sad, nervous or scared was 6.1 per cent and feeling extremely tired was 3.6 per cent.

Recommendations

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, observations, and suggestions provided by the participants, the study team has made some recommendations. These recommendations are targeted at government and non-government stakeholders, including federal, provincial, and local governments which aim to further support the rehabilitation, socio-economic empowerment, and protection of the freed-*Haliya* community, as well as enhance efforts to prevent and respond to forced labour and child labour in Karnali province.

1. All three levels of government should work to achieve the objectives of the government's 'freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation framework'. This includes the identification of left-out families from registration and verification, guaranteeing the holistic needs of the families/communities, which are land, housing, education, health, employment, and sustainable livelihood options.
2. Ensure the rehabilitation package is prepared based on local needs, availability of services and resources, and after doing the necessary assessment and suitable planning. Strictly monitor the delivery of rehabilitation programmes to prevent mismanagement of the delivery of rehabilitation packages and facilitate the process of accessing the package without any hindrance.
3. Prepare a comprehensive database of the freed-*Haliya* communities and develop and implement the specific 'social protection schemes', particularly in health, education, and employment.
4. Encourage entrepreneurship by providing business development training, mentorship, and access to easy and accessible microcredit schemes specifically tailored for freed-*Haliya* youths. Strengthen vocational training programmes to equip freed-*Haliya* youth with practical skills in high-demand sectors.
5. Foster agricultural modernization and diversification to create sustainable and local level income-generating opportunities for the freed-*Haliya* community to prevent them from falling back into forced or bonded labour.
6. Facilitate the formation of cooperatives and associations to enhance the collective bargaining power and economic independence of freed-*Haliya* families.
7. Strengthen labour inspections and enforcement mechanisms to proactively identify and address instances of forced labour and child labour in the agriculture, household levels, and other formal and informal service sectors where the freed-*Haliya* community is vulnerable.
8. Conduct awareness campaigns targeting employers, labour recruiters, and the general public to promote ethical labour practices and discourage the exploitation of freed-*Haliya* individuals. Establish effective grievance redress mechanisms to address complaints and provide remedies for victims of forced labour, child labour, and gender and caste-based discrimination ensuring confidentiality and protection.
9. Strengthen collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners to share best practices, resources, and expertise in combating forced labour and child labour. Conduct further studies on gender and caste-based discrimination and its impact on freed-*Haliya* communities, particularly in women and children.



Introduction

Bonded labour, also known as debt bondage, occurs when an individual or family inherits or acquires a debt that cannot be immediately repaid. This debt is often passed down through generations, and in order to repay it, family members, including children, are compelled to work under the same conditions as their parents or ancestors. Bonded labour involves the forced and involuntary work of a person, who is subjected to threats and penalties. Forced labour can involve various forms of coercion, including physical violence, intimidation, manipulation of debt, confiscation of legal documents, or other forms of intimidation.

Although slavery is illegal around the world, it still remains. The Global Slavery Index states that an estimated 40.3 million men, women, and children are victim of modern slavery, of which 24.9 million people are in forced labour.² The international Palermo Protocol requires the criminalization of bonded labour as a form of trafficking, 170 countries have made public commitments to eradicate it, though just 122 countries have criminalized human trafficking in line with the UN trafficking protocol.³ The Nepal Government ratified the Palermo Protocol in 2020. The Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act (HTTCA) has not been amended in line with the 2000 TIP protocol and the government's laws do not criminalize all forms of labour trafficking and sex trafficking.⁴ Nepal ratified the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) in 2002. Likewise, Nepal ratified the International Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990.

Forced labour is "All work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily."

ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

In Nepal, there are communities of agricultural bonded labourers who have traditionally been forced to work for landowners under the pretext of repaying an ever-increasing debt. The *Haliya* are one such community that exist in Nepal, among *Kamaiya* and *Harawa Charawa* in the mid and far-western regions and eastern Tarai in Nepal. In 2002, the Parliament of Nepal approved the policy to end any form of bonded labour with the promulgation of the Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002 which banned the practice of bonded labour. In 2008, the government formally abolished the *Haliya* system.

Five years after the abolition of the *Haliya* system in 2013, a rehabilitation plan and framework were issued and started implementation in 2015, after two years of formulation. However, the attempt

² www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/global-findings/

³ www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/25/modern-slavery-trafficking-persons-one-in-200

⁴ <https://np.usembassy.gov/2022-trafficking-in-person-report/>

to eradicate the practice and roll out the rehabilitation package has been met with mixed results, successes and failures. The evidence articulated in the reports produced by government and non-government stakeholders' state that bonded labour communities are still struggling to meet fundamental human rights.

The Purple Foundation conducted this analysis of the situation with the objective to assess the situation of freed-*Haliya* communities in three districts of Karnali province named Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla. The study is conducted with the technical support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Nepal Office and financial support of US Department of Labour (DOL).

The general objective of the study is to assess the situation of the freed-*Haliya* communities in Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla districts with the following specific objectives:

- Evaluate the current status of the implementation of the rehabilitation package, identify the factors affecting the effective and timely rehabilitation process;
- Examine the possible magnitude of child labour and engagement of freed-*Haliya* children in domestic work and its impact on educational attainment;
- Provide policy recommendations.

► 1.1. Research questions

The study has three main research questions. This report addresses the following study questions from study districts (Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla) in Karnali province.

(a) Current rehabilitation status

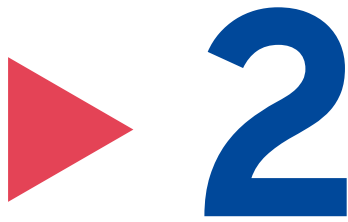
- (i) How is the access of FH families to the rehabilitation package?
- (ii) What are the successes, implementation gaps, and challenges of the current rehabilitation package?
- (iii) What are the main factors that affect the full rehabilitation of freed-*Haliya* families?

(b) Current socio-economic status

- (i) What are the existing livelihood sources of FH?
- (ii) How is the status of participation of FH in socio-political space?
- (iii) What are the key concerns of legal status, health, caste, and gender equality?

(c) The situation of child labour and its consequences on education

- (i) What is the children's situation in freed-*Haliya* families? Does child labour exist in practice? If yes, in which forms and magnitude?
- (ii) What are the underlying causes of child labour?
- (iii) What are the consequences of child labour on the education and well-being of children?



Methodology

► 2.1. Research design

The study employed mixed methods and data has been collected through household surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and case study collections. The grey literature (such as media, and unpublished materials) review has been done to understand the context, design the study, develop the tools to substantiate the interpretation of the data, and establish a link with the policy implication of the findings. The questionnaires of this study were formulated based on the standards against child labor defined in ILO Convention No.182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999) and Nepal Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2000.

► 2.2. Sampling methods and approaches

The quantitative survey applied a multistage sampling process. Three districts (for example, Humla, Jajarkot, and Surkhet) and 18 local levels with *Haliya* population were selected in Karnali Province. Except for one Rural Municipality (Lekbesi in Surkhet) where there was only one FH HH, all local levels were included in the sample of the survey. After identifying the rural areas/municipalities, wards were identified with the highest FH population. Then, verified (ID holder) households were selected as sample households through a random method maintaining systematic sampling interval. Within HHs, the household head or an available member aged 18 years and above who can give the required information was selected for the interview as the respondent.

The district sample size was determined at a 95 per cent confidence level and a five per cent margin of error. The total sample size was 638 individuals from three districts: 215 from Surkhet, 175 from Jajarkot, and 248 from Humla. Among the respondents, 31.3 per cent were women. The survey collected data for all children in the sample households aged between 5 to 17 years, via the main respondent. In total, information for 900 children from the sample households was collected.

The samples for FGDs, KIIs, and Case Studies were taken by using purposive sampling techniques. Individuals, organization representatives, related government officials, service providers, and local political leaders were identified as key informants.

► 2.3. Data collection and analysis methods

The quantitative survey aims to generate the household level detailed information about the freed-*Haliyas* and their children and provide an overview of the latest status of rehabilitation, their socioeconomic, educational, livelihood, and employment status, and the engagement of freed-*Haliyas* children in forced labour/domestic work. The HH survey data was collected through a mobile app viz. Kobo Toolbox. The Kobo Toolbox provides the real-time and actual GPS location of data collection. A face-to-face interview was conducted using structured questionnaires. The Kobo-generated data was cleaned and analysed by SPSS and Excel software.

For qualitative data, the study team conducted 17 FGDs, 43 KIIs, and three in-depth interviews for case study development. The focus group discussions involved both adults and children separately to understand the issues in depth. Altogether 12 adults' FGDs and five Children's FGDs were conducted; Out of 12 adult FGDs, three were with women, three were with men and six were with both men and women. Altogether 90 women, 53 men, and 65 children (40 girls, and 25 boys) participated in these FGDs. The KIIs involved freed-*Haliya* activists, political leaders, teachers, local, provincial, and federal government officers, elected representatives, private sector employers and trainers, journalists, lawyers, ex-landlords, and CSO representatives.

The stakeholder-specific semi-structured questionnaires (checklist) were used for interviews and discussions. The literature review mainly encompasses constitutional and legal documents, government rehabilitation policies, programmes and reports, and ILO studies on forced labour and child labour. The qualitative data were transcribed and manually analysed using thematic Excel sheets.

Research principles and ethical considerations

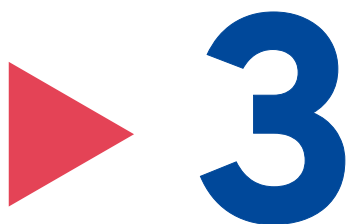
This research is based on major principles of (i) voice and inclusion: ensuring voices of all gender, persons with disabilities, and age groups (ii) participation: mobilization of local experts, using a participatory approach, coordination with right holder organization (for example, Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation) (iii) data triangulation: by collecting evidence, verifying data sources and confirming perspectives (v) transparency: the evidence discloses the details of the data sources and methods used (vi) ethical consideration: all the evidence, data, information, photographs, stories had taken with full written consent and high confidentiality (v) psychosocial aspect: the research team was highly aware of the psychosocial aspect of working with the ex-bonded labour community and field staff was trained on trauma-informed interview techniques (vi) the research team had fully adopted the safeguarding policies.

► 2.4. Quality assurance

The study was designed and developed in coordination with the ILO Head Office, Country Office for Nepal, country office, Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation and the local enumerator team. A two-day training was provided to the field team on study techniques, quality, monitoring, ethical issues, and safeguarding policies. A pre-test of the questionnaire was done together with the field team. Regular feedback, monitoring, and technical backstopping were provided to the field staff. The basic concepts and definitions followed in this study are the ILO Convention, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No.182), and Nepal Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2056 (2000).

► 2.5. Limitations

The study covered only verified/cardholder families; therefore, the study findings are limited to this only. The study did not reach out to the children directly in the survey; hence the information was gathered via an adult family member (study respondent). Difficult geography, limited timeframe for the survey, and human resources were some of the limitations of the study. Background of agricultural bonded labour in Nepal



Background of agricultural bonded labour in Nepal

In 2002, the Parliament of Nepal approved the policy to end any form of bonded labour with the promulgation of the Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002 which banned the practice of bonded labour and declared financial support for rehabilitation to one of the bonded labour practice '*Kamaiya*' in mid and far western Nepal. However, another similar system '*Haliya*' was recognized and addressed in 2008, and '*Harawa Charawa*' only in July 2022. The government issued a rehabilitation package to the *Haliya* community in 2013 and started implementing it in 2015, where the *Harawa Charawa* is still waiting for the identification. Freedom Fund reports that nearly 400,000 people including women and children are estimated to be in agricultural bonded labour across Nepal. These communities are forced to work for landowners and their masters under threat.⁵ According to the *Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2017/18*, altogether 31,338 individuals are in forced labour in Nepal. Among those, it is estimated that 17 per cent are children. It further states that forced labour is prevalent in agriculture and forestry followed by construction.

Haliya population is dispersed across 12 districts (all nine districts in Sudurpaschim Province and three districts in Karnali Province). Five years after the abolition of the *Haliya* system, in 2013 a rehabilitation plan and framework were issued and the systematic implementation with policies to provide rehabilitation grants started after two years, in 2015. There were five pillars⁶ in the FH rehabilitation policy record framework, but it focused only on two pillars: verification of identified FH and providing them with grants for land purchase, house construction, or repair. The delay in the rehabilitation process brought economic and social challenges to the FH families.

A study conducted by Anti-Slavery International (2021)⁷ finds that 98 per cent of studied Freed-*Haliya* families do not have a regular supply of food for six months of the year from their reliable primary source of income. As a result, there is increased migration of Freed-*Haliya* to India. They are suffering from hunger, disease, abuse, discrimination, and extreme poverty. According to the observations made by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), although the Nepal government has engaged in rehabilitation programmes for Freed bonded labourers there are still a large number of *Haliya* families who do not benefit from the programmes and are at risk of fallback to bonded labour again for survival means. The ITUC further states the inadequate financial assistance and points out the need for work skills training, education, economic empowerment and access to decent work opportunities.⁸

⁵ <https://freedomfund.org/blog/overview-nepal-hotspot-project/>

⁶ 1) Verification, 2) to ensure safe habitat, 3) to bring improvement in economic condition, 4) to bring improvement in social status and 5) empowerment and inclusion (MoLCPA, 2018).

⁷ Freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation national level policy brief, 2021 (unpublished).

⁸ www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:3957894,103197

Out of 12 freed-Haliya populated districts, three districts of Karnali got comparatively less attention from the government and non-government agencies. The *Haliya* movement emerged and heightened from Sudurpaschim, therefore, it could be a reason to get more attention from the national and international agencies in Sudurpaschim province. The government record shows that the latest revised list of the Freed-Haliya HHHs in three districts of Karnali Province (Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Humla) is 2,533. Out of them, 2172 HHHs have received the ID Card, 1848 HHHs are rehabilitated and 685 HHHs are yet to be rehabilitated. In Karnali province, the hill Dalit population consists of 22.9 per cent of the total population. Most of the *Haliya* are from Dalit communities and are placed at the bottom of the “caste hierarchy,” however, a small portion of the population is non-Dalit, including Khas-Arya and Tharu.

The study area, Karnali province is known as the province with food deficiency, lack of basic facilities, and low rank in health and education. The Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.538 as per the Nepal Human Development Report 2020, which is the second lowest out of the seven provinces in the country. These facts are further evidence of the vulnerability and existence of bonded labour in the region. Violence against women, unsafe migration to India, poor livelihood opportunities, and lack of access to resources are other elements that further fuels the vulnerability of children, women, and girls to the risks of modern slavery in this province.

According to the *Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2017/18*, only 36.5 per cent of employment is in the formal sector in Nepal, whereas 64 per cent of employment is informal and largely occupied by women workers in informal employment, including children.⁹ The report says that 286 thousand children between the ages of 5 to 17 years are involved in work for pay. The *Nepal Child Labour Report, 2021* estimates that 15.3 per cent of children aged 5 to 17 years were engaged in child labour, with approximately 87 per cent involved in the agriculture sector and the remaining 13 per cent in other sectors. The prevalence of child labour is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, and female children are more likely to be engaged in child labour than male children.

The highest child labour prevalence is among Dalits, followed by Janajati, Brahmin/Chhetri, Terai caste, Muslim, and other caste categories. Across all provinces, Karnali Province has the highest child labour prevalence (24.6 per cent) while Bagmati has the lowest (8.9 per cent).¹⁰ The ILO policy brief (2022)¹¹ on Child Labour and Social Protection in Nepal has identified four key typologies and sectors of child labour in Nepal. The first typology includes children who work with their parents in light work, which is primarily in the agriculture and domestic work sectors. The second typology is ‘children in employment (directly with the employer or through labour contractors)’, who are found in various sectors such as brick kilns, carpets, garments, hand embroidery, small hotels/teashops, and transportation. The third typology is ‘children in debt bondage’, which is prevalent in the agriculture sector and to some extent in the carpet and embroidery industry. Finally, the fourth typology is ‘street children’, who are found in the streets, particularly in cities like Kathmandu, and are often forced to engage in hazardous forms of labour to survive.

A study carried out by the Department of Education on the educational needs of freed-Haliya children in 12 districts found that school-leaving is one of the major problems within the community. The report further says that though school enrollment rates are good, irregular attendance is an issue as children are engaged in household chores, farming, agriculture, and engaged in activities to provide support to parents.¹² Children are compelled to take work from an early age due to a severe lack of alternatives available to them and in particular to their families struggling to meet their daily survival needs. Anti-Slavery International's reports say the daily household and agricultural activities carried out by Freed-Haliya children work hard and long hours.¹³ Children are not well treated by their employers, some work for low pay, and many unable to get the education promised and are discriminated against because of their caste.

9 https://nepalindata.com/media/resources/items/20/bNLFs-III_Final-Report.pdf

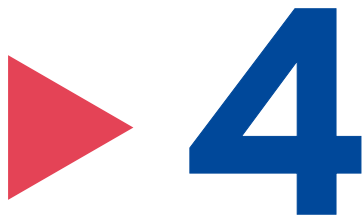
10 www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_784225/lang--en/index.htm

11 www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_864661/lang--en/index.htm

12 <https://nepalindata.com/resource/A-STUDY-ON-EDUCATIONAL-NEEDS-OF-THE-FREED-HALIYA-CHILDREN-IN-12-DISTRICTS-2016/>

13 www.antislavery.org/what-we-do/nepal-bonded-labour/

The Ministry of Land Management, Cooperative, and Poverty Alleviation had formed a committee to conduct a study on 'freed *Kamaiya*, *Kamlahari*, *Haliya*, and *Harawa Charawa*'. The study has identified several issues remaining to address regarding freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation. *Haliya* families missing out from the registration process, wrong classification, insufficient rehabilitation package, and lack of education, livelihood options, skills trainings are some were some areas focused by the report. The report also highlights that due to lack of addressing the problem effectively, many families are still forced to work as a '*Haliya*', for example in Nwali of Baitadi district.



The legal framework

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015¹⁴ guarantees the rights to be free from any kind of slavery. Article 29 (3) of the Constitution bans the sale and trafficking of human persons and prohibits the practice of bonded labour. Similarly, Article 29(4) states that no one can be forced to work against their will. In Article 51 under state policy, it is mentioned that Rehabilitation of *Kamaiya* (bonded labourers), *Kamlari*, *Haruwa-Charuwa*, *Haliya*, the landless, and the squatters by identifying them, and making arrangements for housing, or providing a small plot of land or house, employment, or arable land for their livelihood.

Labour Law, 2017 Article 4 (1) prohibits the direct or indirect use or practice of forced labour. The Article widens the definition of ‘forced labour’ in the explanation provided in the Article: “For the purpose of this section, “forced labour” means any work or service performed by any worker against his/her will as a result of a threat of taking any action having a financial, physical or mental impact if he/she does not perform such work.”

The Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act, 2002¹⁵ is expedient to make provisions in order to put a ban on bonded labour (*Kamaiya shram*), to rehabilitate the freed bonded labourers, and to uplift their livelihood from the perspectives of social justice. It guarantees the right to be free from bonded labour after the commencement of the act. This further says no bonded labourers shall be obliged to pay back the bonded debt obtained by him/her from any creditor.

Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007:¹⁶ This act defines ‘exploitation’ as an act of keeping human being as a slave and bonded. This act further defines trafficking and transportation as ‘to take anyone from his /her home, place of residence or from a person by any means such as enticement, inducement, misinformation, forgery, tricks, coercion, abduction, hostage, allurement, influence, threat, abuse of power and by means of inducement, fear, threat or coercion to the guardian or custodian and keep him/her into ones custody or take to any place within Nepal or abroad or handover him/her to somebody else for the purpose of prostitution and exploitation.’

The freed-Haliya Rehabilitation Problem Solving Committee Formation Directive, 2013. The committee is chaired by Minister or State Minister, of the Ministry of land management. Vice chairman is a member of the National Planning Committee. The working areas are Mid-west and far-west region of Nepal. The task of this committee is to implement programmes for freed-Haliya such as rehabilitation and livelihood programmes, to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the action plan, to do the monitoring. This directive has imagined coordination committee and district committees. The directives also talks about rehabilitation fund.

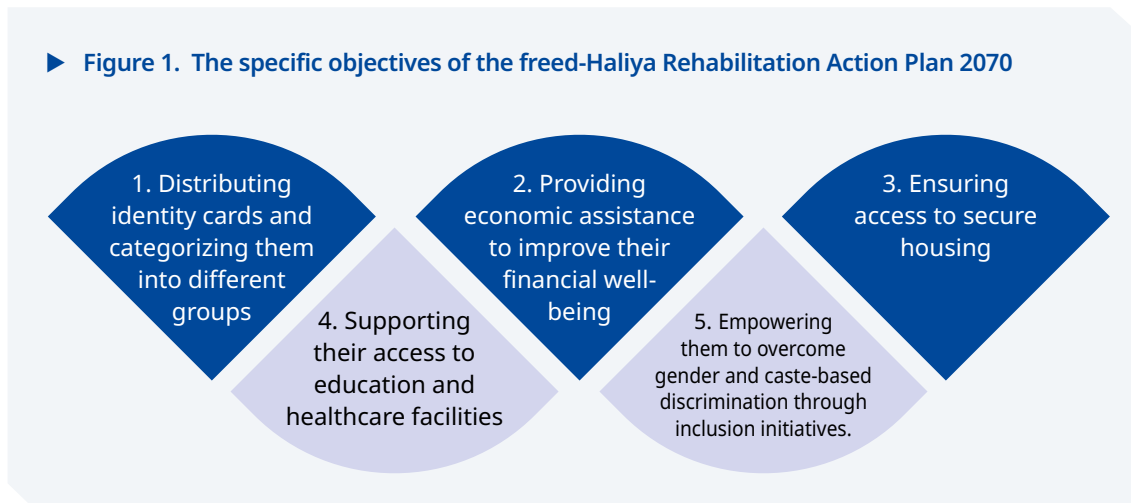
¹⁴ www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nepal_2015.pdf

¹⁵ <https://csrnepal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Bondeb-Labour-Prohibition-Act-2002.pdf>

¹⁶ www.warnathgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Nepal-TIP-Law-2007.pdf

The freed-Haliya rehabilitation action plan, 2070: The goal of this action plan is to enhance the livelihoods of Freed-Haliya individuals by strengthening their capacity. The specific objectives include the below:

► **Figure 1. The specific objectives of the freed-Haliya Rehabilitation Action Plan 2070**



Land Purchase, Registration, Home Construction, and Repair Support Procedure 2072

The Freed-Haliya can purchase land as per the amount they have received. They have to submit an application in the relevant government offices. The land reform office should ensure if such land is habitable. They also prioritize various facilities such as electricity, transportation, education, health, employment, and income generation opportunities. Freed-Haliya can also submit an application for home construction.

The Constitution of Nepal, Article 39 says that no child shall be employed in factories, mines, or any other hazardous work. And no child shall be subjected to physical, mental or any other forms of child labour.

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2000¹⁷ : In Article three: No child who has not attained the age of 14 years shall be engaged in work as a labourer. In Article 4, no child shall be engaged in work as a labourer against his/her will by way of persuasion, misrepresentation, or by subjecting him/her to any influence or fear or threat or coercion, or by any other means. In Article 6, in any case, if an enterprise has to engage a child at work, approval has to be obtained from the concerned labour office or any authority or officials prescribed by that office and from the father, mother or guardian of the child. In Article 15, the labour office may depute an employee from time to time to inspect an enterprise engaging children. In Article 19, - whoever commits any act of using child labour, shall be liable to a punishment of imprisonment of three months in maximum or a fine of ten thousand rupees in maximum or both.

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 2006¹⁸ Under this, in Article 4, it is clearly mentioned that before employing a child as a labourer, an application shall be filed in the labour office to examine his/her health in relation to his/her ability and inability to do the work, mentioning about the nature of work and the age of the child. If the child is found to be capable of the work, the doctor shall provide a certificate of eligibility. In Article 6, a child working in an enterprise shall get a monthly remuneration and allowance, not less than prescribed by the government of Nepal.

Act Relating to Children, 2018: every child shall have the right to live with dignity. Every child shall have the right to acquire free and compulsory basic education. Dalit children shall have the right to acquire free education with scholarship pursuant to the prevailing law.

¹⁷ <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/?cat=367>

¹⁸ Idem.

► 5

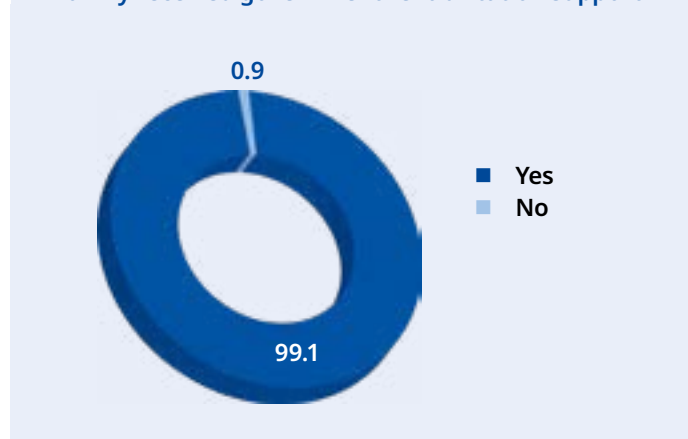
Findings and analysis

► 5.1. Rehabilitation access and delivery status

(a) Access to rehabilitation support

The study found that the majority of Freed-Haliya in the study districts were able to access the government's rehabilitation support package successfully. According to survey data, almost all (99.1 per cent) of the families holding ID cards received government rehabilitation support package. The findings also align with government reporting.¹⁹ In Karnali province, a total of 2,533 families were initially identified and recorded as Freed Haliya. However, out of these, only 1,928 families (for example, 76.1 per cent) successfully underwent verification and received official identity cards from the government. As of 2019, a total of 1,848 families (for example, 95.9 per cent) had received government rehabilitation support, while the remaining 80 families (4.35 per cent) were transferred to local government to complete the rehabilitation process.

