**Dr. Ruchira Talks on Re-Visiting Human Trafficking in Nepal After the Earthquake: August 2015**

Dr. Ruchira Gupta, Professor of New York University, USA talked to Association of British Alumni in Nepal (ABAN) and Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)-Nepal gathering on August 29, 2015 at the British Council hall, sharing her experiences of “Re-visiting Human Trafficking After the Earthquake” in Nepal.

Past President of ABAN Ms. Namrata Sharma introduced Dr. Ruchira as founder of ApneAap Women Worldwide. Dr Gupta is an Emmy Award winning investigative journalist. She has been associated with Nepal for more than 25 years. As an investigative journalist, she was very much interested to expose the sex trafficking in South Asia. She started her work on this from SindhuPalanchowk and Makwanpur districts of Nepal. She has also edited a book titled “As If Woman Matters” together with American Journalist and Activist Gloria Steinems

“The information that girls of 15 years to 40 years age are missing from the villages as they were being trafficked to Mumbai, 1400 kms away changed my life” Dr. Ruchira Gupta said. Some 25,000 Nepali girls are said been trafficked to the brothels of Kantipura, the red-light district of Mumbai. These girls are made to serve 8 to 10 customers every night and have never seen the street for 5 years. This is a deliberate exploitation of human right, and is modern day slavery.

Dr. Ruchira found strong link between the trafficker’s ring and the local authorities, obstructing any investigative research. She visited the brothels of Mumbai to prepare a documentary on the story of Maili Tamang and other 22 girls she helped to rescue, who in turn helped to have her life from the attackers.

The dreams of these girls in brothels were education of children, job in office with fixed income and working hours in a peaceful environment, room of their own and they wanted justice for protection from punishment. Dr. Ruchira helped to set up a school in the red-light district, arranged issuance of government ID or citizenship document and 22 of the brokers are in jail now, she said.

The recent earthquake is another inequality to these most affected poor people of the districts, who have no home or food as basic infrastructures have collapsed and more reason for the brokers to influence the suffering people with greater hopes and promises. Earthquake victims are more vulnerable to traffickers as the girls are in extreme danger. Winter months are specially hard for them.

Mr. Raghu Pant, Ms. Indira, Mr.Shiba Gaule, Editor CIJ, Dr. Piush Mishra and others raised some questions. In reply, Dr. Ruchira stated that the root cause of girl trafficking is demand through traffickers. So, she suggested to track organized crime network. She also stressed on 3Es: Education, Empowerment and Employment and suggested learning centers with boarding room facilities in most vulnerable areas, vocational training, bank account, identity card etc. among the 10 assets to empower the girls.

Vice President of ABAN Mr. TulasiUprety presented a Vote of Thanks to the guest speaker Dr. Ruchira and all those present in the program. ABAN President Maheswor Bhakta Shrestha presented a Letter of Appreciation to the guest speaker Dr. Ruchira Gupta for giving a very enlightening talk on Girl Trafficking from Nepal.

**Efforts to Help the Earthquake Victims of Nepal (2015)**

Dr. Tshering Lama, Ph.D. from Northumbria University, UK is a Young Global Economic Leader, and social entrepreneur promoting telemedicine in Rural Nepal among many other achievements. He addressed the ABAN audience on September 24, 2015 telling his own story of struggle for education and his efforts to help the earthquake victims, particularly the most affected people of Sindhupalchowk district of Nepal.

A young village boy, Tshering, completed his schooling in Helambu and A level from Kathmandu, before he got an opportunity to study in UK University. He r remembers how he was involved in starting adult education when he was in grade 5. Among many accomplishments he worked as a village worker involved in micro-finance activities to mobilise local resources. Upon return to Nepal after studying abroad, Tshering helped set up an NGO Childreach Nepal in collaboration with his University in UK. Childreach aims to unleash every child by giving them an opportunity to get educated and pursue their dreams..

Dr. Tshering never believed on luck before the devastating earthquake of April 25, which happened in Saturday and saved thousands of students when their schools collapsed. He mobilized young volunteers to reach the affected villages s to assure them help. It was a life changing experience for these volunteers, winning trust and love of the suffering villagers. They were emotionally charged to rebuild Nepal.

Childreach Nepal started building 100 Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs) in the affected villages. Nepalese youth have united to rebuild their villages like never before. Now the focus is on building semi- permanent schools, which also provides health centre/ sanitation facilities and shelter for the affected families. The target is to build 100 TLCs within six months. Help from local suppliers and foreign donors are mobilized to achieve this target. If we join hands together, great things can be done quickly.

As a Young Economic Global Leader himself, Dr. Lama believes that every child has a potential to be a Young Global Leader. Education, health, gender equity, faith in oneself and passion for what one can achieve are some of the basic ingredients for success, he said