**Anna and Katie, 3 May 2017**

(Preliminaries)

**Where did your husbands go for security work?**

**Anna:**

West Indies

My father is also in the British Army in the UK.

I have a mother. Father died 2 years ago. I have 6 brothers. I am the only daughter. My eldest brother, you met him earlier.

**Katie does your husband work in security?**

**Katie:**

My husband used to work in a bank. Now he stays at home after retirement. My father-in-law was in the army too.

**Did your husband use to be a security guard?**

**Katie:**

Not a security guard. Worked in a bank and later worked overseas in Japan. Only my father-in-law used to be soldier, not husband. I have a son and a daughter.

**Anna, how long was your husband in the army?**

**Anna:**

17 years in the army.

**Did he have a gap before he went into commercial security? Or, leaving the army he went straight to the commercial security?**

**Anna:**

After working as an Indian army, he stayed here for 2-3 years and then he went to West Indies.

**And what did he do in those 2-3 years? Did he just hang in around the home or what did he do?**

**Anna:**

He didn’t do anything as he had planned to go abroad. Time passed by as he strolled places to apply abroad. Later in West Indies he worked as a security guard in a 7-start hotel.

**How did he get that job in West Indies?**

**Anna:**

My mom’s cousin had a job in West Indies. He was a manager in that 7-star hotel. And, he arranged for the job.

**Oh, so he didn’t go through any agents, he went there directly or by himself?  
What about your husband? How did he get work in Japan?**

**Anna:**

He had just applied for visa with his friends and got approved for a visit visa. Later overstayed there. He returned after 9-10 years.

**So, neither of them went through agents?  
Do you have any children? Can you tell me a bit your family, about your children?**

**Katie:**

I have two sons. They stay with us, we look after them. I used to have a job, left it later.

**What were you doing before you had children?**

**Katie:**

I worked in a fancy store.

**Did you stopped working because you had children?**

**Katie:**

No. I felt bored and left.

**How old were you when both got married?**

**Katie and Anna:**

19 years old. 17 years old.

**Was it a love or an arrange marriage?**

Arranged (Both).

**Why did they pick your husband (a Gurkha) for you?**

**Anna:**

It was a trend to get married to a Gurkha. It ran in our family. Also, my elders told me they get good pension.

**Katie:**

Not army. He worked in bank before marriage, not as an army or security.

**When you got married, did you move into your parents’ house?**

**Katie:**

I stayed at my mother’s house in the beginning.

**Anna:**

I didn’t go to my new house. I have been staying at my mother’s house since marriage.

**Do you still live with your parents or husband’s parents or in a different house?**

No. I stay separately.

**Is it you and your husband and your children?**

Yes. In-laws, husband and a son.

A son and a daughter. She is married.

**How long were you married before you got pregnant?**

One year after the marriage.

**When you got married, how long was your husband with you before he left for the army?**

4 months.

After 2 years.

**How did you feel being pregnant and your husband away? Did you feel lonely or did you feel you still had support from your family? How did you cope with that?**

Felt lonely and missed him.

Just thought about what could be done and time flew by. There was no phone at that time. Back then there was no texting either. You can video chat, call text these days.

**Did you write letters?**

Yes. But it took a while to get a reply. Almost a month. By that time, I forgot what I even wrote.

**Did you seek advice from your mother or your other extended families who were also married to men who went overseas? How to cope up with the loneliness?**

I had daily chores and had to work.

I was always busy in daily chores and had to look after the children too. Time flew by. It was different time. Back then there was no such thing as sharing feelings or loneliness. Even if we did, people would think we were crazy of gone mad. We kept it to ourselves.

**If you can choose one thing about your husband that you love the most, what would that thing be?**

He is very hard-working and open-hearted. I try telling him that this is not always good.

**One thing that really frustrates you about your husband?**

He has got a lot of friends. He gives more priority to them over family.

**When your husband’s away, how does the finance work? Who makes the decisions? The smaller ones too, about groceries, education of children, houses.**

I do it myself.

We both decide.

**So, he leaves you to make all the decisions?**

Yes.

**Do you have times or hard times where extended families would ask you for money and in those times, did you feel you could make the decision whether to lend the money or not or did you have to talk to your husband about it?**

We decide on big expenses together whereas for small financial management I do it myself.

**When your husbands decided to work overseas in Japan and the WI, did you feel you were the part of the decision or did they come home and say they were leaving?**

It’s common to have financial crisis, that’s the reason why we both decided on him working overseas.

Same.

**Why did you make decision for your husband to go overseas? What was the main motivator to make that choice?**

For the education of our children we were compelled to do so.

Same.

**If you can compare your life as an army wife and as private security, what are the differences? Are there any differences between those two?**

Working here wouldn’t suffice for children’ education and household expenses. That’s why we were compelled to take the decision. It would be better if we earned that amount of money here.

We stayed separately when he was in Indian Army and WI, both. The only difference is that the wage in Indian Army was lesser and insufficient to run lives. Don’t have to think twice with the wage earned in the West Indies.

**Your husband does an unarmed security, is that right?**

Yes.