► Figure 2. Percentage of respondents whose family received government rehabilitation support



It is worth mentioning that among the 632 freed-Haliya families in the sample who were able to access the government rehabilitation package, a total of 98.6 per cent received both instalments of the grant. The rehabilitation support grant was provided in two instalments. However, a small portion (1.3 per cent) of the respondents faced difficulties in obtaining the second instalment.

¹⁹ 'Report on Situation Study of Freed Kamaiya, Kamlahari, Haliya and Harawa Charawa, 2078', Freed Kamaiya, Kamlahari, Haliya and Harawa Charawa Situation Study Committee formed by Ministry of Land Management Cooperative and Poverty Alleviation, Government of Nepal.

Additionally, 0.2 per cent of the respondents were unaware of the existence of the second instalment. The primary reasons behind these challenges were the inability to produce necessary documents, failure to claim in a timely manner, and failure to utilize the funds for the intended purpose.

The government rehabilitation package provided various forms of support, including land ownership or cash grants to purchase land, as well as grants to construct or repair houses, based on the categories of the ID card issued. The freed-Haliya rehabilitation programme was financed by the federal government and implemented by the District Land Revenue Offices (DLROs). There was a freed-Haliya Rehabilitation District Committee chaired by the Chief District Officer (CDO), which also included two representatives from the freed-Haliya community. As per the key informants, it gave an opportunity for the freed Haliya's voices to be heard in the rehabilitation package delivery process and related decisions. During focus group discussions and interviews, it is also observed that information dissemination and coordination played by the Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation and networks were vital to access rehabilitation support. According to key informants, after the local election in 2017, the rehabilitation delivery was accelerated by local elected representatives which helped to solve the procedural issues such as the preparation of legal documents, and verification by local representatives, the recommendation from local authorities, which were hindering to access the package.

► **The freed-Haliya rehabilitation framework and action plan-2070 has five objectives as follows:**

- *Verify the documented list of freed Haliya, categorize them and provide the ID cards.*
- *Ensure the safe residence support to the families*
- *Ensure the improvement in the economic status of the families*
- *Improve the social status by increased access to education and health*
- *End existing caste based and gender-based violence by empowerment and social inclusion*

► 5.2. Types of rehabilitation package received by ID categories

► **Figure 3. Percentage of respondents by ID categories [N=638]**

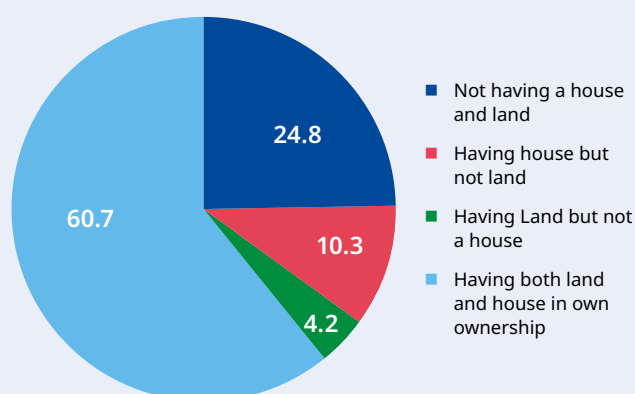


Figure 3 shows that out of the total of 638 households included in the sample, about one-fourth (24.8 per cent) were in 'Ka' (Red) category. They have received both land and housing support. The largest number of families falls in 'Gha' (White) category which are those having both land and house in their own ownership.

These categories of cardholders receive support only for house repair (125,000 rupees). In total, 10.3 per cent are in the 'Kha' (brown)

category those who have house but not land. The category with the smallest proportion of respondents (4.25) was 'Ga' (Green), consisting of individuals who owned land but did not possess a house.

There are four types of freed-Haliya identity (ID) card. The types of FH ID cards are categorized into the initial four Nepali alphabets. Different colors are also used for each category: red for 'Ka', brown for 'Kha', green for 'Ga', and white for 'Gha'

► **Freed-Haliya rehabilitation support schemes by ID categories:**

- 'Ka' (Red) category ID holders were given the option to receive up to 3 Ropani land or 200,000 rupees in grants for purchasing land, as well as up to 375,000 rupees for house construction.
- 'Kha' (Brown) category ID card holders were provided with up to 125,000 rupees for house repair and the facility to register public land with their house.
- 'Ga' (Green) category ID holders were given up to 375,000 rupees for house construction.
- 'Gha' (White) category ID card holders were provided with up to 125,000 rupees for house repair.

Although the ID card holder families received the rehabilitation package, there was a problem in the identification and categorization of the freed-Haliyas. The study found contradictory evidence and serious defects in the Haliya classification process. Families who fall under the 'kha' category were found living on either the landowner's land or on the government unregistered land. The study also found that for those who received the 'Gha' category package, do not have registered land, even though they are registered under the 'Gha' category. The focus group discussions and case studies provided support to this fact. In Humla, during FGD, 17 families were found living on landowner land who received 'Gha' category card and a house repairing package. During the FGD participants shared that since they do not own the land, landowners can chase them anytime. However, because of the fear of "God", they are able to live in the land.

Participants stated: *'we do not own this land. This belongs to 'Shahi/Thakuri' families. Since we lived here for decades, there is a belief that in this area, together with us, 'Dhami, Jhakri and Goddess' also lives. If they chase us, Goddess will be angry and they will face serious harm. In that belief only we are here. Goddess is protecting us to date'.*

A case study which shows evidence of mis-categorization of families.

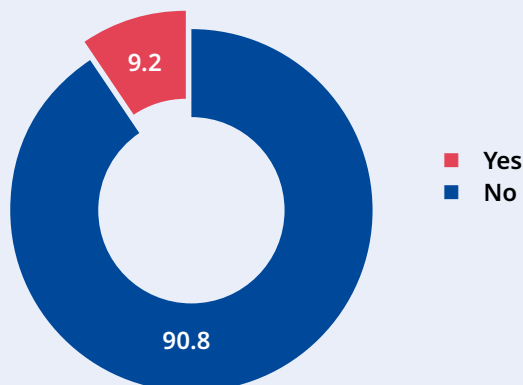
► **Case-1: Kaule Sharki received 'Gha' category card.**

Kaule Sarki (name changed) and his family live in Simikot, Humla. Kaule's parents were Haliya and Kaule and his family are called 'freed-Haliya' now. Kaule's parents died being Haliya. After the declaration of Haliya-emancipation in 2008, Kaule left the village (the landowner where his parents worked and died). Kaule was searching for a better life and migrated to another village with a family called Bargau, Simikot. Since he did not have land, he chose the next landowner and the landowner allowed him to build a 'hut' on some of the landowner's property. During the rehabilitation process, he received "Gha" category card because officials put him in the category of having a 'house', although the land was not his property. And now, after 24 years of freedom, Kaule does not have his own land and house. His children are not able to continue school as they all need to work for the landowner. If they deny it, they will lose the place to cover their head. They do not have alternate income- generating skills or opportunity except working for landowner.

► 5.3. Access to additional rehabilitation support except land and house

The HH survey has also explored the access of freed-*Haliya* to other rehabilitation support in addition to land and house. As per government rehabilitation framework, they were supposed to be provided livelihood, education, health and social empower support to ensure their complete rehabilitation. The survey findings shows that the proportion of respondents who got rehabilitation support from the government in addition to the land or cash grants was only 9.2 per cent. The largest proportion of FH HH receiving additional support were from Jajarkot (17.7 per cent) and the lowest from Humla (2.8 per cent). The proportion for the same was 9.8 per cent in Surkhet. A significant majority (78 per cent) of the recipients of additional support underwent skill development training, excluding business startup or any other additional support. A small proportion (3.4 per cent) received educational support for their children, such as scholarships and other forms of assistance. Additionally, 18.6 per cent of the recipients received various other forms of support, including goat rearing, iron workshop repair, house repair, and more.

► Figure 4. Percentage of HHs receiving additional government rehabilitation support except land and housing [N=638]



► Some of the focus group and key informant participants statements are:

- 'Except 125,000 rupees from government, we have not received any support from anyone else.'
- 'We do not have any income. We have not received any support for health, livelihood or skill'
- 'The money was too minimal. Government does not want us to complain but it did not fulfil our necessity. There are no options to earn, where should we go?'

During interviews, key government stakeholders at the local, district and provincial levels acknowledged the core messages conveyed in the statements. The District Land Revenue Office (DLRO), the primary agency responsible for implementing the federal rehabilitation package (for example, land and housing), had already delegated its rehabilitation duties to the local governments. Officials at the DLRO, who were interviewed during the study, described the rehabilitation programmes as a one-time project. Therefore, DLRO has not done any follow-up and has not maintained any updates on the status of the targeted freed *Haliyas*. Similarly, the local governments have not maintained up-to-date records of the freed-*Haliya*.

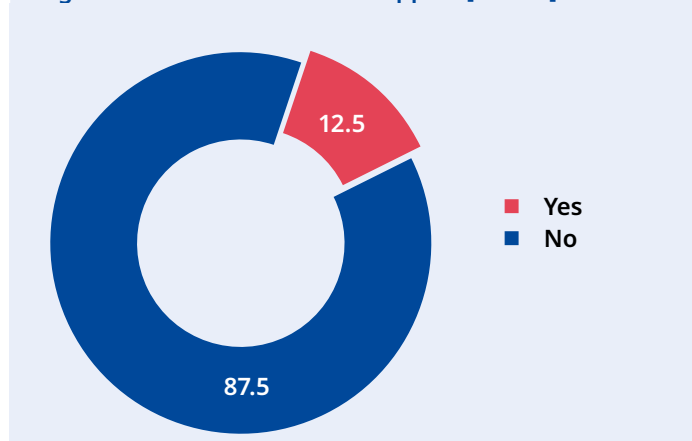
An official from Birendranagar Municipality in Surkhet admitted that the municipality had not effectively carried out the rehabilitation work for the freed-*Haliya*. The municipality has not even attempted to collect data regarding the accurate number and current situation of the freed-*Haliya* within their jurisdiction. The official mentioned that the municipality allocates a modest budget of approximately 100,000 rupees which is utilized based on demand. In certain years, this budget remained unused due to the absence of any demands or requests.

A Ward Chair in Jajarkot, who observed FGD and later participated in interviews, conceded that his office has not initiated to address the specific challenges faced by freed-Haliya families. Notably, a former member of the provincial planning commission and a former minister of Karnali province also affirmed that substantial efforts are required for the successful rehabilitation of freed-Haliya. They openly acknowledged their unrealized endeavors aimed at identifying overlooked freed-Haliya individuals across all districts within Karnali province.

This study showed that non-government organizations also rarely reach these communities with rehabilitation support. Except for the ILO Bridge Project which supported skills development, the study participants hardly mentioned any NGOs directly targeting these communities to work in particular on any issues, particularly in Humla and Jajarkot districts. The proportion of the respondents who received empowerment support through the non-government agencies was slightly larger (12.5 per cent). However, the share looks relatively very insignificant compared to the needs and aspirations of FH HHS.

Some interviews with the non-government activists also evidenced this finding.

► Figure 5. Percentage of HHs receiving non-government rehabilitation support [N=638]

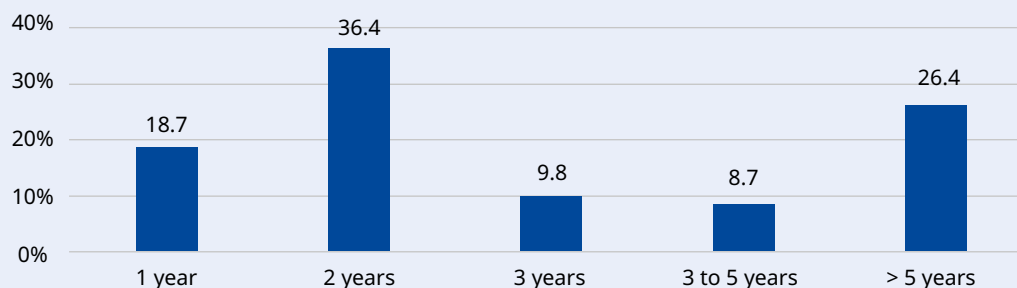


A key informant (an NGO worker in Surkhet) stated, *'We have not worked on anything regarding Haliya at all, do not have any projects in the districts or province level targeting to Freed-Haliya'*. Similarly, a key informant working in the bonded labour sector for decades stated *'we are working in far west and eastern Tarai, but not yet in Karnali Province.'*

► 5.4. Time taken to access the rehabilitation package

The study showed that the implementation of the rehabilitation programme was not as smooth as the encouraging percentage of FH receiving rehabilitation grants in Karnali. Survey data and participants' experiences both share mixed findings. The survey data showed that only 18.7 per cent of respondents' families received rehabilitation grants within one year from the date of application. The largest share (36.4 per cent) of the respondents received theirs within two years. More than one-fourth of the respondents had to wait for more than five years to receive the rehabilitation package. Cardholders had to spend many years fulfilling the administrative and legal procedures to access the package. A focus group participant in Surkhet stated, *'the documents were very hard to arrange, we had to wait months just to get the approval of our documents. The authorities kept asking us to go away and come back next time.'*

► **Figure 6. Time taken to receive rehabilitation support from the date of application [N=632]**



Of the total, 1.25 per cent of respondents could not receive the last installment of the rehabilitation package. One main reason for not getting the last installment was that the amount of the first installment was not utilized for rehabilitation purposes. Some focus group respondents shared that the amount was for food and other needs during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown so they could not use it for its intended purpose. Despite this fact, some communities also shared that they did not face any difficulties accessing grants. Focus group participants in Surkhet stated that *'All 32 households do have proper documentation. We did not face any difficulties preparing legal documents.'*

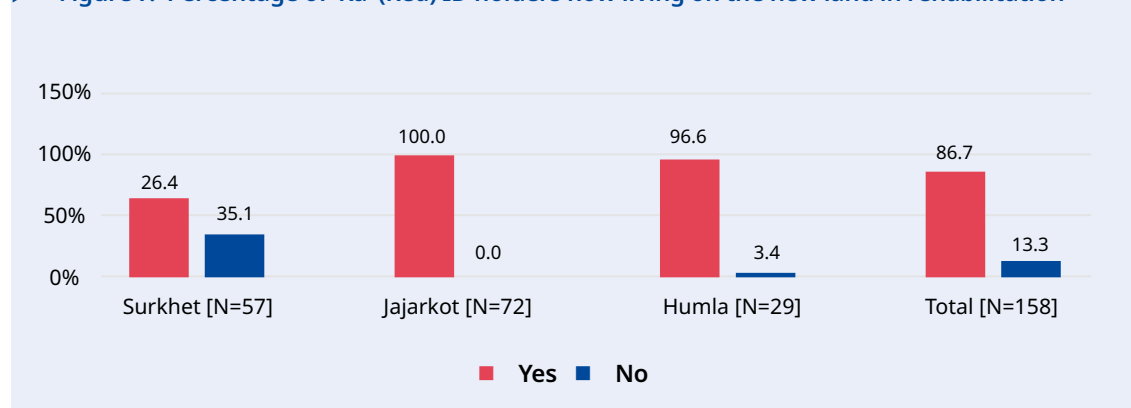
► 5.5. Access to 'full' delivery of rehabilitation package

The study identified a serious issue in ensuring transparent grant delivery from the government. Across all three districts, the focus group participants raised the issue of the 'underpayment' of the government grant amount. The grant amount was deducted for various administrative expenses to speed up the grant accessing procedures. Participants from Surkhet, Humla, and Jajarkot mentioned 25,000 rupees was deducted from the total amount. Study participants shared that they were not able to make any complaints to any authorities about this issue because they were 'afraid'. A focus group participant in Jajarkot district stated *"They have deducted 25,000 rupees in cash saying they need this money is for managing documents. They did not want this shared with anyone, so we kept quiet."* Some participants also raised the issue of an artificial hike in the land price during the purchasing time. They had to pay a higher price for a barren, less productive and isolated piece of land. They seemed to claim that they had to provide the 'commission' to a certain person, but they were reluctant to mention the specific authority or person(s) who made them pay the money. Participants also shared that they had to provide the money after it was deposited into their respective bank accounts. Bank cheques were not used for payment.

► 5.6. Utilization of rehabilitation support

The study explored the utilization status of rehabilitation packages by the beneficiaries. The survey data shows that overall 13.3 per cent of Ka (Red) ID card holders (receiving both land and housing support) were not living in the house constructed on the land received by the government package. However, this issue was found highest in Surkhet and almost nil in Jajarkot. A total of 3.4 per cent of Ka (Red) ID card holders in Humla were not using their land and houses received by rehabilitation package.

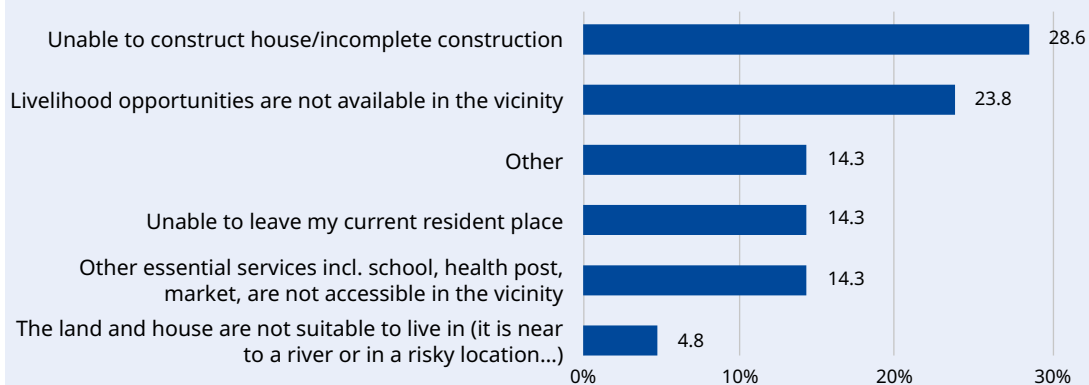
► Figure 7. Percentage of 'Ka' (Red) ID holders now living on the new land in rehabilitation



There were various reasons for the non-utilization of the land and houses received (See Figure below). Out of 21 such rehabilitation beneficiaries in the sample, the largest share (28.6 per cent) were not living because their house constructions were incomplete. In a site observation in Bhimpur in Bheriganga Municipality in Surkhet, the house construction of ten FH families was incomplete (see case below). Participants stated that the contractor responsible for roof-building ran away without completing the construction, and now there are only roofless wall structures. Five households had paid the full amount to the contractor. Likewise, in a nearby settlement in the same place, there were 17 completed houses but only one family was living in the house. The remaining 16 families were living in another place where they were living for decades and did not want to move.

In the survey, 14.3 per cent respondents answered that they do not want to move to another new place from their current residence. Over 85 per cent of FH families have been living in the same place for more than 30 years. Around two-thirds (for example, 65.7 per cent) of the HHs have been living in the current location for even over 50 years and over generations. They explained that they felt connected with nature, environment, livelihood, neighbourhood, and lifestyle where they are living and they do not want to leave. The same proportion (14.3 per cent) of the respondents answered that other essential services including schools, health posts, and markets are not accessible in the vicinity. In total, 4.8 per cent of respondents think that the land and house provided by the rehabilitation package is not safe and appropriate for them as the land is either barren land or on the edge of the river or forest or in very isolated and remote places. The land they are currently living is government unregistered land (*ailani*).

The largest proportion (23.8 per cent) were not living on the received land due to lack of livelihood and income opportunities in the vicinities of new settlements. The lack of amenities like road, electricity and drinking water was also a reason for non-utilization. The other reason mentioned is house size being insufficient.

► **Figure 8. Reasons for not living in the new land and house [N= 21], multiple responses**

A participant in Surkhet during focus group discussion stated that *'we are 9 siblings, how can we fit into a two rooms house? It is a cramped hut with no supporting infrastructure or income opportunities. All family members have gone to either India or other places to earn. A single mother met in Birendranagar and was living in a rented house and working as a housemaid to run her family. She emphasized that she would be unable to earn and send her children to school if she lived in the remotely located land received by the government. It is found that there was a serious lack of assessment of land in relation to access to education, health, livelihood opportunities, and basic infrastructure services to the families.*

The woman working as a maid stated *'I cannot live in the land I received but I cannot sell the land and purchase somewhere else either, as that is the policy'.* It is also found in some places that to establish an 'integrated settlement', the land was purchased in remote areas, without other physical infrastructure and services such as road, electricity, school.

► **Case-2: Incomplete integrated settlement!**

Bhimpur Nayabasti was intended to be developed as an integrated settlement for 32 families of 'Ka' category freed-Haliyas from Bheriganga Municipality of Surkhet district. This freed-Haliya rehabilitation site is situated in ward No. 14 of Gurbhakot Municipality, which adjoins Bheriganga Municipality and is separated by the Bheri river. The site is located about five kilometers from Jahare Bazar. The area is plain farming land near a forest, with no previous housing structures. The new houses for rehabilitation have been constructed at the corner of the farming field, and there is currently a motorable road crossing the settlement.

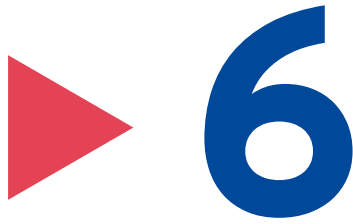
On the east side, approximately 100m from the road, there are 17 blue-roofed houses in a line. On the west side, approximately 50m from the road, there are five completed houses and ten incomplete house structures. However, it has been over five years, and ten house structures are still roofless. A contractor was assigned to finish the roof of the houses, but he ran away, leaving the work incomplete. Although there are 22 completed houses, only one family is living in their house. The other owners of these new houses are still living in their old settlements in Bheriganga, where they have their own houses on unregistered public land. The new houses only have two small rooms, making it difficult to accommodate large families. The land purchased for each family is only around six 'dhurs', which is not enough for even a goat cage and a small kitchen garden.



Freed-*Haliyas* settlement



Freed-*Haliyas* settlement



Socio-economic and political status of freed-*Haliya* families

► 6.1. Existing main livelihood sources

The study revealed that the issue of achieving a sustainable livelihood is a significant concern across all study areas. The survey data showed that over two thirds (69 per cent) of the respondents answered 'daily wages' as a major source of livelihood and income. The families depending on daily wage labour seem highly vulnerable since the wage-earning opportunities are very limited in the local market and are often seasonal in nature, mostly coming from the agriculture and construction sectors.

In the off-season, the FH HHs are hardly able to earn twice daily meals, which makes them insecure about food and nutrition. During the interview, a Ward chair of Chhedagad Municipality in Jajarkot argued that food insecurity was one of the main causes for *Haliya* system. The families who lack of regular income source, are/were compelled to serve the landowners, compromising their freedom and dignity. The study found families working for landowners, just to provide two times meals to their children. Though they are not forced to serve the master, it has been their plight due to a lack of income opportunities which is making them fall in bonded labour situation. Such stories were shared across all study areas.

Farming was cited as the second most common source of income, accounting for 43.3 per cent of responses, followed by sharecropping (*Adhiya, Battaiya*) on master's land, which accounted for 27.1 per cent of responses. Though sharecropping²⁰ is voluntary, it is creating a lot of dependency on the landowners which is creating 'controlling' opportunity for the landowners. Focus group participants shared that when a family works on a landowner's land for sharecropping, his/her children or family members are compelled to work for the same landowner by default in many cases.

