

## An investigation into the socio economic factors impacting on mental wellbeing in Kumbeshwor and Imukhel area with particular attention to the Pode Community

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In the context of a country with minimal spending on mental health, this research project takes a close look at the situation of those who are mentally ill and distressed from the Pode community in a specific area in Lalitpur (Kathmandu, Nepal). This study was commissioned by **Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health (CNMH)**, a non-governmental organisation that has been working with a number of clients<sup>1</sup> suffering from mental illness or distress in this area. Drawing on their clients as primary informants we provide a qualitative report about the nuanced reality of their lives, exploring what might be the main vulnerabilities of the *Pode* community regarding responses to mental illness and distress.

We spent three months working in the field, using an array of methods in order to address this question. We provide a glimpse into the lives, not only of the clients, but also their family members and neighbours. Common issues related to poverty, stigma and discrimination are also pertinent to the *Pode* community, but further cultural and social dimensions add to their difficulties in seeking help. We discuss, for example, the prevailing reliance on traditional healers and the creation of gaps of care through the intricacies of gendered caring roles. Both idiosyncratic and systemic issues are taken into account in order to shed light onto the factors influencing mental wellbeing and distress in the community of focus.

Drawing on our analysis we put forward informed suggestions for CNMH's future work and propose a holistic community based intervention for clients and their families in Kumbeshwore and Imukhel. We believe this intervention would have a synergistic effect in benefiting CNMH's current clients and their family members as well as a broader population of sufferers in the area.

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