**Do you know much about what he does? Does is share with you? (To both)**

Yes, Everything. (Both)

**What was the pay difference between your husband working in Indian Army and how much he makes now?**

Vast difference. He would make NRs. 15,000 to NRs. 20,000 in Indian army. Now, in the West Indies, he makes minimum NRs. 100,000 a month, could have taken a year here.

**How often does he come home as a private security guard?**

Once a year when worked in Indian army. Once in two years in the West Indies. Sometimes in 3 to 4 years.

**You don’t see him much; do you find that difficult?**

Yes. I didn’t see him for 12 years while he was working in Japan.

**Now that he is home, he’s not leaving, right?**

He’s not.

**What are you dreams and hopes? What is something that you always wanted to do in your life? Wish to do in your future or wished you’d done.**

A nice house. Good education for children, good jobs for them.

**How old are you children?**

Two sons. One 22 years old and the other 17.

My daughter is 26 years old. She is a doctor now. Son, 7 years old, born after husband returned after 12 years.

**How did you feel when he came home and you got pregnant?**

Shy. Didn’t come out of the home. My elder sister is married and little brother studies in grade 2.

**When your husbands were overseas, what sort of expectations did you have on them as husbands, and as fathers? Except bringing money home.**

Taking care of himself. That’s all.

**Your husbands being away, specially your husband being away for 12 years, how did you teach your children to know their father? How did you teach them when they were physically absent?**

Kids ask where he is, I tell them where he is and they will know. They were used to hearing that he will come sooner, maybe tomorrow and like that. They used to have conversation over phone. But I realize that there exists a certain distance in between when separated for very long time. The bond is not as strong as it was supposed to exist. I felt so.

**Is it more duty bound that your daughter respects her father or you don’t think so? Do you think it’s more respect over love?**

Respect is for sure. He has worked hard for us. It wasn’t a mistake that he had to leave us. We were helpless and in pressure already. It was for kids. So, obviously there’s respect and no greed for money.

**Were there other times where your children experienced a stranger in their father?**

Never happened. Showed pictures every now and then. Physically close, not emotionally.

**Do you love your husbands out of respect or do you love them beyond respect? Since, they’ve been away for long.**

Respect and love, both. Sacrificed everything for us so respect comes from within. Love because we’ve spent our times together and he didn’t do anything wrong.

What’s sad about this is that as proud as you are for your what they do and as important as it is, you can see the sacrifice to their family, because they have to work overseas to provide.

When you compare military families to other families in this country, the divorce rate is generally higher, and then also more incidents reported of domestic violence or community violence in the area.

**Is this something that you think is reflected in Nepal too around the Gurkha communities? The people who aren’t married to Gurkha communities. What are your experiences? Within the community itself?**

There lacked communication in the beginning. Couldn’t rely on routine calls. Now, it’s easy because of calls and messages through mobile phone. On urgencies they are permitted to return home as well. Knowing they are doing good bring us satisfaction. Well, all happened long ago, not these days. Haven’t heard now.

**In terms of street harassment and violence, is there something that you feel impacts you as a woman in Nepal, there’s been increased reported cases in harassment and violence.**

Depends on you, on how you respond and behave. Try to ignore knowing their intention if possible.

**Are there any strategies you adopt to make yourself safe on the street when you are by yourself? For example, I wear my wedding ring.**

We possess them but they are worthless. We wear ring, *tika, sindoor (to indicate they’re married).* Some respect that while some don’t.

**Did you husbands worry about your physical safeties here?**

He used to tell me about it frequently.

**What were the expectations put on you as a mother and as a wife? What did you feel was expected of you to do?**

Take good care of children, be safe, take care of health and more like that.

**Anna, do you want your sons to be Gurkhas? Is that something is desirable for you or what do you want for your sons?**

If they did well in their studies I would prefer if they opted other fields as a career rather than the army. However, I aspire that the youngest continues the tradition and becomes a Gurkha. Now, they are studying.

**Is education also important for your sons, especially for your 22 years old, or just going out and getting the job?**

Education is important. My 7 year old son says he wants to become a soldier. It’s just because of his grandfather and uncles are soldiers, and he is playing soldier with his grandpa...

**Is your daughter married?**

She’s married and she’s a doctor. The marriage was love at first and then arranged later.

**For your sons, do you want them to pick their own wives or arrange marriage?**

Preferably arranged, mine was arranged too.

**For picking them wives, what are some good qualities of a wife? What would you look for?**

The qualities for their future wives I seek are education, working (job) and good manners.

**Would you be okay with your daughter-in-law continuing to work outside of the home when she’s raising children as well or is that something you wouldn’t like?**

Yes, I would be glad to send her off to work. I had no opportunity to work when I was young, so I don’t have any problem regarding her working, I could look after the kids and cook instead.

**Comparing the two of your lives as wife and mother, one with the Indian Army and your husband gone a lot, and while your husband was still here as a banker before he left for Japan, were there any differences between your lives as mothers and wives when he was with you and absent? Or do you think it’s pretty much the same?**

I have already lived that life once. Well, he was not supposed to go for 12 years but had to. Therefore, I can’t take that chance again. I always hoped he would come next year if not this year, but it was very long.

**Anna, if you had a daughter, would you encourage her to marry Gurkha after all your experience as a wife and a mother? All that you’ve experienced, would you want that for your daughter?**

It depends on the daughter.

End of transcript