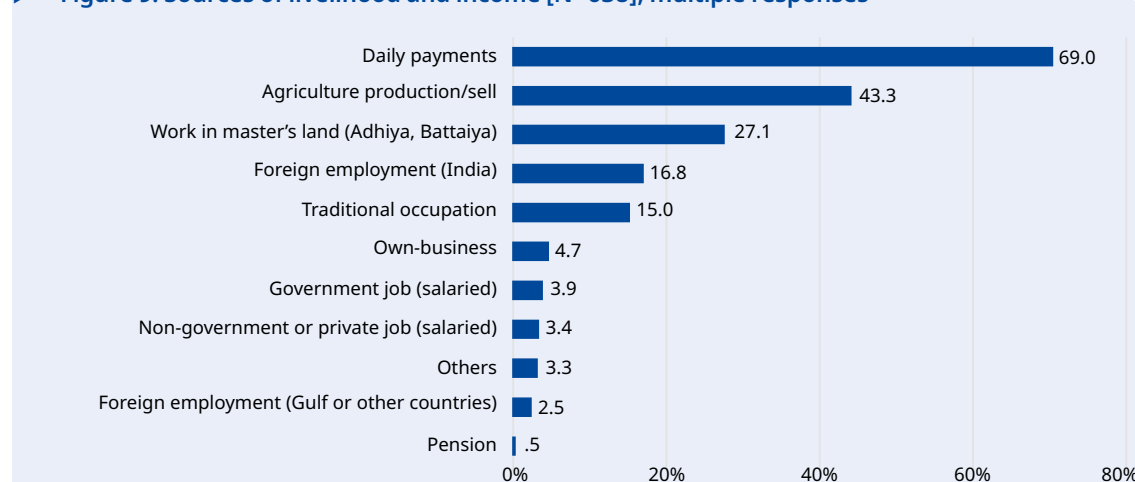
In addition, when a family is also residing on a landowner's land, there is an invisible 'subjugation' in practice, focus group and key informant participants confirmed this with their statements. Focus group participants in Surkhet shared jointly that *'in past, we had to work for landowners and used to get*

20 Sharecropping is a system where the landowner allows a tenant to use the land in exchange for a share of the crop.

basic food and shelter. But now, we lack any reliable source of work and income. This is making us, our children, compelled to work for the landowner again.'

The study showed 15 per cent of families were earning some income from traditional occupations like blacksmith, and tailoring which is also not regular. The respondent's income from the business was less than five per cent.

► **Figure 9. Sources of livelihood and income [N=638], multiple responses**



The share of HHs with salaried income from government and non-government employment was just 3.9 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively. The families reporting income sources from salaried jobs were mostly from Surkhet majority other than Dalits, mostly Tharu. The youth are employed in the police and army and as helpers in different government offices. Likewise, a total of 16.8 per cent of families found receiving remittance from India, whereas families getting remittance from other than India including gulf countries was just 2.5 per cent. It was found that a large number of family members go to India for seasonal work, including a large number of children. Focus group participants in Surkhet stated *'our main source of income is to work as a labourer. We go to India, earn some money and come back. Again, during working season, we go there. Our children also go there.'*

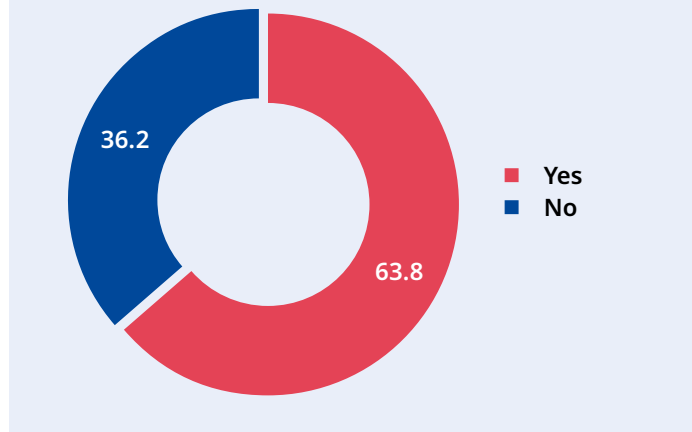
Statistics also show the education level of the study respondents. A total of 70.4 per cent of the survey respondents had never attended formal education, while 11.3 per cent had completed primary education. Additionally a mere 8.3 per cent had completed secondary education and an even smaller proportion, only 2.5 per cent had achieved bachelor's degree or above. A total of 58 per cent of the respondents were from the age of 19 to 49 years.

► 6.2. Skill training and opportunities

A total of 63.8 per cent of respondents stated that their family members possess one or more kinds of skills for income. However, half of them were construction-related skills like mason, carpenter, etc. mostly traditionally transferred skills. Other major skills included sewing-cutting, farming, and other traditional skills like shoemaking, tailoring, blacksmith, and bamboo crafting, which they have been doing for generations as professions. However, it should be noted that these skills are mostly based on indigenous knowledge and practice and lack the necessary professional capacity to effectively compete in the market in terms of quality and production.

During interviews and discussions, some freed-*Haliya* youths shared that they had received non-traditional and modern skills in recent years. However, during fieldwork, interactions with a few skill training recipients indicated that the utilization of training was not encouraging for all trades. While skills such as masonry, goat rearing, and vegetable farming were well utilized, skills requiring more resources, such as start-up capital, marketing, or employment opportunities, were less utilized or not utilized at all. For instance, a Dalit youth in a village in Jajarkot received training in cooking, but he did not utilize this skill in the village. Instead, he migrated to India for seasonal work, and could not use his training skill in the county and had recently returned to the village to participate in a CTEVT²¹ skill test event. The same stories of migrating youths were shared by family members of skill training recipients in Surkhet and Humla. Focus group participants in Surkhet stated *'We were provided mushroom cultivation work, tailoring and cattle rearing training, but due to lack of funds to start a business, we have not been able to utilize these skills.'*

► Figure 10. Percentage of HHs with skilled members [N=638]



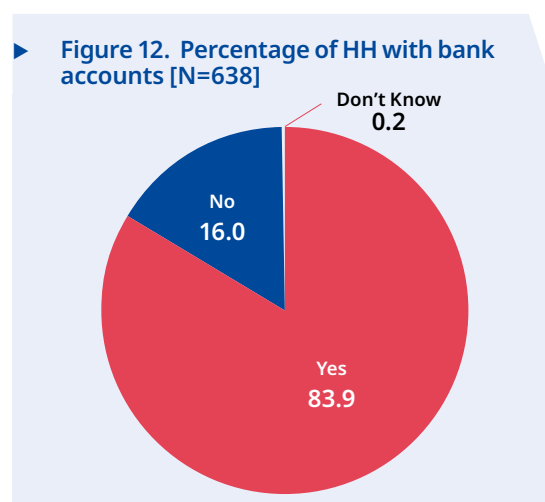
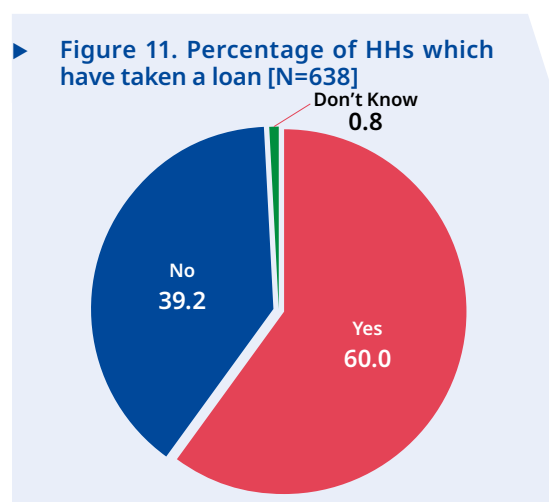
► 6.3. Access to banking services

The study revealed that one of the beneficial outcomes of the rehabilitation programmes was its ability to establish a connection between liberated *Haliya* families and banking services. The cash grant of the rehabilitation programmes was paid through bank accounts therefore there was a compulsion to open a bank account for the receiver. The survey showed that over 83 per cent of the respondent's families had at least one bank account. During the FGDs, the majority of the account holders shared that there was only a minimum balance in their accounts since the regular income is not enough for regular savings and transactions. The rest, 17 per cent of the respondents' families, did not have operational bank accounts. It may indicate that some accounts opened during the rehabilitation process are now closed. Most of the participants stated that they were unable to save regularly in the bank, and therefore, the bank accounts are either inactive or closed.

The survey findings indicate that despite having their own bank accounts, freed-*Haliya* families face difficulties in accessing bank loans and facilities. Consequently, they resort to various alternative sources to obtain loans. These loans are primarily utilized to meet daily needs, address health-related concerns, and fulfill other necessities. A positive outcome of the study is that freed-*Haliya* families have reduced their reliance on landowners or masters for loans, thereby avoiding the risk of falling into debt bondage.

21 The CTEVT skill test event refers to an assessment or examination organized by the Council to evaluate the skills and competencies of individuals in various technical and vocational fields. It is a formal testing process conducted to assess the practical knowledge, abilities, and performance of individuals in their respective vocational areas, such as engineering, health, agriculture, hospitality, and other skilled trades.

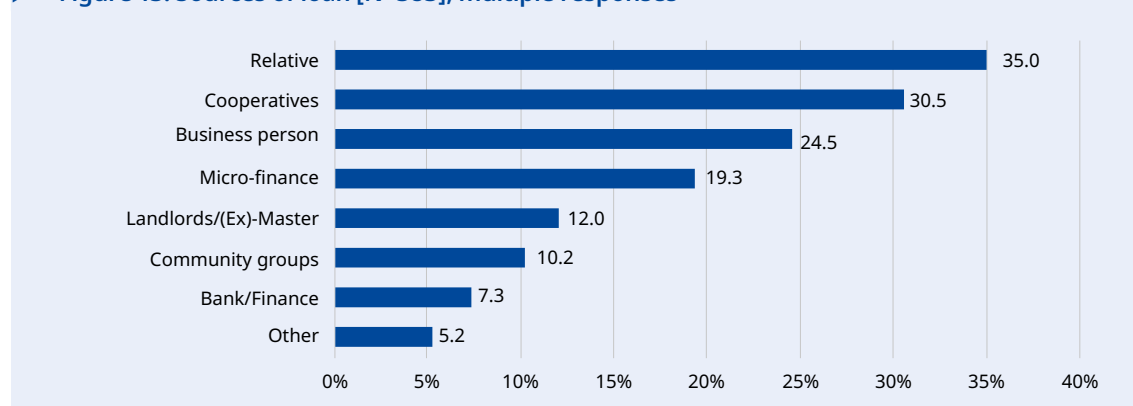
The survey also revealed that approximately 60 per cent of families have taken loans from different sources. The majority of households (35 per cent) borrowed from relatives, typically for small amounts to address immediate or emergency needs. Both survey data and information gathered from focus groups emphasized that accessing loans from banks and finance companies remains a significant challenge for freed-*Haliya* families. Only 7.3 per cent reported obtaining loans from banks or financial institutions. According to the survey, the second largest portion of loans (30.5 per cent) were obtained from cooperatives. It is worth noting that the accessibility of cooperative loans varies based on location and community, with Surkhet district and the Tharu community having the highest rates of access.



In addition, the families were obtaining loans from microfinance institutions (MFIs); however, the capital acquired was not being utilized in productive sectors. Participants in the focus group discussions highlighted that MFIs offer loans with minimal or no collateral requirements, often without adequately assessing the debtor's capacity to utilize the funds or formulate a business plan. Consequently, these loans are typically used for food expenses, repayment of previous loans, and other non-capital expenditures. As a result, debtors are unable to generate income and struggle to make timely loan repayments. The discussions also revealed instances where families had resorted to escaping their villages or migrating due to the mounting pressure of loan repayment.

As stated above, the study showed that freed-*Haliya* families are still going to landlords to access loans. A total of 12 per cent of respondents' families have taken loans from local landlords. The soft loans offered by various government schemes appear to be less accessible to these communities. The interest rates on these loans varied widely, ranging from 12 per cent to over 60 per cent per annum. The largest share of loans was taken at interest rates between 13 and 18 per cent per annum. Approximately 16 per cent of borrowers had obtained loans with interest rates ranging from 37 to 60 per cent per year, whereas 18 per cent of borrowers had loans with interest rates between 25 and 36 per cent per year.

► Figure 13. Sources of loan [N=383], multiple responses



However, despite the fact that freed-*Haliya* families are less dependent on landowners for loans, many families still found to be taking loans from landowners (12 per cent as mentioned above) which is again making them fall into bonded labour. Focus group participants shared that they are taking personal loans at high-interest rates. *'We take a loan from the people in the village with the 60 per cent interest rate (5 rupees per month for 100 rupees).'* *'We take loans from landowners. The interest rate is three rupees for 100 rupees per month (36 per cent per annum).'* a focus group participant stated. This interest rate is against Nepal's Civil Code 2017.²² Section 478 of the Code states that the maximum amount of interest the creditor can collect annually is capped at 10 per cent of the principal amount. As stated above, freed-*Haliya* families are not able to provide any collateral or show trust to the debtors, it is very difficult to access to easy loans for them. Participants stated during focus group 'nobody trusts us'.

► 6.4. Access to social protection

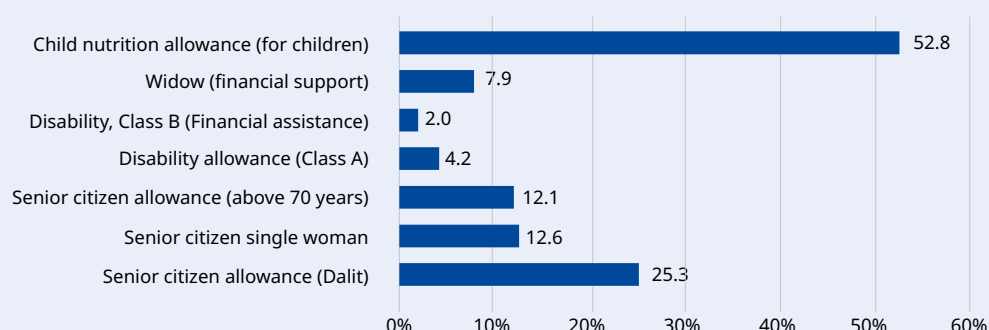
The access of freed-*Haliya* families to social protection services, particularly social security allowance (SSA) was found good across all study areas. In the survey, around 56 per cent of the respondents stated that at least one of their family members has been receiving SSA provided by the government. The largest share of the HHs were receiving child nutrition allowance (52.8 per cent) whereas the share of senior citizen allowance (Dalit) was 25.3 per cent. The share of HHs receiving senior citizen allowance (70+years) and allowance for senior citizen single women was 12.1 per cent and 12.6 per cent respectively. Likewise, the proportion of financial support for widows was 7.9 per cent. The share of disability allowance for fully disabled²³ and severe disability²⁴ categories was 4.2 per cent and two per cent respectively. The SSA was regular and predictable money for the recipient families.

During discussions, social security allowance recipients stated that *'We see such big amounts/notes only when we receive social security payment on the quarterly basis.'* Survey respondents and focus group participants mentioned this helps as a 'livelihood option'. So, the study showed that bringing this population under social security policies is vital. Participants argued that it would be key to their lives if they are provided other kinds of social protection such as higher education for the *Haliya* children, and health protection. A focus group participant in Jajarkot stated *'we wished to have life insurance for us, that could give us a lot of confidence and support during emergency.'*

22 www.moljpa.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Civil-code.pdf

23 Citizens of any age who have received A class, for example red colored disability identity card from the relevant body.

24 Citizens of any age who have received B class, for example red colored disability identity card from the relevant body.

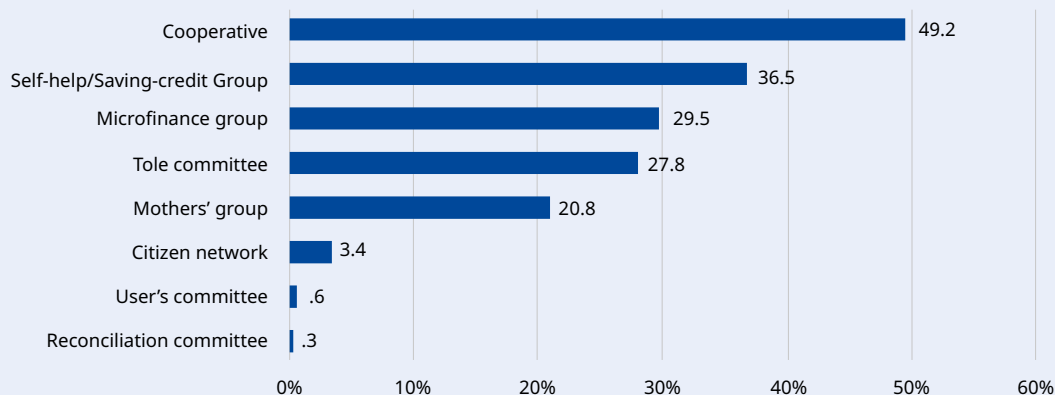
► **Figure 14. Types of SSA received [N=356], multiple responses**

(a) Legal identity

The study showed that like bank accounts, access to citizenship certificates is good in the freed-*Haliya* communities. A total of 97.6 per cent of respondents have received their citizenship certificates, which means that only 2.4 per cent of respondents who are eligible for citizenship certificates have not received them yet. It is mandatory to have a citizenship certificate to access rehabilitation programmes which could be a reason to increase awareness about citizenship certificates. Citizen rights movements have also contributed to increasing awareness about legal identity. The freed-*Haliya* ID card is also a legal identity for claiming rights with/from the government. The survey also asked about the voter's identity card. A total of 97.4 per cent of respondents had made their voter card.

(b) Participation in community organizations

The study found that slightly less than half of the respondents or their family members were associated with at least one community organization. The highest proportion (49.2 per cent) of the HHs were members of local cooperatives. The share of self-help groups/saving-credit groups and micro-finance groups was 36.5 per cent and 29.5 per cent respectively.

► **Figure 15. Types of social organization affiliated [N=356], multiple responses**

Likewise, the families with membership in the tole committee and mothers' groups were 27.8 per cent and 20.8 per cent respectively. However, the membership in advocacy organizations such as the citizen's network was only 3.4 per cent. The membership of the user's committee which are partners

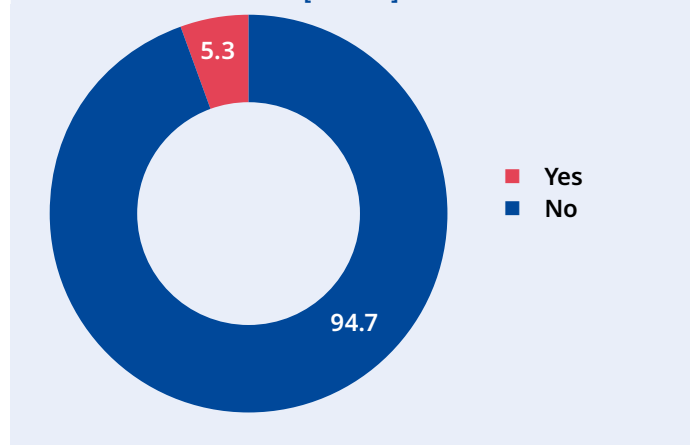
in local project implementation less than one per cent. Similarly, the membership of the reconciliation committee was almost negligible. With this, freed-Haliya communities found more engagement with financial institutions. Some focus group participants who were also member of community groups shared talhough they are members of such committees or groups, they are often not included in the decision-making process. A focus group participant in Jajarkot stated *'I am a member of the committee but I am not informed or aware of any meeting.'* Similarly other stated *'we are aware of meetings but those meetings do not talk about our issues and problems.'*

(c) Political participation

The political participation of the FH was found low at leadership and decision-making levels. In the survey, only 5.3 per cent of respondents stated that they were candidates/elected in the local, provincial, and federal elections held in 2022.

However, their participation as voters was encouraging. A total of 98 per cent of voter ID holders cast their vote in the last elections. Focus group participants verified this data saying, *'we have been always used as a voter bank, though our voices are never heard by the leaders.'* The survey did not ask about the leadership in political party structures, however, focus group discussions pointed out of exclusion of freed-Haliya communities in leadership positions. Some women were found as elected ward committee members, however, focus group participants stated they were only taken on board as a 'token gesture', *'our representative was uneducated, and could not make a strong representation. All she did was clap her hands'* stated focus group participants. They added, *'politics need money and we lack that. So we do not want to waste our time and energy on politics.'*

► Figure 16. Percentage of respondents as candidate/elected [N= 638]



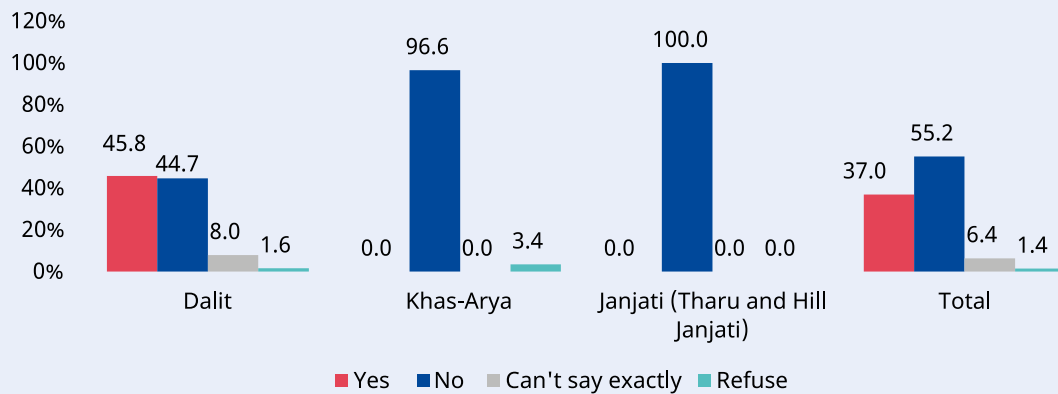
(d) Caste and gender-based discrimination and violence

Caste-based discrimination

The study found that the customary practice of caste-based discrimination and untouchability is rampant across all study areas, though there was variation across districts and villages. In the survey, a total of 37 per cent of respondents answered that they had faced caste-based discrimination and violence during the last 12 months. All respondents stated this was from the Dalit population. Looking at the Dalits only, 46 per cent of the Dalit respondents were victims of caste-based violence in the last 12 months. None of the Khas Arya and Janjati respondents shared similar experiences.

Focus group participants in Surkhet, who were mostly from the Tharu community stated *'in the Chaudhary community we do not do or face caste-based discrimination. The people from hilly areas does this and we stay away from them.'* According to the survey, across three districts, the share of such incidences against Dalit respondents was highest in Humla (78.9 per cent) and the lowest in Jajarkot (7.3 per cent). During the focus group discussions, participants stated that this is the impact of Maoist movement that the caste-based discrimination decreased in Jajarkot, however, this study was not able to further gather information about the difference between high and low discrimination levels in Humla and Jajarkot. The proportion for the same was 28.8 per cent in Surkhet. Participants did not mention any legal actions taken against such discriminative acts.

► **Figure 17. Percentage of respondents who faced caste-based discrimination and violence during the last 12 months by caste and ethnic groups [N=638]**



During a key informant interview, a female teacher (a Dalit), shared that Dalits are not able to sell their dairy products in a market in Birendranagar, Surkhet (provincial headquarters). Surprisingly, some participants stated that caste-based discrimination is higher in city areas than in rural areas. In Jajarkot, the focus group participants shared that the direct and regular type of discrimination has been reduced and they face less discrimination now. However, the other very notable point observed during discussions and visits as they do not count the incidence of 'discrimination and violence' until it is exposed in a violent form. The situation of caste discrimination was widespread in Humla.

A Dalit participant in a focus group at Simkot Humla, shared her feelings saying: *'This will leave us when we leave this world'*. A young boy shared his feelings saying *'I want to go to a place where I am not judged based on my caste identity. I am confident enough that I earn enough to eat two times meals anywhere in the world, but I don't know where I can live with dignity and respect'*. A focus group participant in Humla, Hildum municipality, shared facing discrimination even by local government officials. She shared that *'people of our village do not allow us to enter the ward office.'* Across all areas, Dalit respondents were unable to feel respected and treated equally in society.

(e) Gender-based discrimination

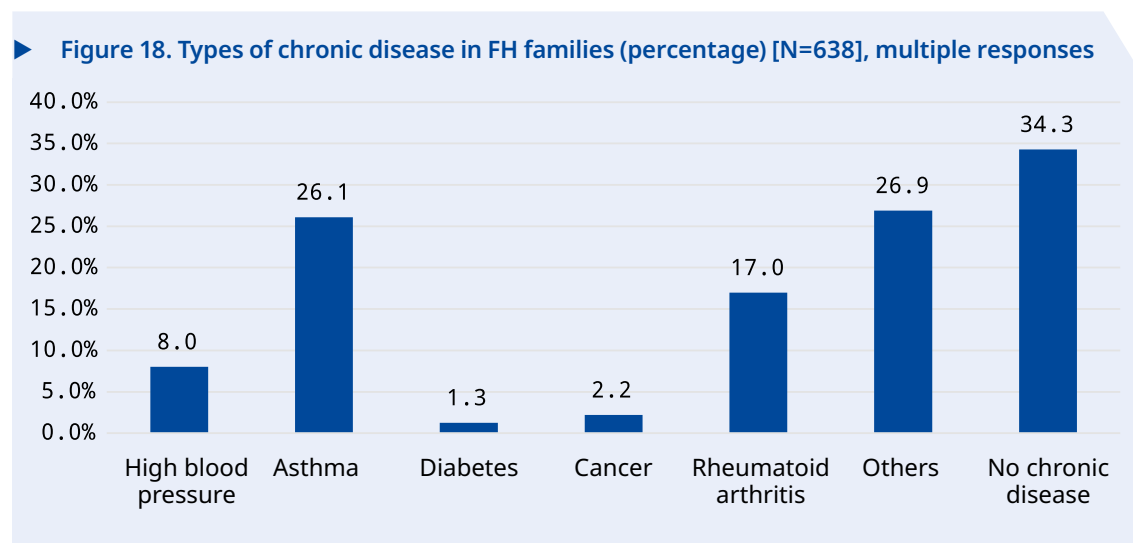
The findings revealed that gender-based discrimination is a topic rarely discussed within the freed-Haliya communities. Only 2.9 per cent of the respondents reported experiencing gender-based discrimination. This low percentage can be partly attributed to the fact that 69 per cent of the survey respondents were male family members. It is essential to acknowledge that men generally face a lesser risk of gender-based violence, as the majority of reported cases involve male perpetrators. This particular demographic composition in the survey helps partially to explain the smaller number of respondents who reported facing gender-based discrimination. Out of 200 women respondents, only five per cent stated that they experienced gender-based discrimination during the last 12 months while five per cent replied 'can't say exactly' and 0.5 per cent refused to answer.

Mixed groups participated in FGDs (men and women) and as a result, women were hesitant to speak about gender-based discrimination and violence. Participants were less vocal on gender issues compared to caste issues. However, the observations and facts showed that gender-based discrimination is a serious issue to be explored and intervened in the future days. Women participants during focus group discussions shared wage discrimination exists between men and women. According to their accounts, in instances of domestic violence or other gender discrimination, women are often unfairly blamed and discouraged from voicing their concerns. They are made to feel as though their voices carry no weight, inhibiting their ability to speak up about their experiences. Women from Dalit

communities reported double discrimination against them, caste and gender-based compared from Tharu community. Girl child marriage is seen as a huge problem in Freed-Haliya communities across three districts. The participation of young women in focus groups aged 18 to 25 carrying four to five children and in very poor health, is a serious issue meriting further investigation so as to explore further, gender related issues. A few key informant interview respondents mentioned the trafficking of women and girls as a problem. A provincial assembly member reported that due to the lack of jobs and opportunities, people have been restoring the sex trade and prostitution in the region.

(f) Health condition of Freed Haliya

The survey data showed that around two-thirds of Freed-Haliya HHs had at least one family member with chronic disease, and only 34.4 per cent HHs did not have any chronic disease patients as family members. The first and second largest share was of asthma (26.1 per cent) and arthritis (17 per cent) related to joint pains: these two diseases are easily identifiable. Another major disease mentioned was high blood pressure (eight per cent). The proportion of diabetes and cancer was 1.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively. It was also observed that very few of them go for diagnosis, and therefore, it is possible that the actual prevalence of chronic diseases among the freed-Haliya population is higher than what has been reported in this study. The largest proportion of the respondents mentioned others. Some participants shared that women are suffering from uterus prolapse problems at large. The stomach-related diseases like gastritis, ulcer, etc. also include in the others.



Across all study areas, the focus group participants including children, raised health problems as a major issue for families. For instance, most of the male participants in a FGD cohort in Chhedagad Municipality of Jajarkot district were suffering from at least one disease. During a focus group, a male participant stated, *'why be ashamed, I have a kidney problem and my wife is suffering from uterus prolapse, but I am not able to go for treatment'*. Most of the participants in all districts shared similar stories. None of them had health insurance as they cannot pay a minimum premium. Due to the bad health of the parents, children's education, career, and dreams have been impacted. The children also shared their worries about the bad health of their parents and other family members. A girl in Jajarkot, during a focus group discussion, became emotional sharing her dream as her father was bedridden and her mother was not able to take him for treatment. She was sharing financial responsibilities and was unable to go to school. Many children during focus group discussions shared their burdens and family responsibilities because of their parent's poor health conditions.

Lack of a regular income source, lack of basic food, nutrition, regular check-ups, lack of access to health services, discrimination, and child marriage, and also lack of health awareness were observed in all three districts, comparatively higher in Jajarkot and Humla districts. Having a large family of up to eight

children and very poor maternal health also showed that family health in general, and reproductive/ children's health in particular, are serious areas to be addressed and explored in freed-Haliya families in the future.

(g) Government and non-government initiatives

Since 2019, the responsibility of rehabilitation programme implementation has been transferred to the local level. The local government works autonomously to use its discretion for designing programmes for FH. However, most local governments have not designed FH-focused programmes except token support by the initiatives of some issue-sensitive local representatives. The demand of FH was not strongly visible to influence the decision of the local government.

The study findings showed that the FH rehabilitation package was insufficient to address the multi-dimensional challenges of the freed-Haliya community. The federal government's rehabilitation programme was found confined to one pillar (for example, 'to ensure safe residence') out of five pillar strategies in the rehabilitation policy framework. In addition to safe residence, livelihood, education, and health care were also immediate needs of the FH which were not prioritized in the resource allocation of the federal government. It was also a notable observation that some of the residences established through the rehabilitation grant do not fulfil the basic criteria of 'safe residence'. It has only considered the construction or repair of houses on the land with ownership. The federal government (the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare) reported the 'completion' of the rehabilitation delivery process and did not mention any specific programmes targeted to FH communities. However, the National Dalit Commission shared serious concerns regarding the rehabilitation process. The chairperson of the National Dalit Commission, Mr. Devraj Biswokarma, stated the commission is aware of the incomplete rehabilitation process and continuously raises its voices at the federal and provincial levels.

There were some initiatives to recognize the issue, but it could not be concluded in action. During the interview, an ex-member of the Policy and Planning Commission of Karnali province narrated that the freed-Haliya issues were raised in the periodic plan of Karnali province, but the provincial government did not address them through programmes and budget.

The study team observed and witnessed a very low presence of non-government initiatives in study districts. Projects were observed addressing 'Dalit' populations however specific projects/programmes targeting to Freed-Haliya population found a serious lack.

A journalist, during his interview as a key informant, shared that even the media do not cover the concerns and news of this community. He stated *'Haliyas are located in very remote areas and do not access media. We journalists also do not put effort into covering the news. Also, there is a serious lack of data from the government which is a hindrance for us.'* A large number of key informant interview respondents mentioned lack of implementation of policies and acts is a serious problem in each district. All agreed about the lack of integrated efforts to address the problem.

A key informant working in an international NGO stated that *'Donors and INGOs are also less interested in investing in these communities. The cost associated to free a person in Karnali province is 'high' and also takes a longer timeframe'. 'Difficult geography, lack of resources, also lack of sensitivity towards the issue are some of the key factors which are hindering development agencies by reaching out to these communities'* he added.

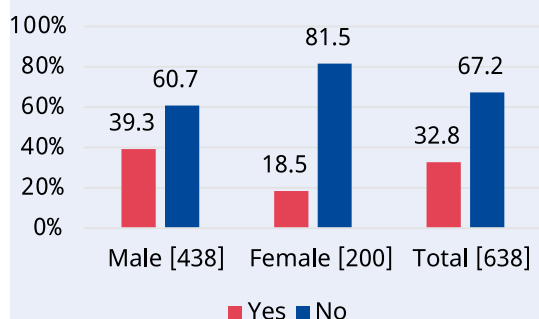
► 6.5. Situations inherent in forced labour

(a) Work situation

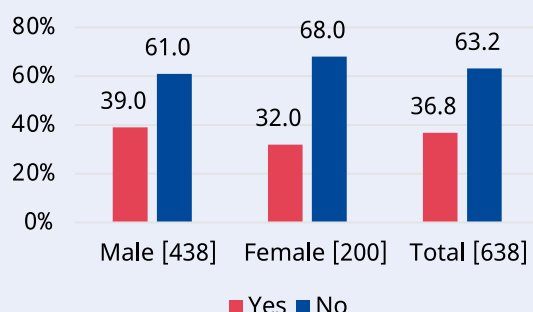
The study showed that the freed-Haliya familial income source is either a daily wage or from agricultural activities. There are no factories and/or industries in the study areas, and a very small portion of the population is found engaged in salaried jobs in the government and non-government sectors. The above data already attributed that the income opportunities are very limited for freed-Haliyas. In the survey, the respondents were asked about three types of engagement to generate income even for at least one hour in the last seven days. Of the total 638 respondents, only 32.8 per cent were engaged in any work for a wage, salary, or any other pay in the last seven days (See Figure 19.1). The proportion of respondents who worked in any kind of business, farming, or other activity to generate income was 36.8 per cent (See Figure 19.2). Likewise, a total of 22.3 per cent of respondents helped a member of the household or family with his/her paid job or business in the last seven days (See Figure 19.3). In total, 363 children, which accounts for 56.7 per cent of the sample, were found to be engaged in at least one of the three types of work mentioned during the last seven days (See Figure 19.4). Across all districts, male engagement in income activities found higher in all three types of work.

► Figure 19. Types of work done in the last seven days, even for one hour [N=638]

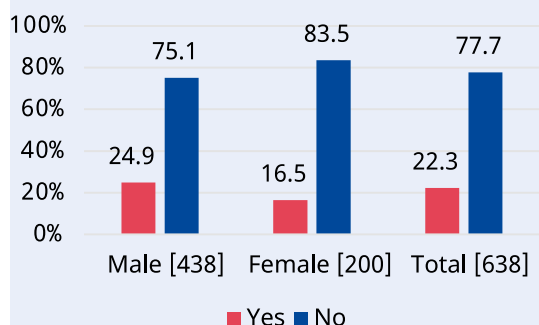
► Figure 19.1. Percentage of respondents who worked for wage, salary or any other pay



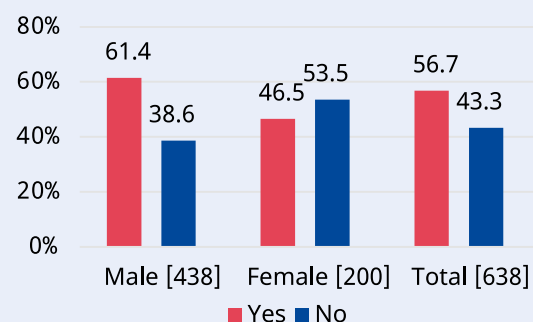
► Figure 19.2. Percentage of respondents who worked in any kind of business, farming, or other activity to generate income



► Figure 19.3. Percentage of respondents who worked HH/family members for paid work or business



► Figure 19.4. Percentage of respondents who worked in any of either three types of work



A total of 329 respondents who were working in paid work or business during the last seven days were further asked whether they expect to return to the same work or not; 89.4 per cent of them reported that they expect to return. Likewise, out of 255 respondents who worked or helped family members

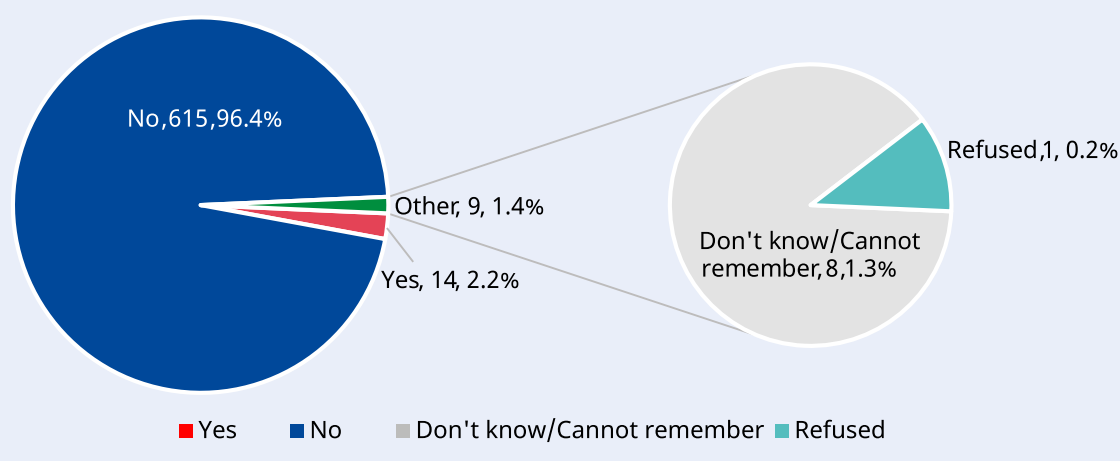
with paid work, 75 (29.4 per cent) reported that they were absent during the last seven days. However, most of the absentees (for example, 94.7 per cent) stated that they will return to the same work within three months. The main reason for absence was because of the seasonal nature of work (46.7 per cent).

► 6.6. Different reasons for being in forced labour

According to the Guidelines concerning measuring of forced labour endorsed at the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), a worker is considered a victim of forced labour²⁵ if s/he has worked both involuntarily and under the threat and menace of a penalty (coercion). Both conditions must exist simultaneously to be regarded as forced labour.

In the quantitative study, a total of 14 respondents (2.2 per cent), including five women, reported experiencing such conditions over the past three years. However, it's important to note that the overwhelming majority of respondents were not compelled to work for their landlords, were not under direct threats or coercion, and were not recruited through deceitful practices. Moreover, they expressed the belief that they have the freedom to leave their work if they wish to do so. Since their freedom was declared by the government in 2008, the study highlights a prevailing sense of independence and freedom among the *Haliya* population. Hence, the majority (96.6 per cent) reported that they had not been involved in forced labour situations during the past three years, according to their own perception.

► Figure 20. Respondents working in a forced labour situation in the last three years, either in Nepal or while working abroad [N= 638]



The study also delved into the circumstances of 14 respondents who were engaged in situations of forced labour. Out of the 14 respondents who reported being in forced labour situations, 9 of them (equivalent to 1.4 per cent of the total respondents) disclosed that they had experienced such situations in more than one job over the past three years. Among these, five individuals were currently facing similar circumstances in their present jobs. Among the respondents, only one (a female) mentioned that she had taken out a loan to secure employment. At the time she borrowed the money, she was unaware of the terms and conditions associated with the loan. However, she had already repaid the loan.

During FGDs and interviews conducted across all three study districts, the freed-*Haliya* participants shared that acquiring loans from local landlords has become challenging in recent times. The

25 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meeting_document/wcms_648619.pdf

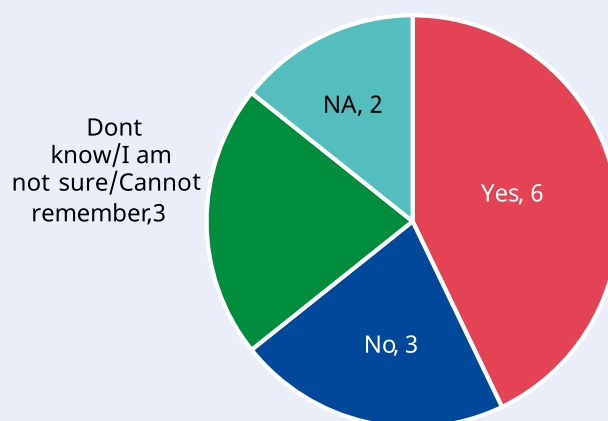
quantitative survey also revealed that only 12 per cent of respondents reported having taken loans from landlords or former masters. In rural areas, obtaining bank loans is not readily accessible for impoverished individuals. For example, a mere 7.3 per cent of loan recipients among the freed-*Haliya* population have been able to access loans from banks. This is primarily due to the cumbersome documentation procedures and collateral requirements, which deter these marginalized groups from approaching banks for financial assistance. Table 1 below shows the situation faced by 14 freed-*Haliya* working in the forced situation based on various indicators.

► Table 1. Different situations faced by freed-*Haliyas* working in a forced situation [N=638]

Indicators	Yes		No		Don't know		Refused	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Have you ever been made to take on this job under the decision of a third person without your consent?	8	1.3	6	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to take the job to repay a debt linked to the job with the employer or recruiter?	5	0.8	9	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to work regularly overtime on call, or out of working hours that was not previously agreed with the employer?	6	0.9	8	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to work for no wages or very low wages below than agreed?	8	1.3	6	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to work in hazardous conditions without your consent?	7	1.1	7	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to live in degrading conditions imposed by employer without your consent?	7	1.1	6	0.9	1	0.2	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to perform a job different in nature than that specified during the recruitment without your consent?	4	0.6	10	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to perform illicit activities without your consent?	3	0.5	11	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been obliged to use of alcohol or drugs without your consent?	2	0.3	12	1.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to work for other employers than agreed?	5	0.8	9	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever been made to stay in the job for longer time than agreed without your consent?	10	1.6	2	0.3	1	0.2	1	0.2
Have you ever been made to work with no or limited freedom to terminate work contract?	2	0.3	11	1.7	1	0.2	0	0.0
Have you ever been any cases other than those I have already mentioned?	4	0.6	10	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

The quantitative survey revealed that among the 14 freed-Haliya respondents who encountered forced labour situations, less than half of them (6 individuals) were capable of refusing to be in those situations. In contrast, three individuals were unable to decline such circumstances, and an equal number of respondents either lacked awareness or were unable to provide information about their ability to refuse. The study delved deeper into the factors contributing to the inability to reject these situations. The Table 2 below illustrates the experiences of these three individuals based on various indicators.

► **Figure 21. Individuals who were in position to refuse the situation of compulsory working conditions [N=13]**



► **Table 2. Reasons behind being obliged to be in a forced labour situation [N=638]**

Indicators	Yes		No		Don't know		Refused	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do/did you need money?	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Are/were you fear of threats and violence against yourself such as physical abuse, corporal punishment, sexual abuse?	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Are/were you fear of threats and violence against your family, relatives or close associates?	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Do/did you not pay back your debt with employer/ recruiter?	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Does/did your employer threaten to impose a fine or financial penalty?	2	0.3	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Are/were you under constant surveillance?	1	0.2	2	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Are/were you in an isolated place, with no access to outside world?	1	0.2	2	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Is/was your work permit renewal done by your employers?	1	0.2	2	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Do/did you have your documents confiscated such as ID, passport, residence permits, travel documents, etc.?	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Does/did your employer know that you have no other option to survive?	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Do/did your employer or recruiter threaten you of dismissal, deportation, report to police/immigration authorities, or to take legal action?	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Are/were you waiting for payment of due wages or other promised benefits?	2	0.3	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Do/did you have any cases other than those I have already mentioned?	1	0.2	2	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0

While the percentage of individuals exposed to forced labour appears relatively low, it is observed that certain risk factors and indicators associated with forced labour persist within their work conditions. This observation is supported by the analysis of evidence from Humla, which suggests the existence of such indicators despite respondents' self-reported perceptions. Table 3 below illustrates the circumstances of 248 respondents in Humla. During the survey, prior to inquiring about their experiences with forced labour, the enumerators provided an explanation of potential situations, allowing the respondents to provide their own accounts. These responses were documented in the survey form which has been analyzed here to show the situation and risks factors of forced labour. In total 248 respondents in Humla, 63.5 per cent respondents stated that working for landlord is their own compulsion because of their poor economic condition, the need for food and clothes, and only work opportunity in the village. On occasions, they encounter threats or are provided with false assurances, which they readily accept due to their dire circumstances. Their primary motivation is to secure their basic sustenance.

► Table 3. Work compulsion situations stated by respondents in Humla [N=248]

Work compulsion situation stated by the respondents in Humla		N	%
Compulsory like condition	Own compulsion/weakness/hope (for food/cloths, family expense	62	25.0
	Compulsion because of poverty/economic hardship	49	19.8
	Unable to leave by own (working for income/traditional work/etc.)	46	18.5
	Working without will for subsistence	11	4.4
	Give false assurance to engage in work	11	4.4
	Sometimes threats of violence/false assurance	6	2.4
	Compulsion because of landlessness	4	1.6
	Illness/Cannot do other work	3	1.2
	Compulsion because of joblessness/unemployment	2	.8
Not a compulsory condition	Seasonal work only/master's work	13	5.2
	Own will (for income/wages/subsistence/business)	9	3.6
	Permanent/regular work/own business/traditional work	3	1.2
	Other	3	1.2
	No reason	17	6.9
	Do not know/do not feel anything	5	2.0
	NA	4	1.6
Total		248	100.0 %

Income opportunities are notably limited, primarily stemming from seasonal agricultural activities and occasional construction work. Consequently, a significant majority found themselves working for former masters in exchange for their daily sustenance. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that most of them refrained from openly discussing this situation and instead reported to rationalize their perceived sense of freedom. During FGDs and other interviews conducted with Freed-Haliya leaders, it became evident that there exists a palpable fear of jeopardizing their subsistence options by speaking out against their employers/former masters. They hold the belief that there are no viable work alternatives available to them if they were to voice their grievances against these employers.

The ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) defines, in its Article 2, forced or compulsory labour for the purposes of the Convention as *“all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the stated person has not offered himself voluntarily.”*

For statistical purposes, a person is classified as being in forced labour if engaged during a specified reference period in any work that is both under the threat of menace of a penalty and involuntary. Both conditions must exist for this to be statistically regraded as forced labour.

The adult forced labour covers four principal dimensions- 1) *“Unfree recruitment”* which covers both forced and deceptive recruitment, 2) *“work and life under duress”* which covers adverse working or living situations imposed on a person by the use of force, penalty or menace of penalty, 3) *“impossibility of leaving an employer”* when leaving entails a penalty or risk to the worker and 4) *“penalty or menace of penalty (means of coercion)”* may be applied directly to the worker or to members of his or her family.

The qualitative data verified this fact by the statement shared by the focus group participants such as *‘we do not go to work for landowners if we do not want’, and ‘we send our children to school, not to landowner’s house.’* A Tharu woman from Surkhet, during a focus group discussion, stated, *‘we do not have to stay as slaves like before until we repay our loans after the government declaration.’* This shows that emancipation has brought a sense of freedom and built-up confidence among the communities.

However, at the same time, the qualitative data, observations, and cases collected during the study confirmed that the majority of the Freed-Haliya families are living a very vulnerable life to forced labour or living a life similar to forced labour. As the data shows, the majority of the families have received ‘Gha’ category cards (61 per cent) which means as per the record they do have land and a house already. But the study team found that among the many families, the land they were living on was not their registered land, that was either government land “Ailani” or landowner’s land. This does not allow them to own or control the land without the land certificate, which means they are landless in reality.

Data shows that 85 per cent of the families are living in the same place for the last 30 years, which means they are living on a piece of land that does not belong to them. Out of the total respondents, 20.1 per cent did not have a land certificate yet. Additionally, a total of 25.1 families were living in houses built on land without a land certificate. Likewise, 91 per cent of the respondents stated that they have not received any other support besides the rehabilitation package which shows that they do not have any alternative income source. Moreover, 26 per cent of the respondents stated it took more than five years to receive rehabilitation support, and 36 per cent stated it took two years, it is clear that they had to continue working in the same condition as before.

In the one hand these communities are trying to live a free life, on the other hand, lacking alternative sources of livelihood, they are having frustration too. During the focus group discussions, some very serious statements were made. For example, a woman in Humla stated *‘in the past my whole family used to work as Haliya. We used to work the whole year and at least we were not starving for food. But now, we are free but do not have jobs and food either. Our situation is getting worse.’* Another participant shares *‘the houses that were renovated are already torn apart. We cannot buy materials, our houses are made of stones and mud, and our whole family lives in one room.’* Another participant from Humla shares *‘we eat only when we have something to eat, but many days we don’t have anything to eat so we do not have the option of not working for landowners.’* This showed that families are working with landowners “by choice” but “without options”. This situation creates a vulnerability of offering him/herself as ‘forced labour’ including children and the opportunity for the employer/landowners to take advantage of the situation, which has been supported by the evidence during the study. *‘I work for a landowner because I do not have any other option. I cannot leave because if I leave my children to starve for food,’ a survey respondent says.* A Freed-Haliya says, *‘I go to work for the landowner voluntarily to make two meals. I don’t have an option. No matter how much I am paid or not.’*

Data revealed some serious issues of forced labour in the communities. A family in Humla district shared that they are living on the landowner's piece of land. In return, the whole family has to work for the landowner. The father works on the farm, transporting the goods, plowing the field, and as a cobbler. The wife works the household chores and the children are busy on the farm and rearing the cattle. None of the children have gone to school because they are busy all the time working for the landowner. The family cannot move anywhere as they do not own land and lack professional skills and opportunities. They live under the fear that if they do not obey landowners, they will be kicked out from houses and off land by the landowner. So, even being 'freed' by law, many families are subjugated by landowners to date in similar ways.

In addition, the study found incidences of labour trafficking within the Freed-*Haliya* communities. In a focus group discussion in Surkhet district, a women participant shared that *'We (both men and women) go to India (Simla) for labour work often during the winter season. In recent years, we have going there through contractors. These contractors gather labourers from various locations in a group and provide transportation costs. Some contractors make agreements with us in advance and give a token amount as an advance payment. However, if we are unable to fulfill our obligations, the contractor may threaten to take away our land.'*

Though the survey data provides a smaller number of families experiencing the forced labour situation (14), the qualitative data provides enough evidence of Freed-*Haliya* families falling back into risk of labour exploitation. Lack of land ownership, still living under the master's land and under control, lack of livelihood opportunities, very low education rate though high drop-out rate among children, prevalent discriminations based on caste and gender are some of the Indicators adding the risks factors to forced or bonded labour.

► 6.7. Land ownership status and risks of forced labour

The Freed-*Haliyas* were agriculture-bonded labour. Their landlessness and food insecure status compelled them to serve as *Haliya* for landlords. The survey has explored the current land ownership status of Freed-*Haliya* HHs in Karnali and found that one in every five HHs (for example, 20.1 per cent) were absolute landless. The absolute landless was highest in Humla (28.6 per cent) whereas it was the lowest in Surkhet (7.4 per cent). A total of 23.4 per cent Freed-*Haliya* HHs in Jajarkot were landless. The percentage of HHs owning more than one hectare of land was only 0.8 per cent which also came all from Surkhet. Likewise, the proportion of HHs with 0.5 to 1 hectare of land ownership was just 2.2 per cent. It reveals that the majority of Freed-*Haliya* are in near landless status. 'As outlined in the Agriculture Development Strategy (2015 to 2035) of the Nepalese government, individuals within the rural population possessing land holdings of less than 0.5 hectares are categorized as nearly landless. Farmers with land holdings ranging from 0.5 hectares to 1 hectare are categorized as subsistence farmers, while those with land holdings ranging from more than 1 hectare to 5 hectares are classified as small commercial farmers.'²⁶ Though it was not explored in the survey, during the discussion in the communities and the walk within the vicinity of the Freed-*Haliyas* settlement, it was observed the quality of land is also poor, and most of the land lacks an irrigation facility. A significant portion of them must source their sustenance from external means rather than solely relying on their own farmland.

26 <https://moald.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ADS-Final-English-Part-1-2-combined.pdf>

► Table 4. Land size owned by respondent HHs by district

Land size owned	Surkhet		Jajarkot		Humla		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0 hectare (Landless)	16	7.4	41	23.4	71	28.6	128	20.1
0.0001 to 0.25 hectare	178	82.8	111	63.4	165	66.5	454	71.2
0.25001 to 0.50 hectare	12	5.6	21	12.0	4	1.6	37	5.8
0.5001 to 1 hectare	4	1.9	2	1.1	8	3.2	14	2.2
> 1 hectare	5	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	0.8
Total	215	100.0	175	100.0	248	100.0	638	100.0

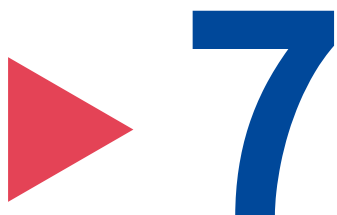
Across ID categories, the absolute landlessness was highest among 'Gha' category freed-*Haliya*, and the lowest (for example, 6.1 per cent) among 'Kha' category Freed *Haliya*. The proportion of absolute landless people in 'Ka' and 'Ga' categories was 13.3 per cent and 14.8 per cent respectively. As per the categorization, 'Ka' category did not have their own land and house, therefore, they were provided support for land and house. Therefore, principally all 'Ka' categories should have land ownership, but data shows a notable percentage of absolute landlessness among 'Ka' category too. Data triangulation affirmed that the families of ID holders have now split, and the split HH lacks land ownership for one part of family. In addition to this main reason, in the case of other categories, there was incorrect reporting and documentation regarding land ownership. Some of them were living in master's or publicly owned land, and therefore, they reported the land as their 'own land', although they did not legally own it. Therefore, those families were treated as land holders. As result, the land ownership was not in their name.

During FGDs, the participants shared the number of such cases. This is a serious question to the rehabilitation programme, as its objective is to provide land and housing to every family liberated from *Haliya* bondage. The 'Kha' category had houses therefore, the land with their houses was registered in their name, and house repairing support was provided. The 'Ga' category had its own land therefore, house construction support was provided. Under this category too, the proportion of landless is significant. The 'Gha' category had both land and house; therefore, they received house repairing support only.

► Table 5. Land sizes owned by respondent HHs by ID categories

Land size owned	Ka (Red)		Kha (Brown)		Ga (Green)		Gha (White)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0 hectare (Landless)	21	13.3	4	6.1	4	14.8	99	25.6	128	20.1
0.0001 to 0.25 hectare	117	74.1	60	90.9	20	74.1	257	66.4	454	71.2
0.25001 to 0.50 hectare	14	8.9	2	3.0	3	11.1	18	4.7	37	5.8
0.5001 to 1 hectare	4	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	2.6	14	2.2
> 1 hectare	2	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.8	5	0.8
Total	158	100.0 %	66	100.0 %	27	100.0 %	387	100.0 %	638	100.0 %

The above quantitative and qualitative data has provided additional evidence that landlessness is a key factor in putting families into forced or bonded labour situations. Having many families landless or near landless, even if the land owned is non-fertile, barren land, without access to livelihood options or other basic infrastructures forces families to either migrate to the cities or India for earning or work for masters' land. When families have no options for livelihood and fall into serious hand-to-mouth problems, there is a high risk that these populations fall under coercion, or into exploitative situations.



Working children and the child labour situation in the Freed-*Haliya* community

► 7.1. Prevalence of child labour

To assess the situation of working children and child labour, a comprehensive data collection process was undertaken. This involved gathering specific information about children through a household survey. The survey encompassed data from 900 children aged 5 to 17 years residing in 638 sampled households of freed-*Haliya* communities. Of the total children 437 (48.6 per cent) were girls, and 463 (51.4 per cent) were boys. The primary survey respondents, either the household heads or guardians of the respective children, provided the necessary information about the children. In order to validate and enhance the interpretation of the survey findings, focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with the children.

The study has analysed the situation of working children and child labour status in the freed-*Haliya* community, focusing on major types of work. The major types of children's work accounted in the survey include (1) works for someone else for pay in the reference year (2) works for business or farm activities to generate income (3) helping family members in business or farm activities (4) engaging in unpaid activity to produce goods for consumption by their own household or family (5) participating in unpaid apprenticeship, internship, or similar training in a workplace and (6) performing household chores. The involvement of children in hazardous labour has also been investigated. By examining these various types of work, the study aims to gain a better understanding of the working conditions and prevalence of child labour within the freed-*Haliya* community.

Out of 900 children in the sampled households, two thirds of the children (i.e., 599, 66.6 per cent) were 'working children' whereas the remaining 33.4 per cent were 'non-working children'. The overall number of working children (599) represents the highest count of children engaged in any of the seven types of work. Notably, house-hold chores account for the largest number of working children. On

the other hand, the non-working children (301) are calculated by subtracting the number of working children from the total number of children.

The survey revealed that out of 900 children from 5 to 17 years of age in the sample households, 6.9 per cent were working for someone else for pay. The proportion of children working in business, farms and other activities was 8.1 per cent of children whereas a total of 35 per cent of children were found helping family members in their business or on-farm activities. At least 54.4 per cent of children were involved in some type of household unpaid activity to produce goods for consumption by their own household or family. Since there are limited opportunities for an apprenticeship, internship, or similar training in a workplace, only one child was engaged in such work. Approximately two-thirds (66.6 per cent) of children were working on household chores. A total of 192 (21.3 per cent) were involved in hazardous work.

The survey also included the collection of data on the duration of children's engagement in specific types of work. This information was utilized to estimate the prevalence of child labour in alignment with Nepal's laws and regulations addressing child labour. As per the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act (2000) of Nepal,²⁷ employing children below the age of 14 years is prohibited by law. Any child under the age of 14 working with their parents is also considered child labour. However, 15–17-year-olds are allowed to work non-hazardous jobs for up to six hours per day or 36 hours per week during the daytime. The act also prohibits the employment of those younger than 16 years of age in hazardous work.

According to the Nepal's 'Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2056 (2000)', there are strict provisions prohibiting the engagement of children in labour. Section 3 (1) of the act states that no child under the age of 14 shall be employed as a labourer. Furthermore, Section 3(2) explicitly prohibits the involvement of children in any risky businesses or activities listed in the schedule. The Act also establishes specific limits for time to engage in works. Section 9 (1) of the act specifies that a child should not be engaged in work between six o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning. Likewise, Section 9 (2) states that a child should not work for more than six hours a day or exceed a total of thirty-six hours in a week, regardless of whether additional remuneration is provided.

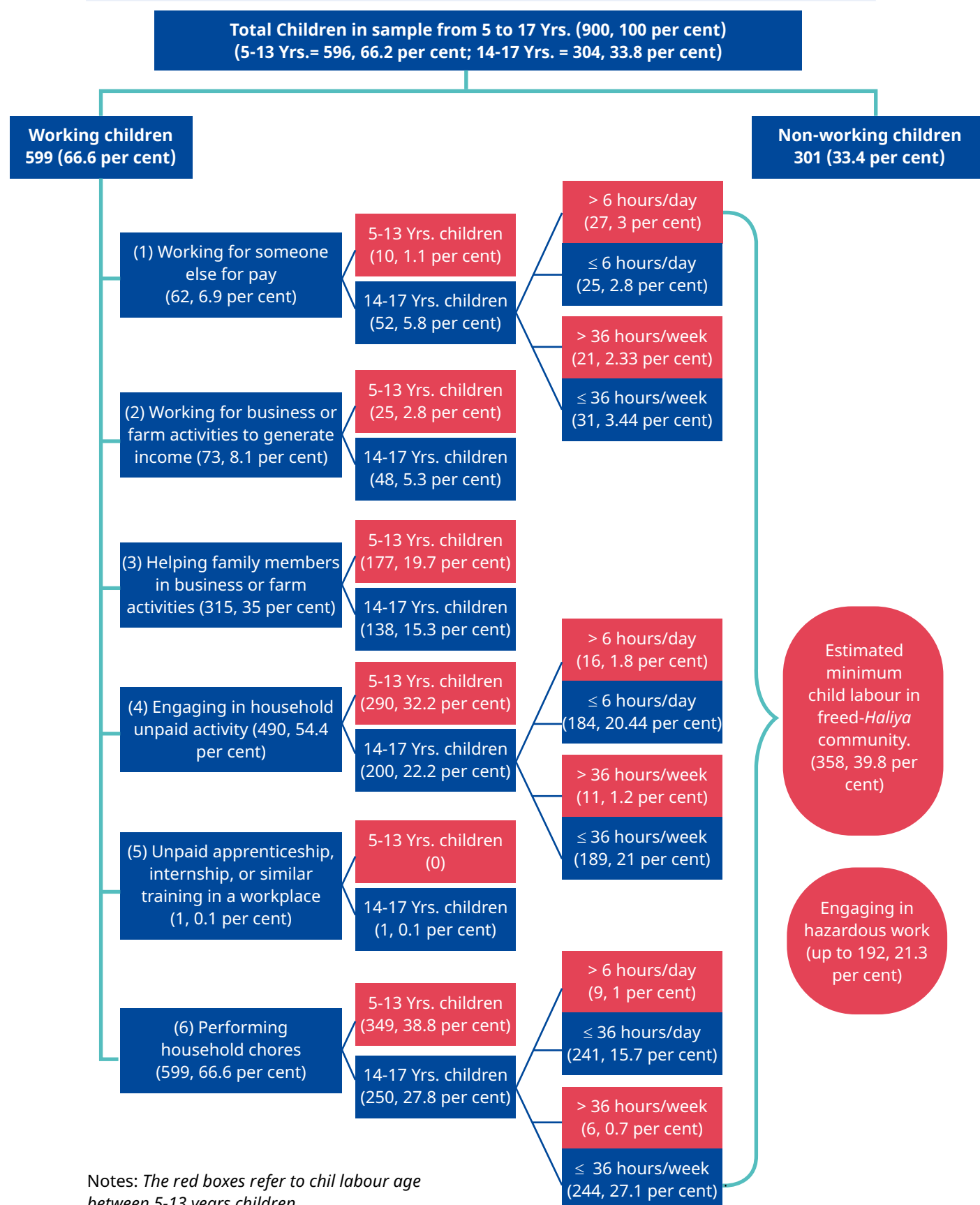
Diagram 1 below presents a summary of the various work categories performed by freed-Haliya children, and an estimation of working children and child labour.

It is estimated that out of 900 children in the sample, approximately 358 (39.8 per cent) fall under child labour (*See diagram 1*). This prevalence of child labour within the freed-Haliya communities in Nepal appears to be significantly higher than the national average. According to the *Nepal Child Labour Report 2021*,²⁸ an estimated 15.3 per cent children aged 5 to 17 were engaged in child labour in Nepal. Further analysis of estimated child labour under each type of work are also analysed in separate sub-sections below, including a discussion on the engagement of children in work, as well as the impact of child labour on education and health.

²⁷ <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/?cat=367>

²⁸ www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_784225.pdf

► Diagram 1. Estimation of child labour prevalence in freed-Haliya community



Each child in the sample may be in one or more situations at the same time. Therefore, the total number of children across all situations exceeds the total number of children surveyed.

► 7.2. Children working for someone else for pay

As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, out of 900 children at least 66.6 per cent (i.e. 599) were working children. The survey has especially examined the children working for someone else for pay. The survey data revealed that a total of 6.9 per cent were working for someone else for pay during the last 12 months for one or more hours. Across age groups, the proportion of working children among aged 14 to 17 years was 17.1 per cent where it was 1.7 per cent of the children aged 5 to 13 years were involved in such work. This data is verified with the qualitative data of the study as most of the children's drop out happens from grade five to six. The focus group discussions says that male children start working, supporting families, or go to India with their parents (mostly father) to earn money. It is also notable findings that the children aged of 5 to 13 were also working to earn money.

The data also shows gender wise disparities in paid work. The proportion of boys involved in paid work was higher than that of girls for both age groups. Among the age group of 14 to 17, 24.7 per cent of the boys and 9.3 per cent of the girls were working for pay. Likewise, among age group of 5 to 13 years, 2.6 per cent of the boys and 0.7 per cent of the girls were working.

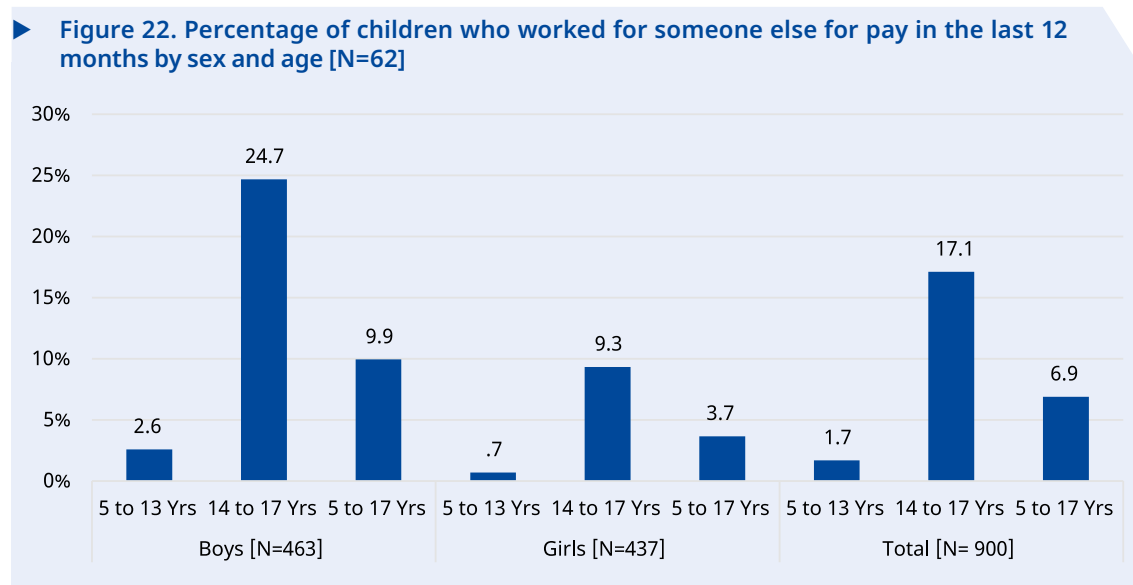
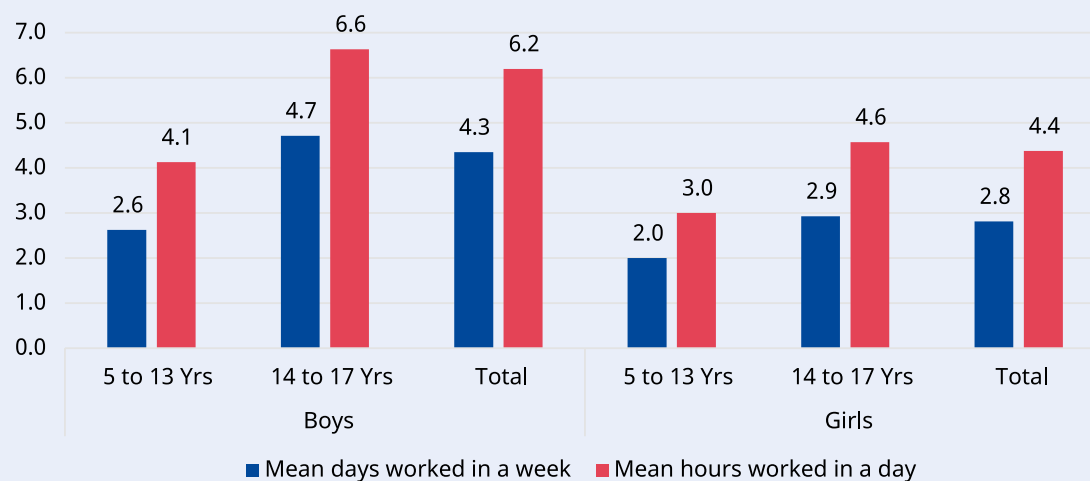


Table 6 below illustrates the working hours of the children according to their age and sex. The percentage shown in the table is calculated against total 900 children. The survey data shows that 21 children aged 14 to 17 years were working more than 36 hours a week for pay or income, whereas 27 were working more than six hours in a day. This means that up to a number of 27 i.e. 8.8 per cent of total 304 children aged 14 to 17 years, and three per cent of the total 900 children in the study fall under child labour as per the law of Nepal. Likewise, ten children (1.1 per cent in total) were working which all fall under child labour. It clearly shows that out of 62 children working for at 37 falls under the child labour as per the law of the country which is 4.1 per cent of total freed-*Haliya* children in the sample. In the freed-*Haliya* community, the proportion of boys falling under in child labour particularly in the paid work was higher (for example, 31, 6.7 per cent of 463 boys) than their female counterparts (for example, 6, 1.2 per cent of 437 girls).

► **Table 6. Number of hours worked by children in a week for pay/income by sex and age group [N=900]**

Sex and age		≤ 6 hours/day		> 6 hours/day		≤ 36 hours/week		> 36 hours/week		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Boys	5 to 13 Years	7	0.8	1	0.1	7	0.8	1	0.1	8	0.9
	14 to 17 Years	15	1.7	23	2.6	19	2.1	19	2.1	38	4.2
	5 to 17 years	22	2.4	24	2.7	26	2.9	20	2.2	46	5.1
Girls	5 to 13 Years	2	0.2	0	0.0	2	0.2	0	0.0	2	0.2
	14 to 17 Years	10	1.1	4	0.4	12	1.3	2	0.2	14	1.6
	5 to 17 years	12	1.3	4	0.4	14	1.6	2	0.2	16	1.8
Total	5 to 13 Years	9	1.0	1	0.1	9	1.0	1	0.1	10	1.1
	14 to 17 Years	25	2.8	27	3.0	31	3.4	21	2.3	52	5.8
	5 to 17 years	34	3.8	28	3.1	40	4.4	22	2.4	62	6.9

Figure 23 illustrates the average number of days worked per week and the average number of hours worked per day for paid work among freed-*Haliya* children, categorized by age and sex sub-groups.

► **Figure 23. Mean working hours of children working for someone else for pay [N=62]**

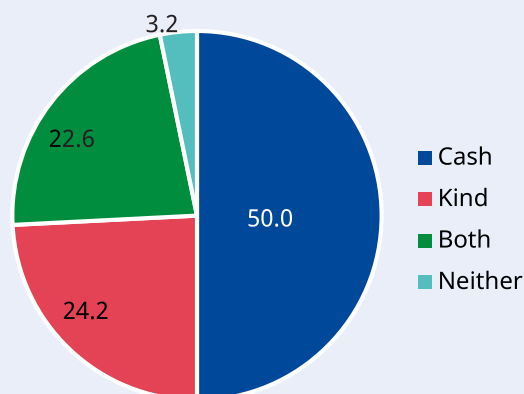
► 7.3. Types of payment made to children

Out of working children, 62 (seven per cent) are working as paid labourers. Among them, 24.2 per cent are paid only in kind, while 50 per cent are paid in cash and 22.6 per cent are paid in both cash and kind. Additionally, 3.2 per cent of children were not paid at all. Out of those who received payment in cash, only 62 per cent received full payment, while the rest were either not paid or paid partially. The qualitative data verifies the survey data as many children are still working for landowners as their parents are living in landowner's land. As parents do not own land, they have to work

for landowners' family, especially in the farm or rearing cattle, or household chores. The qualitative data says they are not paid, nightly in cash or in kind.

During discussions and interviews it is found that some children are still compelled to work for landowners without receiving any payment or incentives and are referred to as 'Baure'. In the Humla region, this practice is common, where a freed-*Haliya's* child works for landowners because their parents also work for them. The children not only take care of their own few goats while grazing, but they are also responsible for looking after a large number of cattle and goats belonging to the landlords. Despite their service, the landlords often treat them as if they are working for themselves. However, in reality, these children are serving the landlords and their livestock. The only compensation they receive is in the form of food or other incentives, such as rice or millet.

► Figure 24. Types of payment made to children (percentage) [N=638]



► Forced labour of children

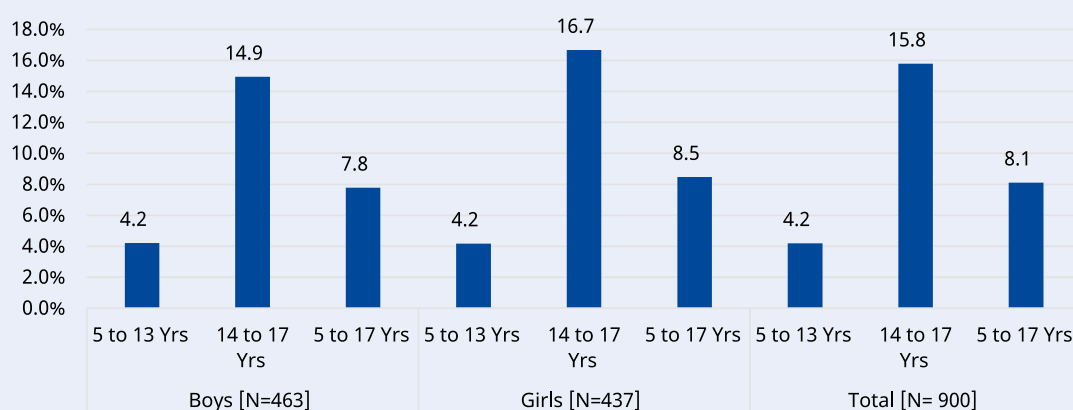
Forced labour of children is defined as work performed by a child during a specified reference period falling under one of the following categories:

- (i) work performed for a third party, under threat or menace of any penalty applied by a third party (other than the child's own parents) either on the child directly or the child's parents; or
- (ii) work performed with or for the child's parents, under threat or menace of any penalty applied by a third party (other than the child's parents) either on the child directly or the child's parents; or
- (iii) work performed with or for the child's parents where one or both parents are themselves in a situation of forced labour; or
- (iv) work performed in any one of the following worst forms of child labour: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, [as well as forced or compulsory labour], including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties.

► 7.4. Children working in businesses or on farms to generate income

The survey result shows that a total of 8.1 per cent of children worked in business or on farms to generate income. This means they are directly contributing to families for income generation. Out of that a total 4.2 per cent of children were aged of 5 to 13 years. It is seen that the children aged between 14 to 17 years are mostly engaged in supporting families for income generation. The data shows that 14.9 per cent boys are helping families with income generation whereas 16.7 per cent girls are doing the same. This shows that the girls are comparatively helping families to generate income higher than boys. In total also 15.8 per cent of children aged between 14 to 17 years are working in business or on farms to generate income for families.

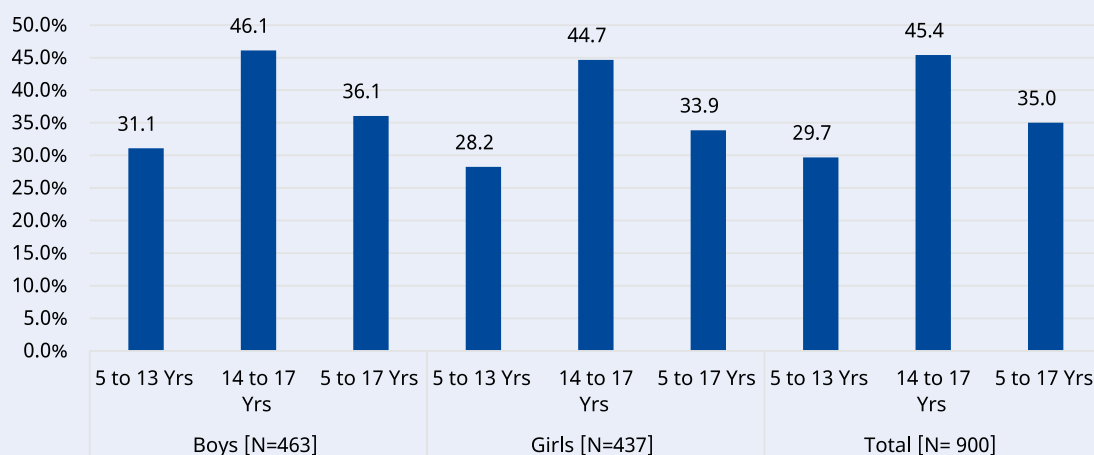
► Figure 25. Number of children working in business, farm or other activities for income



► 7.5. Children helping their family members in businesses or farms

The study shows that in all three districts, a significant number of children are engaged in helping family members' work either in business or on farms. The survey result shows that a total of 35 per cent of children aged between 5 to 17 years help family members' work. Disaggregation to boys and girls, the study shows that boy's number is high (46.1 per cent) in comparison to girls (44.7 per cent) however, even children aged between 5 to 13 years are engaged in supporting family business or farm. A total of 31 per cent boys and 28.2 per cent girls age between 5 to 13 are supporting families. In total 29.7 per cent of children age between 5 to 13 are engaged in family support, either in farming or business.

► Figure 26. Number of children helping family members in business or farm



(a) Unpaid activity to produce goods for consumption by own household or family

According to survey data, out of 900 children from 5 to 17 years, at least 490 children (for example, 54.4 per cent) were involved in some type of unpaid activity to produce goods for consumption by own household or family. The three major household unpaid activities done by children were fetching water (31 per cent), working on a farm (31 per cent) and collecting firewood (26 per cent).

► Table 7. Percentage of children working for unpaid activity by age groups, multiple responses

Types of unpaid activity	5 to 13 Years		14 to 17 Years		5 to 17 Years	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Work in farming, rearing animals, and/or fishing for consumption by your household or family	150	25.2	126	41.4	276	30.7
Help to gather wild food for consumption by your household or family,	1	0.2	2	0.7	3	0.3
Go hunting for consumption by your household or family	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.1
Help to prepare preserved food or drinks for storage for consumption by your household or family	15	2.5	14	4.6	29	3.2
Do construction work to build, renovate or extend the family home or help a family member with similar work	3	0.5	1	0.3	4	0.4
Spend time making goods for use by your household or family	1	0.2	3	1.0	4	0.4
Fetch water from natural or public sources for use by your household or family	179	30.0	103	33.9	282	31.3
Collect firewood for use as a fuel by your household or family	122	20.5	114	37.5	236	26.2
None	306	51.3	104	34.2	410	45.6
Total	596		304		900	

(b) Workplace violence against working children

According to the study, children working for income, whether it be through paid work or assisting their family's business, experience physical and mental abuse in their workplaces. Out of the 388 working children, 3.4 per cent reported experiencing physical abuse, which included instances of being slapped, beaten, or punched. Additionally, 2.6 per cent of the children raised concerns about their safety, expressing fear and being threatened by their employers. Similarly, 1.5 per cent of the children disclosed feelings of shame, humiliation, and guilt while working.

► Case-3. Urmila dreams of becoming a nurse!

Urmila Kami (name changed), 13 years of age, is the second oldest child in her family. She has one older and five younger siblings. Urmila's parents are 'ka' category freed-*Haliya*. They are all living in a house received by the government's rehabilitation package. Urmila's father works as a labourer in the village, which is the one and only source of income in the family. Her family struggles for day-to-day needs, including two-time meals.

One day, Urmila's father received a suggestion to send Urmila to the district headquarters, in an Ashram. He got this suggestion from the Rural Municipality deputy chair. The condition was if Urmila lived there, helped in the morning and evening, she could continue her education. The Ashram was for orphan children, run by some individuals. Though Urmila was not an orphan, her parents sent her to Ashram, thinking that at least she could eat twice a day and continue school. But something different happened when Urmila joined the Ashram. Urmila was admitted to school, but since she was forced to work all the time, she was not able to regularly attend school and focus on studying. She was discriminated against based on her caste, and not allowed to enter the kitchen. She was insulted, humiliated and inhumanly treated. After a year, Urmila ran away from the Ashram and returned home.

Upon returning, her education came to a halt as her parents lacked the funds to cover expenses such as clothing, books, and other related costs. Nowadays, Urmila is helping her parents with daily income. She goes to work in the field and gets some grains/food in return. She collects firewood, takes care of her younger siblings, and helps with household chores as much as she can. Urmila dreams of becoming a nurse.

(c) Children performing household chores

Out of 900 children in the study, approximately two-thirds (66.6 per cent) were working on HH chores. This data clearly shows that children even below 14 years are engaged in household-level work. The respondents reported that shopping, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning house/utensils, and care of children/old/sick/handicapped are the major five HH chores done by children. According to children FGD, house cleaning also had a bigger share among HH chores. This relates to the number of children not attending school in the last twelve months. The information gathered during FGDs also shows that the children supporting families are not able to attend school regularly. It is also noticeable that in contrast to paid work, a higher proportion of girls (69.3 per cent out of 437) were engaged in household chores compared to boys (63.9 per cent out of 463).

► Table 8. Percentage of children performing HH chores, multiple responses

Type of HH chores	5 to 13 Years		14 to 17 Years		5 to 17 Years	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Shopping	211	35.4	132	43.4	343	38.1
Repair of household equipment	19	3.2	14	4.6	33	3.7
Cooking	169	28.4	193	63.5	362	40.2
Cleaning of the house/utensils	64	10.7	65	21.4	129	14.3
Washing/ironing of the clothes	126	21.1	161	53.0	287	31.9
Care for children/old/sick/ handicapped person	60	10.1	49	16.1	109	12.1
Any other household tasks	214	35.9	128	42.1	342	38.0
None	247	41.4	54	17.8	301	33.4
Total	596		304		900	

Table 9 presents data indicating that only six children aged 14 to 17 years were found to be working more than 36 hours per week for household chores, while nine children were working for more than six hours 4a day. This means that a total of nine children, which accounts one per cent of the total 900 children in the study, can be classified as child labour according to Nepal's laws. Likewise, a total of 349 (38.8%) children between the ages of five and 13 were engaged in work, all of whom qualify as child labour according to the law.

► Table 9. Number of hours worked by children in a week for HH chores by sex and age groups [N=900]

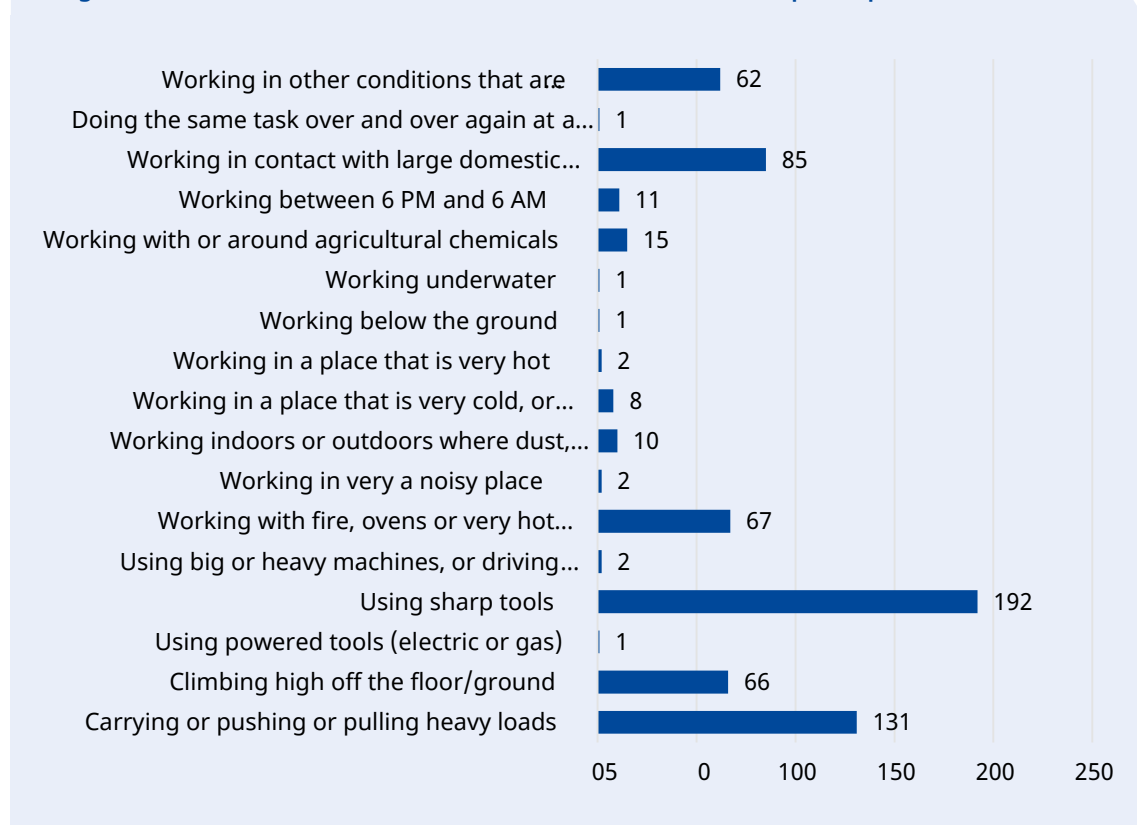
Sex and age		≤ 6 hours/day		> 6 hours/day		≤ 36 hours/ week		> 36 hours/ week		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Boys	5 to 13 Yrs	175	19.4	3	0.3	176	19.6	2	0.2	178	19.8
	14 to 17 Yrs	115	12.8	3	0.3	116	12.9	2	0.2	118	13.1
	5 to 17 Yrs	290	32.2	6	0.7	292	32.4	4	0.4	296	32.9
Girls	5 to 13 Yrs	168	18.7	3	0.3	171	19.0	0	0.0	171	19.0
	14 to 17 Yrs	126	14.0	6	0.7	128	14.2	4	0.4	132	14.7
	5 to 17 Yrs	294	32.7	9	1.0	299	33.2	4	0.4	303	33.7
Total	5 to 13 Yrs	343	38.1	6	0.7	347	38.6	2	0.2	349	38.8
	14 to 17 Yrs	241	26.8	9	1.0	244	27.1	6	0.7	250	27.8
	5 to 17 Yrs	584	64.9	15	1.7	591	65.7	8	0.9	599	66.6

(d) Children in hazardous work

The data presented shows that Freed-Haliya children are involved in hazardous work as defined by exposure to hazardous conditions, listed in Figure 27. The main aim of this figure is to highlight the major types of hazardous work that FH children encounter. It is important to note that the percentages shown in this section are calculated based on the total number of children included in the study. Out of the children who work for pay, support their family's business or work, or engage in unpaid household activities, 192 were found to be involved in various types of hazardous work. This number

192 represents 21.3 per cent of the total 900 children included in the study. Notably, the largest proportion of children—192 (21.3 per cent)- were reported to use different kinds of sharp tools and equipment such as knife, matches, axe. The second largest group-131 (14.6 per cent)- were involved in carrying or pushing or pulling heavy loads. Similarly, 85 (9.4 per cent) children worked in contact with large domestic animals (such as oxen and buffalos), while 67 (7.4 per cent) were exposed to fire, ovens, or hot machinery. Further details on the number of children engaged in other types of hazardous works are presented in the figure.

► **Figure 27. Number of children in hazardous work [N= 388], multiple responses**



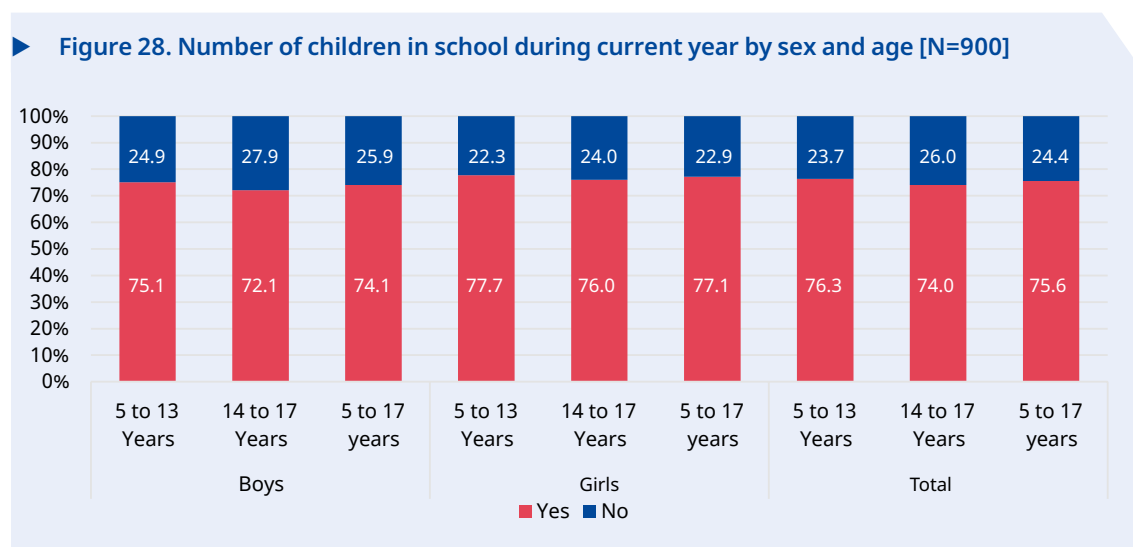
► 7.6. Access to education for Freed-*Haliya* children

Out of a total of 900 children covered by the survey in three districts, 75.6 per cent of them attended school or any Early Childhood Education Programme at any time during the current school year. This means that 24.4 per cent of children did not attend school in the current school year, indicating a serious issue of children being out of school in the freed-*Haliya* communities. According to The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2075 (2018) of Nepal, the state is obligated to provide compulsory education up to the basic level to every child who has completed four years but not completed thirteen years of age. This education should be provided at every level. In addition to the compulsory education mentioned above, at least one year's early childhood development and education shall be provided after the child reaches the age of four years. The act also provisions that

if a child has completed the age of five years but has not completed the age of twelve years and has been unable to receive admission to a school or has left school without completing the basic level education, the school is required to readmit the child.²⁹

The study revealed alarming statistics regarding the lack of school attendance among children in the FH community. Among children aged 5 to 13, a significant 23.3 per cent were not attending school, while the number rose to 26 per cent for those aged 14 to 17. These figures underscore the severe denial of the right to education for children in this community. Further analysis of the data indicated that dropout rates were higher among boys compared to girls. Among children aged 5 to 13, 25 per cent of boys and 22.3 per cent of girls had discontinued their education. For those aged 14 to 17, the dropout rates were 28 per cent for boys and 24 per cent for girls. These findings align with the discussions held during the focus groups conducted across the three districts. Parents participating in the focus group discussions shared that boys tend to leave school between the ages of 12 to 15. In many cases, they venture to India in search of employment opportunities and often end up working as child labourers, either within their village, in a nearby city, or even across the border in India. A participant in Surkhet shares *'my son works as a construction labour.'* Others stated *'due to financial problems my son could not continue school, went to Gujrat, India at the age of 16, and now works in a hotel.'*

It's important to note that since the study did not reach out to the children directly, information was collected from respondents (parents/guardians) in 638 households. The FGDs and KII data also revealed that even those who were enrolled in school were not regular in attendance.



The above data is verified by focus group discussions with children. The participants of the children's focus group discussion in Jajarkot, shared the cases of their involvement in child labour. Out of the total children attending the focus group, eight had worked and paid for the work. They stated *'we carried stones, carried manure, shredded corn, and got paid.'* One stated *'my brother who is 17 years old is working in India.'* Other children shared *'I cannot carry heavy loads because when I was young, I fell off while carrying stones so I have back pain.'*

Children participants also made complaints about making less than others while involving in work. *'when we go to carry stones we are paid less (600 rupees for working whole day) when others are paid 800 rupees.'* Children participating in a focus group in Humla shared *'we worked to carry stones and bricks. In return, we got rice and vegetables. Some of our friends work to load and unload in tractors. When Laji (landowner) calls us, we go to work for [him/her].'* A key informant in Jajarkot stated that with *'the*

29 www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Act-Relating-to-Compulsory-and-Free-Education-2075-2018.pdf

increasing living costs and lack of income sources, families tend to make children drop out from schools so that they can support the family financially'. The other key informant in Surkhet district says that 'the financial instability at family is one of the major causes of school drop out of children.'

► **Case-4. Rampal left school...**

Rampal Sarki (name changed) is a 14-year-old boy, living in Humla district with his family. He has one elder sister and a brother. Rampal's sister went to school until grade six and got married at the age of 15. His brother went to school until grade seven and left. Rampal himself went to school until grade seven and now he is a school dropout. His parents work for landowners because the land they have a house on belongs to the landowner. So, Rampal and his brother are also forced to work for the landowner. His father's one and only income source is working as labour for the landowner.

Rampal and his siblings left school because while growing up, they needed to help their parents to work for landowners. Parents always struggle to cover education costs. Going to regular school has been always a challenge. Rampal now works for the landowner. The work includes rearing animals, helping with household chores, collecting firewood etc. In return, he occasionally gets food (rice, wheat, millet etc.) as a wage. His family does not get any 'leave' from work unless they are very sick. Their livelihood is dependent on the landowner – no matter, willingly or unwillingly. They want to get rid of this situation without any idea- how? His father does not have any option except to continue what he is doing. Rampal's mother says, 'this is our destiny so we should face it.'

(e) Work/school attendance by freed-Haliya children

The provided cross-table depicts the work/school attendance status among freed-Haliya children. Given that a significant number of children are involved in household chores (HH), the data below specifically addresses the school attendance status of children engaged in HH chores. The information indicates that 52.6 per cent of children manage to balance both studies and work, while 23 per cent of children attend school without participating in HH chores. Among working children, 14 per cent do not attend school, and 10.4 per cent of children neither go to school nor contribute to household tasks.

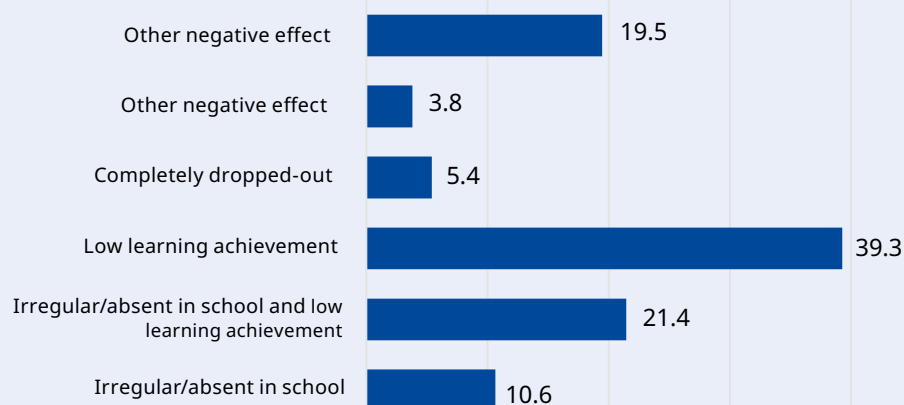
► **Table 10. School attendance status of children performing HH chores [N=900]**

		Attend school or any early childhood education programme.		
		Yes	No	Total
Children performing any HH Chores	Work any HH Chores	473 (52.6)	126 (14)	599 (66.6)
	None	207 (23)	94 (10.4)	301 (33.4)
Total		680 (75.6 %)	220 (24.4 %)	900 (100 %)

► 7.7. Impact on quality of education among Freed-*Haliya* children

Figure 29 illustrates the negative impact on education for working children aged 5 to 17 years. Out of a total 599 working children, only 555 responses were recorded on the impact of working condition on children's education. Out of these 555 children, only 19.5 per cent reported that working had no impact on their education, which means that four out of every five working children faced some negative impact on their education. The main negative impact was low learning achievement, affecting 39.3 percent of working children. A total of 21.4 per cent of working children were irregular or absent from school, while 21.4 percent reported both irregular attendance and low learning achievement. Alarming, 5.5 percent of working children had completely dropped out of school. Out of 555 working children, 178 children were irregular in schools. Of those 178 children, 65.2 per cent were absent due to workload and/or work priority. Among these school-irregular children, girls accounted for 69.5 per cent, while boys accounted for 61.5 per cent.

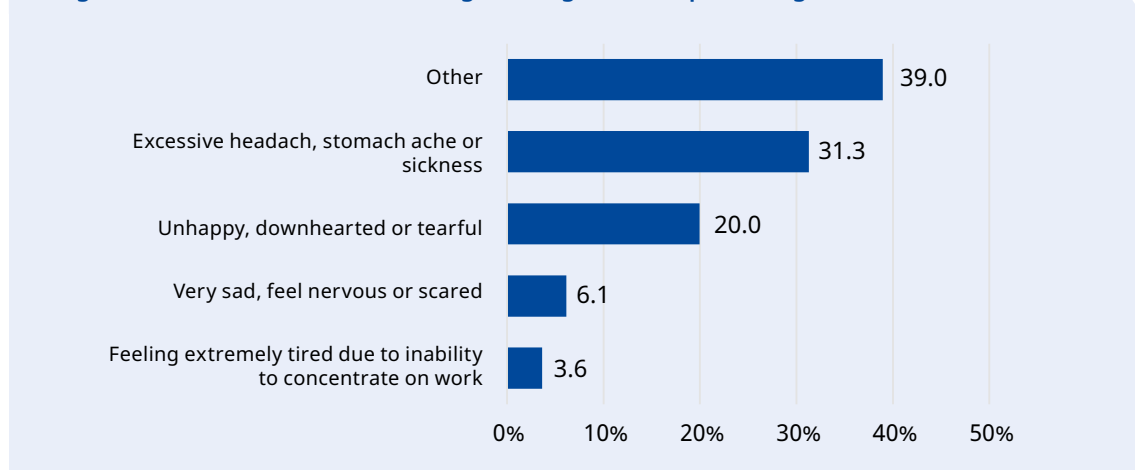
► Figure 29. Types of negative impact on education (percentage) [N=555], multiple responses



► 7.8. Main health issues among working children in Freed-*Haliya* communities

The study showed that the working children also face various health problems. Out of 599 working children, the health-related responses were recorded from 521 respondents. The Figure below presents the main health issues encountered by these 521 working children aged 5 to 17 years. Out of 521, the largest share of the children (31.3 per cent) faced headaches or stomachaches, while 20 per cent felt unhappy, downhearted, or tearful. The proportion found to be very sad, nervous, or scared was 6.1 per cent and feeling extremely tired was 3.6 per cent. Moreover, 6.1 per cent of children were found to be very sad, nervous, or scared, while 3.6 per cent reported feeling extremely tired. The "Other" category, which accounts for the largest share (39 per cent) in Figure 30 was not further explored during the HH survey. However, during FGDs and KIIs parents, it was observed that the "Other" category included vague or undefined health issues such as general discomfort, aches, fatigue, or other illnesses that were not clearly described or diagnosed. During FGD with children, most of the participants also mentioned headaches and stomachaches as major health problems.

► Figure 30. Main health issues among working children (percentage) [N= 521]



► 7.9. Causes of child labour

Despite parents in the study districts denying the involvement of their children in child labour, the study identified child labour as a significant and concerning issue. Many children who dropped out from school were not able to continue because of financial conditions. Besides poverty and exclusion, Caste based discrimination was also found as a serious concern in the villages. Most of the *Haliya* children are found enrolled in government schools which have poor physical infrastructure and neglected to ensure quality education. Caste-based discrimination was found high and impacting children's school enrollment. Parents reported their children are discriminated even by the teachers. A participant in Humla says '*children get snacks at school which is good but our children do not get to sit together with other so-called higher caste children. This makes our children feel very humiliated and they do not want to go to school*'. 'most of the teachers are from 'Khas/Arya' or so-called 'higher' caste and they do discriminate our children', participants added to the conversations during the focus group. 'We have been facing discrimination since childhood, we are always taken down by the 'Shahi/Thakuri''. The study showed that there is a serious negative impact to children's mental health because of discrimination. 'My son went to serious depression because of the caste-based discrimination faced at school' a mother stated during focus group in Surkhet. Children also need to go very far to attend secondary school when they complete primary education which hinders their continued education. In such situations, parents put household chores as a priority over school attendance. Boys seem to help to contribute to family income whereas girls get married at a very early age, contribute to the families differently. A woman, approximately 23 years old had four children, who attended the focus group discussion.

Families with low income and lack of regular food supply at home also found one of the reason children work as visible or invisible child labourers and miss education. A focus group discussion participant in Humla shares that '*my child goes to rear goats to jungle. He needs to take care of the goats of landowners too. When he returns, he gets one-time food at the landowner's place.*' Families still living on the landlord's land and not having own registered land make them forced to work at landowners' places or send their children to work. The lack of regular income sources to feed children and cover the household costs makes *Haliya* community being highly dependent on to the landowners which directly impacts children's education and well-being.

► Case-5. Tara and her wish

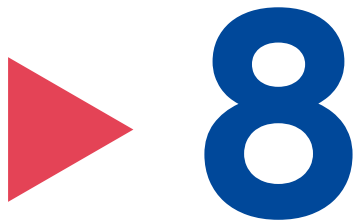
Tara Pariyar (name changed) is 15 years old. She works as a seasonal labourer nearby Kathmandu. She has studied up to grade six. She is from Changadu Rural Municipality, Surkhet.

Tara's father received 'Ka' category freed-*Haliya* card. They built a hut. Her father does tailoring in the village. He sews clothes in the village, and in return, he gets seasonal grains which is the only source of income in the family. Tara's family is always in extreme poverty. A few years back, her mother got frequently sick. They took loans and could not pay it back on time. So, to help the family, Tara, together with other villagers, went to India. There she worked as a house construction labourer. She worked for nine months, but she did not get any payment. She has not received that payment yet.

After returning from India, she went to Kathmandu with her sister and brother-in-law. There they all work as construction labourers. They get work and are paid when there is a need for labourers. They all work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. She does not go to work only if she is sick. She sends her earnings to her parents to run the household.

Tara has a lot of dreams. She sees girls of her age going to school and dreams of doing the same. Tara and her family have never received any support to date. She wishes she could learn some skills and do her own job, earn money!

Families with low incomes and who lack a stable food supply see their children work as either visible or invisible child labourers and miss out on education. A focus group discussion participant in Humla shared that *'my child goes to rear goats to the jungle. He needs to take care of the goats of landowners too. When he returns, he gets one-time food at the landowners' place'*. As families still living on the landlord's land and not having their own registered land, they are forced to work at landowners' places or send their children to work. Lack of regular income sources to feed children and cover the household costs makes *Haliya* community indirectly highly dependent to the landowners which directly impacts children's education and wellbeing.



Recommendations

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, observations, and suggestions provided by the study participants, the study team has prepared some recommendations. These recommendations are targeted at government and non-government stakeholders, including federal, provincial, and local governments. These recommendations aim to further support the rehabilitation, socio-economic empowerment, and protection of the freed-*Haliya* community, as well as enhance efforts to prevent and respond to forced labour and child labour in Karnali Province.

(a) Rehabilitation package and delivery

- All three levels of government should work to achieve the objectives of Nepal government's 'freed-*Haliya* rehabilitation framework'. This includes the identification of left-out families from registration and verification, guaranteeing the holistic need of the families/communities, which is land, housing, education, health, employment, and sustainable livelihood options.
- Ensure the rehabilitation package is prepared based on local needs, availability of services and resources, and after doing the necessary assessment and sustainable planning. Regular and effective monitoring of the delivery of rehabilitation programmes to prevent mismanagement and corruption and facilitate the process to access the package within the timeframe, without any hindrance.
- Prepare a comprehensive database of the freed-*Haliya* communities at the local level. Identify families that are left out from the identification, registration, and verification process. Also, identify the families which are trapped in debt bondage but were/are excluded from the government's support programmes, and ensure that all those who have been subjected to these practices are properly recognized, documented, and receive the necessary support.

(b) Socio-economic status improvement

- Bring specific 'social protection schemes' to the freed-*Haliya* communities, particularly in health, education, and employment. For instance: health insurance policies, scholarships to Freed-*Haliya* children up to higher level education, employment quota at the local level to the youth, special incentives to girls marrying at the age of 20, special family planning incentive packages, and so on.
- Encourage entrepreneurship by providing business development training, mentorship, and access to easy and accessible microcredit schemes specifically tailored for Freed-*Haliya* youths. Strengthen vocational training programmes to equip Freed-*Haliya* youth with practical skills in high-demand sectors. Provide business startup support.

- Foster agricultural modernization and diversification to create sustainable and local-level income-generating opportunities for the freed-*Haliya* community to prevent them from falling back into forced or bonded labour. Gather the ward-level data of the families living in master's land and provide land and housing support under various schemes of the Nepal government such as the Dalit Utthan programmes.
- Facilitate the formation of cooperatives and associations to enhance the collective bargaining power and economic independence of freed-*Haliya* families.

(c) Decreased forced and child labour

- Strengthen labour inspections and enforcement mechanisms to proactively identify and address instances of forced labour and child labour in the agriculture, and other formal and informal service sectors where the freed-*Haliya* community is vulnerable.
- Ensure the children who are trapped in child labour are evacuated from the situation and are reintegrated into families, providing long-term educational, social, and moral support with psychosocial counseling. This should include parents and family members.
- Ensure public places such as schools are free from discrimination, including gender-based and caste-based violence. Create awareness about the laws and punishment of discriminatory practices and strictly implement them in practice.
- Conduct awareness campaigns targeting employers, labour recruiters, and the general public to promote ethical labour practices and discourage the exploitation of freed-*Haliya* individuals. Establish effective grievance redress mechanisms to address complaints and provide remedies for victims of forced labour, child labour, and gender and caste-based discrimination ensuring confidentiality and protection.
- Strengthen collaboration between government agencies (such as rural municipalities, province and federal government, inter-ministry), civil society organizations, and international partners to share the best practices, resources, and expertise in combating forced labour and child labour. Conduct further studies on gender and caste-based discrimination and its impact on women and children, particularly in their physical, social, and mental well-being.

Annexes

► Annex 1. Demography of the respondents

(a) Sex of respondents by districts

Of the total 638 respondents, 31.3 per cent were female, and the rest 68.7 per cent respondents were male. There was no participation from the other gender. The share of female respondents in the survey was highest in Jajarkot (40.6 per cent) and the lowest in Humla (23 per cent). One third of respondents in Surkhet were female.

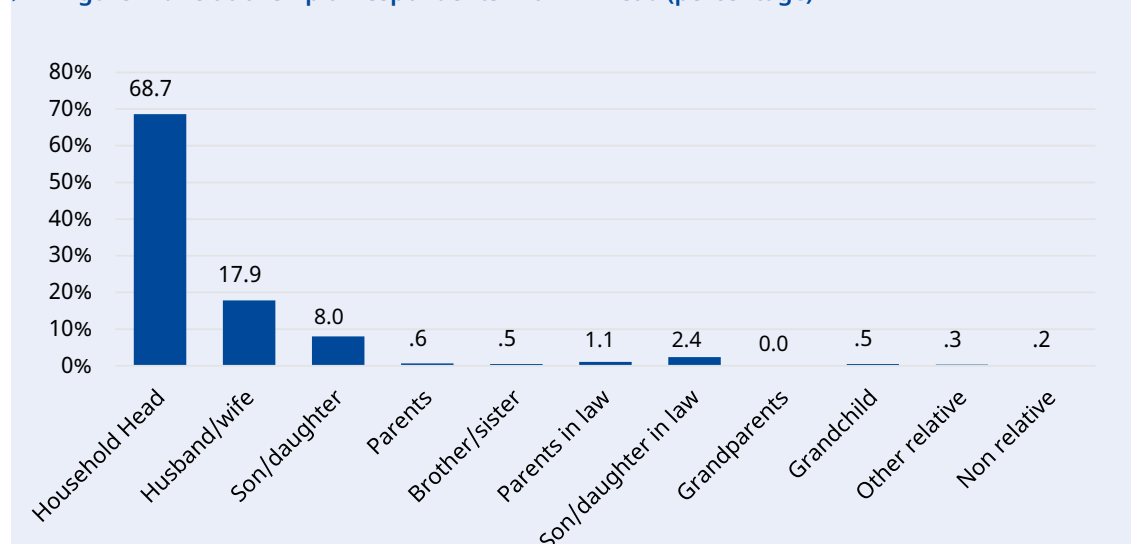
► Table A1. Sex of respondents by districts

Districts	Frequency (N)	Male	Female	Other	Total
Surkhet	215	66.5	33.5	0.0	100
Jajarkot	175	59.4	40.6	0.0	100
Humla	248	77.0	23.0	0.0	100
Total	638	68.7	31.3	0.0	100

(b) Relationship of respondents with HH head

Over two thirds of the respondents were HH head. Of the total HH head, the proportion of female was 12.4 per cent and the rest 87.4 per cent HH head were male. The second largest proportion of the respondents was husband or wife of the HH head whereas the third largest share of son or daughters. Similarly, the proportion of son-in-law or daughter-in-law was 2.4 per cent.

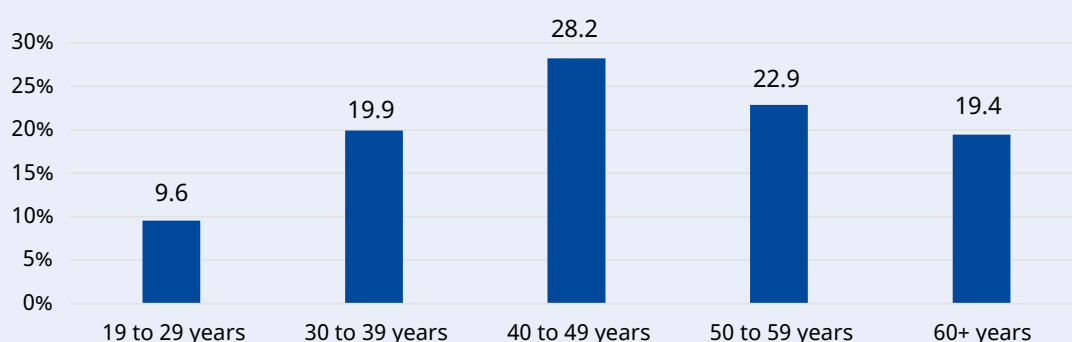
► Figure A1. Relationship of respondents with HH head (percentage)



(c) Age groups of respondents

By age groups of the respondents, the largest proportion (28.2 per cent) was of the adults aged 40 to 49 years. The smallest share was of the youth respondents aged 19 to 29 years. The proportion of senior citizens aged 60 years and above was 19.4 per cent. Likewise, the proportion of the respondents aged 30 to 39 years and 50 to 59 years was 19.9 per cent and 22.9 per cent respectively.

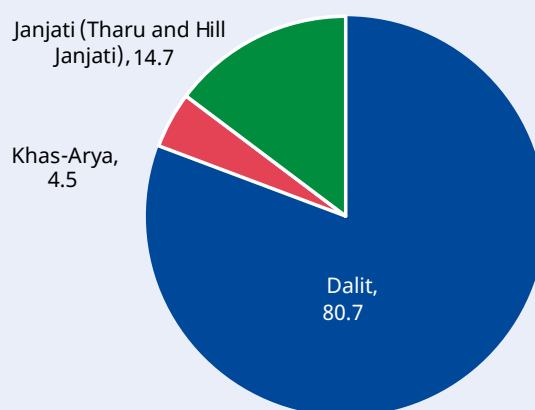
► Figure A2. Age groups of the respondents



(d) Caste and ethnic groups of respondents

Across caste and ethnic group, the largest shares (80.6 per cent) share of the respondents were from Dalit community. The second largest share (14.4 per cent) was Janjati. Within Janjati, the share was Tharu community constitute 13.9 per cent, and the share of other Hill Janjati was just 0.5 per cent. All Tharu respondents come from Surkhet district. It is unique in Karnali that Tharu are also Freed-*Haliya*. Most of the agriculture bonded labourers from Tharu community in Sudurpaschim and Lumbini Province are counted as freed-*Kamaiya*. The share of Khas/Arya was 4.4 per cent.

► Figure A3. Caste/ethnic cluster of the respondents (percentage)



Though the caste system is outlawed by the Constitution of Nepal and other laws of the country, the caste hierarchy continues to persist in customary practices in Nepali societies. In the caste pyramid, the Brahman and Chhetri (now known as Khas Arya as per the constitution) are considered the so-called “high caste” groups, while the Dalits are considered the so-called “low caste” groups. According to the caste system, Dalits are often treated as impure and untouchable, facing discrimination and social exclusion. Adivasi Janjati (for example, indigenous nationalities), occupy a middle position in the hierarchy.¹ It is

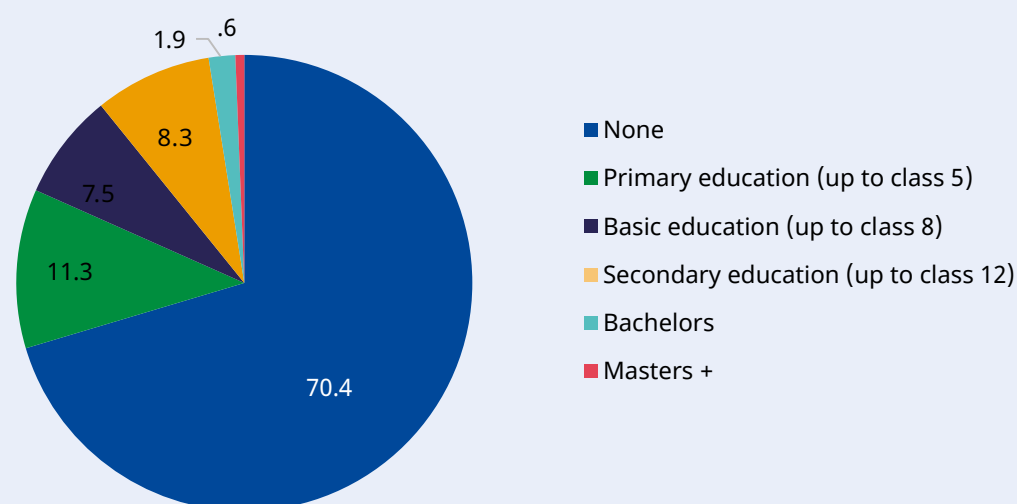
¹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/201971468061735968/pdf/379660Nepal0GSEA0Summary0Report-01PUBLIC1.pdf>

important to note that within each high and low caste group, there exist sub-hierarchies that further stratify individuals by birth. The caste groups are vertically arranged based on Hindu scripture, while the ethnic groups are horizontally distributed across different regions of Nepal.²

(e) Education status of respondents

Over two thirds of respondents were not able to read and understand in any language. It can be guessed that adult literacy is significantly low among the FH community which has been considered as a major barrier for the effective empowerment of this community. In the HH survey, 70.4 per cent of respondents did not have any formal education. The respondents completing education of Bachelors' degree and above was less than three per cent in overall. The respondents with secondary level education were 8.3 per cent. Likewise, the proportion of respondents with primary level (up to 5th grade) and basic level education (6th to 8th grade) was 11.3 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively.

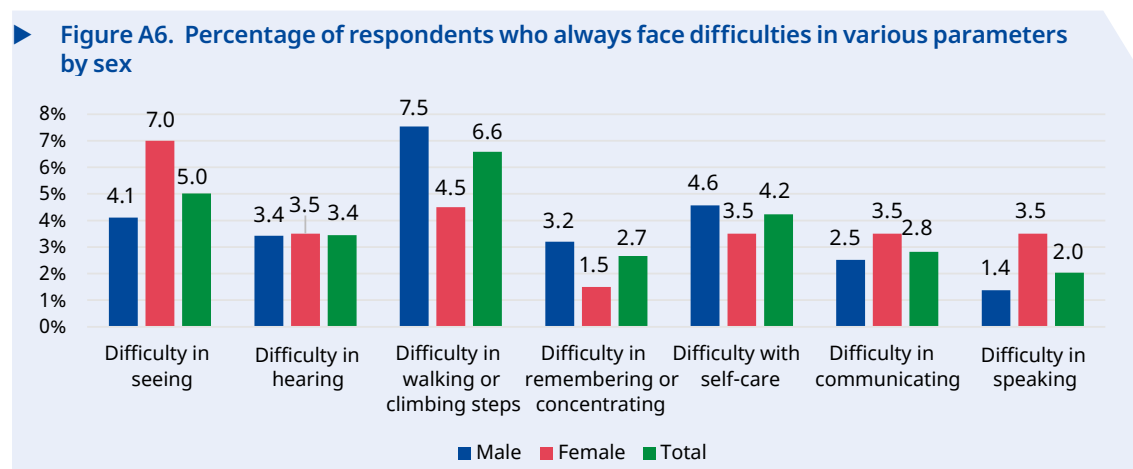
► Figure A4. Education status of respondents (percentage)



(f) Respondents with disabilities/difficulties

The respondents were asked whether they have any difficulties in various parameters. The following Figure presents the data who answered that they have difficulties 'always'. Minimum 2 per cent to maximum 6.6 per cent respondents had some sort of difficulty. Across sex difficulties in walking, remembering and self-care was higher among male respondents compared to female. The proportion of bearing difficulties in seeing, hearing, communicating and speaking was higher among female respondents.

2 www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11080.8



(g) Average size of total HH members, females, and children

The average HH size of the respondents was 6.2 whereas the average population of children below 18 years of age within the respondents' HH was 2.4.

► **Table A2. Average HH size of respondents by district and caste/ethnic cluster**

Average size of	District			Caste/ethnic category			Total
	Surkhet	Jajarkot	Humla	Dalit	Khas-Arya	Janjati	
Total HH members	5.5	6.9	6.1	6.4	5.2	4.7	6.1
Female HH members	2.9	3.5	3.0	3.2	2.7	2.5	3.1
Children (aged below 18 years)	1.5	3.1	2.5	2.7	1.7	1.0	2.4
Children aged 5-17 years	1.1	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.0	0.7	1.5

(h) ID categories of the respondents

All the households included in the survey samples were Freed-Haliya ID card holders. By ID card categories, 60.7 per cent of the respondents were 'Gha'(White) ID card holders. The second largest share (24.8) was of 'Ka'(Red) ID card holders. The share of 'Kha'(Brown) and 'Ga' (Green) ID card holders was 10.3 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively. Nepali alphabet and colour were used for the categorization of the ID card. The ID card was a key basis for providing rehabilitation support to respective FH.

► **Table A3. Freed-Haliya ID categories of the respondents' HH**

ID Category	Frequency	Per cent
Ka (Red) Not having a house and land	158	24.8
Kha (Brown) Having house but not land	66	10.3
Ga (Green) Having Land but not a house	27	4.2
Gha (White) Having both land and house in own ownership	387	60.7
Total	638	100.0

► Annex 2. FGD participants

Annex 2.1. List of FGD participants (adults)

S. N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
1	FGD-1	Birendranagar-10, Surkhet	F	Janajati	37	Class 5 Pass
2			F	Janajati	55	Literate
3			F	Dalit	22	Class 10
4			F	Dalit	47	Literate
5			F	Janajati	64	Literate
6			F	Janajati	59	Literate
7			F	Janajati	25	Literate
8			F	Janajati	32	10+2
9			F	Janajati	38	Literate
10			F	Janajati	52	Literate
11			F	Janajati	50	Literate
12	FGD-2	Birendranagar-9, Surkhet	M	Janajati	59	Literate
13			M	Janajati	43	Class 4
14			M	Janajati	51	Illiterate
15			M	Janajati	64	Illiterate
16			M	Janajati	57	Literate
17			M	Janajati	65	Illiterate
18			M	Janajati	65	Literate
19			M	Janajati	60	Literate
20			M	Janajati	53	Literate
21	FGD-3	Chingad-6, Surkhet	F	Dalit	27	Class 7
22			F	Dalit	56	Literate
23			F	Dalit	35	Class 5
24			F	Dalit	39	Literate
25			F	Dalit	60	Literate
26			F	Dalit	22	Class 8
27			F	Dalit	43	Literate
28			F	Dalit	29	Class 7
29			F	Dalit	23	Class 7
30			M	Dalit	29	Class 5
31			M	Dalit	47	Classs 10
32	FGD-4	Birendranagar, Surkhet	F	Dalit	36	Basic Education
33			F	Dalit	55	Can write name
34			F	Janajati	60+	Illiterate
35			M	Khas Arya	51	SEE

S. N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
36	FGD-5	Bheriganga, Surkhet	F	Dalit	55	Literate
37			F	Dalit	35	Literate
38			F	Dalit	29	Literate
39			F	Dalit	56	Literate
40			F	Dalit	72	Illiterate
41			F	Dalit	70	Literate
42			F	Khas Arya	65	Illiterate
43			F	Dalit	70	Literate
44			F	Dalit	15	Class 8
45			F	Dalit	20	Class 8
46			F	Dalit	33	Literate
47			F	Dalit	25	Class 10
48			F	Khas Arya	26	Class 10
49			F	Dalit	54	Literate
50			M	Dalit	60	Literate
51			M	Dalit	70	Illiterate
52			M	Dalit	37	Class 9
53			F	Khas Arya	62	Illiterate
54			M	Dalit	63	Illiterate
55			F	Dalit	42	Literate
56			F	Dalit	19	Class 8
57			F	Khas Arya	70	Illiterate
58			F	Dalit	50	Literate
59	FGD-6	Chhedgad-13, Jajrkot	M	Dalit	42	Literate
60			M	Dalit	70	Literate
61			M	Dalit	59	Literate
62			M	Dalit	39	Literate
63			M	Dalit	45	Literate
64			M	Dalit	41	Literate
65			M	Dalit	60	Illiterate
66			M	Khas Arya	52	Illiterate
67			M	Dalit	70	Literate
68			M	Dalit	49	Literate
69			M	Dalit	39	Literate
70			M	Dalit	46	Literate
71			M	Dalit	48	Class 10
72			F	Dalit	41	Literate
73			M	Dalit	41	Bachelor
74			M	Dalit	34	Literate

S. N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
75	FGD-7	Tajakot, Humla	M	Dalit	24	Class 10
76			F	Dalit	45	Literate
77			F	Dalit	38	Literate
78			M	Dalit	40`	No
79			M	Dalit	35	No
80			F	Dalit	30	No
81			F	Dalit	25	No
82			F	Dalit	45	No
83			F	Dalit	32	No
84			M	Dalit	65	No
85			F	Dalit	65	No
86			M	Dalit	50	No
87			M	Dalit	65	No
88			M	Dalit	37	No
89			M	Dalit	35	No
90	FGD-8	Simkot-5, Humla	M	Dalit	59	No
91			M	Dalit	45	No
92			M	Dalit	35	No
93			M	Dalit	36	Class 10 Pass
94			F	Dalit	60	No
95			M	Dalit	30	Class 10 Pass
96			M	Dalit	55	No
97			M	Dalit	33	Class 9
98			M	Dalit	45	No
99			M	Dalit	46	No
100			F	Dalit	36	Class 5
101			M	Dalit	62	No
102	FGD-9	Bhargau, Jajarkot	F	Dalit	60	Primary education
103			F	Dalit	42	Primary education
104			F	Dalit	40	Primary education
105			F	Dalit	55	Primary education
106			F	Dalit	18	None
107			F	Dalit	55	Primary education
108			F	Dalit	30	Primary education
109			F	Dalit	20	Primary education
110			F	Janajati	35	Primary education
111			F	Dalit	60	Primary education
112			F	Dalit	30	Class 10
113			F	Dalit	40	Primary education
114			F	Dalit	25	Class 5
115			F	Dalit	33	Class 5

S. N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
116			F	Dalit	26	Class 10
117			F	Dalit	40	Primary education
118			F	Dalit	40	Illiterate
119			F	Dalit	45	Illiterate
120			F	Dalit	61	Illiterate
121	FGD-10	Hildum, Humla	F	Dalit	20	Illiterate
122			F	Dalit	35	Illiterate
123			F	Dalit	29	Illiterate
124			F	Dalit	33	Illiterate
125			M	Dalit	62	Illiterate
126	FGD-11	Humla	M	Dalit	23	Literate
127			M	Dalit	23	Literate
128			M	Dalit	48	Literate
129			F	Dalit	24	Class 10 pass
130			F	Dalit	40	Primary education
131			F	Dalit	25	Class 10 pass
132			F	Dalit	30	Primary education
133			F	Dalit	21	Class 10 pass
134			F	Dalit	60	Primary education
135			F	Dalit	28	Primary education
136	FGD-12	Kushe-5, Dhime, Jajarkot	F	Dalit	21	Class 10 pass
137			F	Dalit	33	Primary education
138			F	Dalit	22	Class 8
139			F	Dalit	54	Primary education
140			F	Dalit	38	Primary education
141			F	Dalit	40	Primary education
142			F	Dalit	45	Primary education
143			F	Dalit	19	Class 9

Annex 2.2. List of FGD participants (children)

S.N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
1	FGD-1	Chingad-6, Surkhet	F	Dalit	12	Class 7
2			F	Dalit	11	Class 5
3			F	Dalit	10	Class 5
4			F	Dalit	11	Class 6
5			F	Dalit	12	Class 5
6			M	Dalit	13	Illiterate
7			M	Dalit	12	Class 7
8			M	Dalit	11	Class 4
9			M	Dalit	15	Class 8
10			F	Dalit	10	Class 4
11			M	Dalit	12	Class 7
12			M	Dalit	15	Class 8
13			M	Dalit	13	Class 8
14	FGD-2	Chedgad-13, Jajarkot	M	Dalit	12	Class 7
15			F	Dalit	13	Class 8
16			F	Dalit	13	Class 8
17			F	Dalit	12	Class 7
18			F	Dalit	13	Class 7
19			F	Dalit	15	Class 8
20			F	Dalit	16	Class 10
21			F	Dalit	14	Class 8
22			F	Dalit	16	Class 8
23			M	Dalit	15	Class 9
24			M	Dalit	15	Class 8
25			M	Dalit	14	Class 8
26			M	Dalit	14	Class 8
27			F	Khas Arya	15	Class 9
28			F	Dalit	16	Class 9
29			F	Dalit	15	Class 9

S.N.	FGD No.	Municipality/ Districts	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Education
30	FGD-3	Simkot-6, Humla	F	Dalit	15	Class 9
31			F	Dalit	13	Class 8
32			M	Dalit	13	Class 5
33			M	Dalit	11	Class 3
34			M	Dalit	9	Class 2
35			M	Dalit	11	Class 5
36			F	Dalit	10	Class 4
37			F	Dalit	9	Class 3
38			F	Dalit	11	Class 2
39			M	Dalit	6	Class 1
40			F	Dalit	6	Class 1
41			F	Dalit	6	Class 1
42	FGD-4	Kushe-5, Jajarkot	F	Dalit	12	Class 7
43			F	Dalit	14	Class 8
44			F	Dalit	13	Class 8
45			F	Dalit	12	Class 6
46			F	Dalit	15	Class 8
47			F	Dalit	10	Class 4
48			F	Dalit	16	Class 10
49			F	Dalit	12	Class 7
50			M	Dalit	14	Class 7
51			M	Dalit	14	Class 4
52			M	Dalit	12	Class 6
53			F	Dalit	14	Class 8
54			M	Dalit	14	Class 7
55			M	Dalit	6	None
56			M	Dalit	8	Class 4
57			F	Dalit	8	Class 4
58	FGD-5	Birendranagar -10, Surekhet	F	Janjati	17	Class 10
59			F	Janjati	17	Class 11
60			F	Janjati	9	Class 2
61			F	Janjati	11	Class 5
62			M	Janjati	11	Class 4
63			M	Janjati	17	Class 11
64			F	Janjati	12	Class 3
65			F	Janjati	16	Class 10

► **Annex 3. KII participants (various stakeholders)**

SN	Sex	District	Address/Place	Organization/ representation
1	Female	Surkhet	Birendranagar	School
2	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Trade Union
3	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Ward Office
4	Female	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Ward member/ FH Women
5	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Province Planning Commission
6	Male	Surkhet	Chingad	Political Parties
7	Male	Jajarkot	Chhedgad	Ward Chair
8	Male	Jajarkot	Chhedgad	School
9	Male	Jajarkot	Khalanga	DCC Jajarkot
10	Male	Jajarkot	Khalanga	Employer/Trainer
11	Male	Jajarkot	Khalanga	District Land Revenue Office
12	Female	Jajarkot	Khalanga	Bheri Municipality/Women and Children Section
13	Male	Jajarkot	Khalanga	District Agriculture Office
14	Male	Jajarkot	Khalanga	CSO Leader
15	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Karnali Province Assembly
16	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	District Freed- <i>Haliya</i> Leader
17	Female	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Province Policy Maker/Politician
18	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Municipality Office
19	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	District Land Revenue Office
20	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	District Land Revenue Office
21	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Karnali Province
22	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	DCCI
23	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	CSO Leader
24	Female	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Ministry of Social Development, Karnali Province
25	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Lawyer
26	Male	Surkhet	Birendranagar	Journalist
27	Male	Jajarkot	Bheri	Municipality
28	Female	Jajarkot	Bheri	Journalist
29	Male	Jajarkot	Bheri	Former Landlord
30	Male	Jajarkot	Chedgad	FH Activist
31	Female	Humla	Simkot	Simkot RM
32	Male	Humla	Simkot	Politician

SN	Sex	District	Address/Place	Organization/ representation
33	Male	Humla	Simkot	Insec/CSO Leader
34	Male	Humla	Simkot	CSO Leader
35	Male	Humla	Simkot	Former Landlord
36	Male	Humla	Simkot	Journalist
37	Male	Humla	Simkot	Dalit Activist
38	Male	Humla	Simkot	Entrepreneur
39	Male	Humla	Simkot	Dalit Activist
40	Male	Humla	Simkot	District Freed- <i>Haliya</i> Leader
41	Male	Ktm.	Ktm.	Freedom Fund
42	Female	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Joint Secretary/MoLESS
43	Male	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Joint Secretary/MoWCSC

► Annex 4. FGD checklist

Annex 4.1. FGD checklists (adults)

Focus Group Discussion facilitators' information

Name	
Date and time of focus group discussion	
Telephone number/email	
Place/District	
Ward no., Settlement, Tole	

Interviewee consent

Hello/Namaste!

I am from Purple Foundation, an anti-slavery organization. I am here to conduct a focus group discussion on the 'Situation of freed-Haliya in Karnali province'. This project is technically carried out by Purple Foundation, in close cooperation with freed-Haliya Federation, supported by International Labor Organization (ILO), country office, Nepal. This survey is being done to understand the situation of freed-Haliyas in accessing rehabilitation packages and situation of child labor/forced labor, to guide policy and action concerning the proper and timely rehabilitation of freed-Haliyas, and ensure their economic, social, and cultural rights are protected.

Your participation is very important for this discussion, though voluntary. We will record this discussion and also take some photographs. If you do not like to record your opinion or photographs to be taken, (which will be later used to take notes and for reports) please let us know. We will not disclose name and identity if participants do not want.

Please read the above statement loudly to the participants. Only proceed if the group agrees to continue. Informed consent is MANDATORY.

If the respondents are ready, continue with the following questions.

Time: 1.5 to 2 hours

- District
- Rural Municipality/Municipality
- Ward no., Tole, settlement
- Total Participants (please fill up the detailed attendance sheet attached)
 - Male
 - Female
 - Gender and sexual minority
 - Caste/ethnicity
 - Education
 - Person with disability

Note to the interviewer: these are semi-structured, guiding questions to continue the discussion. These questions need to follow up questions according to the discussion and understanding, context of the participants.

Questions;

Current rehabilitation status of freed- Haliya community

1. What do you understand of the 'full rehabilitation' of a freed- Haliya family?
2. Do the current government's rehabilitation package provided to the freed-Haliya community addresses the full rehabilitation?
3. Did all the card holder families receive the rehabilitation package offered by the government? If not, who were left and why? what are the key reasons of left out?
4. What are the main difficulties, challenges to access the package? Can you share us some good examples of successfully rehabilitated families? Or any examples of families who are not able to access the package? What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the rehabilitation package?
5. Are the rehabilitated families received the other services (such as loan facility, skill-based training, and vocation training) except the land, and house? Can you share some examples? Who provided such programs?

The current socio-economic status of freed-Haliya families

6. What are the major income sources of Freed haliya families? What are the livelihood options available?
7. Are there enough employment opportunities for freed-Haliya families? Do you see any differences in opportunities available for Haliya and non-Haliya families? What are they? Can you give some examples why it is different for Haliya families and non- Haliya families?
8. How are the services available for access to the loan facility? Can you get easy access to loan? (Please explore loan providing institutions, interest rate, use of loan. This is important here to understand the where do they get loan such as financial institutions, landowners)

The condition of child labor in freed-Haliya community

9. Do all the children in the community goes to school? In what kinds of activities do children involve in community? For example – children between 5-12 what do they do? Children between 13-17 what do they do? Are there any difference in activity of boys and girls?
10. Have you seen, observed or found any children in the community (under 18 years old) who are not going to school? If yes, can you tell us what are the reasons children do not continue school? (Ask the follow-up question if children are not going to school what the underlying causes are such as if they are forced to work at landowner's house, or they are supporting parents at home or not able to pay fee)
11. Have you seen, heard, observed children from the community working as child labor? (It could be in own community or out of the community, such as domestic child workers, landlord's house, in restaurants, hotels, transports, garages etc.) If yes, why they are compelled to do so?

Health status

12. How is the general health situation in the community? Are there any specific health problems women and children suffer?

Gender and caste-based discrimination

13. How is the caste based and gender-based discriminations in community? Have you seen, found, faced, observed any such discriminations? If yes, can you share any example of last six months?

Legal status

14. Are there any families who are deprived from accessing legal documents? Are there any cases of left over from accessing rehabilitation package because of not having legal documents? Such as citizenship or any other documents.

Political participation

15. How is the representation and participation of freed haliya community members in public and political space? For example; elected representatives, political party member, the community users' group (such as forest users' group), school management committee, any development-related users' group such as road, bridge, etc.?

Recommendations

16. Do you have any recommendations regarding freed-Haliya rehabilitation program, and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed haliya community? What are the minimum requirements of full rehabilitation of a freed family?
17. What are your recommendations to end child labor/bonded labor in freed haliya community?

Annex 4.2. FGD checklists (children)

Focus Group Discussion facilitators' information

Name	
Date and time of focus group discussion	
Telephone number/email	
Place/District	
Ward no., Settlement, Tole	

Note to the interviewer: prior to conducting the interview, please take parental consent to speak with the child. The parent's approval is a MUST to have an interview with a child.

Interviewee consent

Hello/Namaste!

I am from Purple Foundation, an anti-slavery organization. I am here to conduct a focus group discussion on the 'Situation of Children in freed-Haliya community'. This project is technically carried out by Purple Foundation, in close cooperation with freed-Haliya Federation, supported by International Labor Organization (ILO), country office, Nepal. This FGD is being done to understand the situation of child labor/forced labor and to guide policy and action concerning child rights.

Your participation is voluntary. I will ask you some questions related to your education, family, work, and aspirations. If you do not want to continue the conversation, you can leave anytime. We will record our conversation and also take some photographs if you allow. But, if you do not like to record your opinion or photographs to be taken, we will not. We will keep the information confidential and do not disclose it to anyone. Do you agree to talk to us?

Please read the above statement loudly to the participants. Only proceed if each person in the group agrees to continue. Informed consent is MANDATORY.

If the respondents are ready, continue with the following questions.

Time: 1.5 to 2 hours

1. District:
2. Rural Municipality/Municipality:
3. Ward no., Tole, settlement
4. Total Participants (please fill up the detailed attendance sheet attached)

Name	Sex	Caste	Education	Currently School attending or not	If not attending school, what is s/he doing

Note to the interviewer: these are semi-structured, guiding questions to continue the discussion. These questions need follow-up questions according to the discussion, situation, and understanding of the children. The discussion will help to understand the situation of child labor and identify children working as child laborers in the community. If so, the interviewer is suggested to take time to talk with the child separately for the case study.

Questions

Current education status of the children

1. Are you all enrolled in the school? (Please note how many of them are actually enrolled and how many are not – if any)
2. Tell us about your school life. How far is your school? Do you all like going to school? What is the most exciting part of school? What do you like the least?
3. Do you go to school most of the time, or do you have to miss school a lot? If so, why?
4. Have you seen any children not enrolled in school or stopped going to school (in your family or relatives or neighbors)? If yes, can you tell us why? (Ask the follow-up questions if children are not going to school what are the reasons children are not able to go to school? such as if they are working, or they are supporting parents at home, are not able to pay a fee and left school or they need to work at a landowner's house)
5. Can you share with us why you are not enrolled in the school? (This question is only to those if anyone in the group is/are NOT enrolled in the school)

The situation of child labor in the freed-haliya community

6. What do you do at home? Do you help your parents? How? Do you help your parents every day with these tasks or just every once in a while? (In this question – please note approximately how many hours in a day children work at home?)
7. Do you work or earn money? If yes, what kind of things do you do at work? Do you work every day or just every once in a while?
8. Do you or any of your friend work at Sahu's house (landowners)? If yes, what do they do? Do they work every day or just every once in a while? (Please note here what kind of work they are involved in)
9. When you (or your known persons) work at landowners' houses what do you/they receive? Is it money or kind for example rice, maize, or other products? How much?
10. Are you/they going to school or even working at a landowner's place? Do /you/they regularly attend school, or do you miss school?
11. Do you know why do you/they need to work at landowners' houses? (For example, to repay the loan, because their parents live on the land and house of landowners, or they are doing Adhiya, Battaiya)
12. Have you seen, or found any children from your community (the freed-Haliya community) who is gone far from home to work? Such as working in hotels/restaurants, transport, carpet factories, etc. (ask children if any of their friends have gone to city areas such as Surkhet, Nepalgunj, or Kathmandu for work, what are they doing? Why they left home? Who took them for work)
13. Have you received any education (scholarship, stipend), meal, snacks, or any other kind of support? If yes, from whom? (For example, from school, or rural municipality or any organization)
14. Have you received any vocational or skill-based training? If yes from whom? How long?

Health status

15. Have you ever been hurt at work (cut yourself with a knife for example)? Has your work ever made you feel sick? (Had to work in very hot or cold temperatures and then fell ill, for example.)
16. Where do you go for treatment when you have health problems? Have you seen any specific health problems in your friends' circle? If yes, what are those?
17. Do you think your work affects your health? How?

Gender and caste-based discrimination

18. Is there any difference in the work or at home that boys and girls do? If yes how?
19. Have you ever faced different treatment than other children because you are a girl or Dalit or haliya? if could be at your school, with family, or in the community. If yes, what kind of? Can you give us any example of what you or your friends have faced in the last six months? Who and where did this happen? What did you do when you face that?

Legal status

20. Do you all have your birth registration done? If anyone does not have one, why? Do you know the age to receive a citizenship card?

Aspirations

21. What do you wish the most for yourself and your friends? (Ask about future plans about education, job, family, etc.)
22. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for anyone to improve children's situation? If yes, what are those?
 - 22.1. What would family members (parents) should do so that you can attend school regularly?
 - 22.2. What would community members, schools, and the rural municipality should do to make all children attend school and not work as child laborers?
 - 22.3. If you got hurt at work, could you do a different task, or could something be changed so it doesn't happen again?
 - 22.4. If you were treated badly because of being a haliya or Dalit, what could be done to change that treatment?
 - 22.5. If you are facing discrimination because you are a girl, what could be done to change that?

Thank you!

► Annex 5. KII checklist

Key Informant Interviewer's information

Name	
Date/place	
Telephone number/email	
Time of the interview	
Ward no., Settlement, Tole	

Interviewee consent

Hello/Namaste!

I am from Purple Foundation, an anti-slavery organization. I am here to conduct a focus group discussion on the 'Situation of freed-Haliya in Karnali province. This project is technically carried out by Purple Foundation, in close cooperation with freed-Haliya Federation, supported by International Labor Organization (ILO), country office, Nepal. This study is being done to understand the situation of freed Haliyas in accessing rehabilitation packages and the situation of child labor/forced labor, to guide policy and action concerning the proper and timely rehabilitation of freed-Haliyas and ensure their economic, social, and cultural rights are protected.

Your participation is very important for this discussion, though voluntary. We will record this discussion and also take some photographs. If you do not like to record your opinion or photographs to be taken, (which will be later used to take notes and for reports) please let us know. We will keep the information confidential and do not disclose the identity if you want to keep it confidential.

Please read the above statement loudly to the respondent. Only proceed if he or she agrees to continue. Informed consent is MANDATORY.

If the respondent is ready, continue with the following questions.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Personal information

- District
- Rural Municipality/Municipality
- Ward no., Tole, settlement
- Total Participants (please fill up the detailed attendance sheet attached)
 - Male
 - Female
 - Gender and sexual minority
 - Caste/ethnicity
 - Education
 - Person with disability

Government authorities (district, provincial, federal)

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
How do you explain the current status freed- <i>Haliya</i> ?	
What were/are the roles/contribution of your institution in rehabilitation process of freed- <i>Haliya</i> ? Explain.	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	
Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
Do you see any existing policy gaps that hinders rehabilitation process? If so what are those?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	

Elected representatives of Rural municipality/municipality

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
How do you explain the current status freed- <i>Haliya</i> ?	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	

Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
Do you see any existing policy gaps that hinders rehabilitation process? If so what are those?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
How do you see the current space for community and political participation of FH? What opportunities and challenges exist now?	
How is the situation of gender-based violence, and caste-based discrimination in the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community? Are there any changes in the last five years?	
The situation of child labor in freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
Based on experience/observation, how do you explain the status of child labour among freed- <i>Haliya</i> community? Where does it exist (at household, community, landowner, or other areas outside the community)?	
How has child labour impacted education and health of FH children?	
What are the underlying cause's child labour among freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	
How to combat child labour and ensure access to education of Freed- <i>Haliya</i> Children? Who should lead and contribute? How?	

Political party representatives

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-Haliya community	
How do you explain the current status freed-Haliya?	
What were/are the roles/contribution of your institution in rehabilitation process of freed-Haliya? Explain.	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the freed-Haliya community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	
Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
Do you see any existing policy gaps that hinders rehabilitation process? If so what are those?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
How do you see the current space for community and political participation of FH? What opportunities and challenges exit now?	
How is the situation of gender-based violence, and caste-based discrimination in the freed-Haliya community? Are there any changes in the last five years?	
The situation of child labor in freed-Haliya community	
Based on experience/observation, how do you explain the status of child labour among freed-Haliya community? Where does it exist (at household, community, landowner, or other areas outside the community)?	
How has child labour impacted education and health of FH children?	
What are the underlying cause's child labour among freed-Haliya community?	
Recommendations	

What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed-Haliya community?	
How to combat child labour and ensure access to education of Freed-Haliya Children? Who should lead and contribute? How?	

INGOs/NGOs, human rights organizations

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-Haliya community	
How do you explain the current status freed-Haliya?	
What were/are the roles/contribution of your institution in rehabilitation process of freed-Haliya? Explain.	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the freed-Haliya community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	
Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
Do you see any existing policy gaps that hinders rehabilitation process? If so what are those?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
How do you see the current space for community and political participation of FH? What opportunities and challenges exit now?	
The situation of child labor in freed-Haliya community	
Based on experience/observation, how do you explain the status of child labour among freed-Haliya community? Where does it exist (at household, community, landowner, or other areas outside the community)?	
What are the underlying cause's child labour among freed-Haliya community?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed-Haliya community?	
How to combat child labour and ensure access to education of freed-Haliya Children? Who should lead and contribute? How?	

Recruiters, Employers, training providers

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
What were/are the roles/contribution of your institution in rehabilitation process of freed- <i>Haliya</i> ? Explain.	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	

Landowners/Masters

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
How do you explain the current status freed- <i>Haliya</i> ?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	
Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
How is the situation of gender-based violence, and caste-based discrimination in the freed- <i>Haliya</i> community? Are there any changes in the last five years?	
The situation of child labor in freed-<i>Haliya</i> community	
Based on experience/observation, how do you explain the status of child labour among freed- <i>Haliya</i> community? Where does it exist (at household, community, landowner, or other areas outside the community)?	
How has child labour impacted education and health of FH children?	

What are the underlying cause's child labour among freed-Haliya community?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed-Haliya community?	
How to combat child labour and ensure access to education of freed-Haliya Children? Who should lead and contribute? How?	

Civil society leaders (journalists, teachers, lawyers)

QUESTIONS	Target respondents
Current rehabilitation status of freed-Haliya community	
How do you explain the current status freed-Haliya?	
What were/are the roles/contribution of your institution in rehabilitation process of freed-Haliya? Explain.	
How did/do you work and coordinate with concerned stakeholders in regards to rehabilitation process of FH? What are the challenges in inter-agency coordination?	
How enough and effective was the government's rehabilitation package, and its delivery to the Freed-Haliya community?	
Why did a significant number of eligible FH families excluded from rehabilitation package?	
Based on your observation, what are the key factors that affect successful rehabilitation of FH?	
What are the unique aspects to be considered in Karnali for successful rehabilitation of FH? Why?	
In your opinion, what constitute a full rehabilitation package? Why?	
Do you see any existing policy gaps that hinders rehabilitation process? If so what are those?	
The socio-economic and political situation	
How is the situation of livelihood and employment of FH families? Have witnessed any changes (positive and negative) in livelihood and employment of FH during last one decade? What are those?	
How do you see the current space for community and political participation of FH? What opportunities and challenges exit now?	
How is the situation of gender-based violence, and caste-based discrimination in the Freed-Haliya community? Are there any changes in the last five years?	
The situation of child labor in freed-Haliya community	

Based on experience/observation, how do you explain the status of child labour among Freed-Haliya community? Where does it exist (at household, community, landowner, or other areas outside the community)?	
How has child labour impacted education and health of FH children?	
What are the underlying cause's child labour among freed-Haliya community?	
Recommendations	
What are the way forwards for full rehabilitation and socio-political, and economic advancement of the freed-Haliya community?	
How to combat child labour and ensure access to education of freed-Haliya Children? Who should lead and contribute? How?	

► Annex 6. Case study interview checklist

1. Personal information

- 1.1. Can you tell us about yourself? (Name, address, education, etc.)
 - 1.1.1. Name:
 - 1.1.2. Address: (the current address where the child is living)
 - 1.1.3. Rural Municipality/Municipality:
 - 1.1.4. Ward no., Tole, settlement
 - 1.1.5. Address: (home address if the child's parents are living in a different place)

2. Family background

- 2.1. Total family¹ members:
 - 2.1.1. Number of siblings: Brother Sister
 - 2.1.2. Parents' information (if they are living together or separately, divorced, died, have step-father or mother or any other condition)
 - 2.1.3. Do you know if your family has received a rehabilitation package?
 - 2.1.4. Does your family have your own land?
 - 2.1.5. If not, where does your family live?
 - 2.1.6. What is the main source of income for the family?

3. Work information

- 3.1. Where are you working? (Get detailed information if the child is staying at the landowner's home or goes every day for work)
- 3.2. What do you do from morning to evening? can you share with us in detail?
- 3.3. What do you do on school days (Sunday to Friday)? Do you have a different routine on the weekend - Saturday? If yes, how?
- 3.4. Do you work with your family or not?
- 3.5. If you do household chores for your family, please tell us about them (cooking, cleaning, etc.) Do these chores take a lot of time or not?
- 3.6. What are your responsibilities at work? Does your work take a lot of time or not?
- 3.7. What time do you go to the bed? What time do you wake up?
- 3.8. Do you get paid? If yes, cash or in-kind (for example rice, grains)? Can you tell us approximately how much? Who receives the salary (or whatever you get from work). How do you (or your parents) spend the money (or what you receive from work)?
- 3.9. Do you get leave? If yes, when? How long? How often do you visit your family?

¹ A family is two or more than two persons living together consisting ordinarily of a father, mother, one or more children, and sometimes near or distant relatives. If the child is living with extended family (grandparents, uncle/aunt, cousins we should consider them as one family.

4. Reason to work as child labour

- 4.1. How long you have been working here?
- 4.2. How did you get this work? Did your parents ask you to work? Or landowner?
- 4.3. What was the situation that made you work here?
- 4.4. Do you have any written contracts? Do you know who did that and what is written there?

5. Education

- 5.1. Do you go to school? If not, why?
- 5.2. If you are going to school, are you able to reach school on time? Do you get enough time to do your homework? Do you have the necessary dress and stationeries?
- 5.3. How often do you get absent from school? Why?
- 5.4. Who pays expenses at school?
- 5.5. Do you get any scholarships or any kind of educational support? Who provides?
- 5.6. Have you taken any vocational or skill-based training? Such as electrician, haircut, plumbing, etc. who provided such training?

6. Work environment

- 6.1. How many times do you eat in a day?
- 6.2. Do you get leave from the work? Do you have the weekend off from work?
- 6.3. Do you get time to play? (Ask only if s/he is staying far from family)
- 6.4. Are you allowed to visit your parents? How often?
- 6.5. Are you living in housing provided by your employer? Is anything deducted from your salary to pay for the lodging? Where do you go or do during festivals?

7. Punishment, sexual abuse/harassment

- 7.1. Do you get scolded at work? If yes, by whom? Why?
- 7.2. Have you ever been beaten at the workplace or did someone attack you physically? If yes, by whom? When? Why?
- 7.3. Did you ever face unwanted touch to your body? Did anyone touch your private parts? Asked you to involve in sexual activity?
- 7.4. Did anyone say something which you do not like to listen to at your workplace? if yes, what? By whom?
- 7.5. Have you ever tried to run away from the workplace? If yes, when? Why? (Ask only if the children have faced such acts) did you tell anyone that you have faced such acts? To whom? Did you get help? If yes what kind of?

8. Health condition

- 8.1. When is the last time you get sick?
- 8.2. What happened?
- 8.3. Did you go to the hospital or get treatment? Who took you there? Who paid the bill?

- 8.4. If the employer paid the costs, was it deducted from your salary?
- 8.5. Have you ever gotten hurt at work? (e.g., cut by a knife you were using, etc.)?
- 8.6. What caused the injury? Did you go to the hospital or get treatment? Who took you there and who paid the bill?
- 9. Do you have birth registration? Do you know when you get your citizenship card and how?
- 10. What are your aspirations for the future? What do you want to do in life?
- 11. Do you have any recommendations for anyone? (For example: to your parents, employer, government, community, or school)
- 12. Do you have anything to tell us? Do you have any questions for us?

► Annex 7. Photos of field study



FGD with FH members in Chedgad Municipality in Jajarkot.



FGD with male members in Heldung, Humla.



FGD with FH members (mixed) in Chingad Municipality in Surkhet.



FGD with women members in Heldung, Humla.



FGD with FH members (mixed) in Bheriganga Municipality in Surkhet.



Child FGD Participants in Chingad Municipality in Surkhet.

► Analysis of situation of the freed-*Haliyas* in Karnali Province, Nepal

This study aimed to evaluate the progress of the government's efforts to rehabilitate freed-Haliyas, uncover the challenges influencing the effectiveness of these efforts, and examine the prevalence of child labour in the freed-Haliya communities. The study focused on three districts of Karnali Province named Surkhet, Jajarkot and Humla. The report marks a significant milestone, providing vital insights, and suggestions to guide future initiatives. It also serves as a beacon, illuminating the path forward and inspiring the creation of impactful interventions. The study recommends to both government and non-government stakeholders for increased support in addressing all pillars of the Nepal government's rehabilitation support programmes, as well as calls for the urgent need to address child labour.

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