

Sociocultural and structural factors shaping the nature, extent and effects of violence against women and girls in migrant communities of Baglung district, Nepal

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One Community One Family- VSO Nepal

➤ Migrant villages in Baglung



➤ Address the problem of YMW's vulnerability to VAWG

➤ Sammanit Jeevan “Living with dignity” intervention

Background

- In Nepal women especially young married women are vulnerable to IPV and DV
- Driven by traditional family structure and discriminatory practices that are grounded in patriarchal values
- Male migration is a dominant source of employment and livelihoods, remittances amount to 29.2% of GDP (World Bank, 2016)
- Women and girls' social positions contribute to unequal power relations, limited livelihoods, and exposure to DV and IPV

Aim of the Presentation

To share our findings on

- the nature of VAWG
- the factors shaping experiences of and responses to VAWG

FORMATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

Intersections between traditional gender norms, women's economic conditions and exposure to violence against women and girls: formative research in migrant communities of Baglung district, Nepal



METHODOLOGY:

- Qualitative study
- Two migrant communities of Baglung district
- 42 IDIs and 7 FGDs
- Ethics approved by SAMRC & Nepal Health Research Council
- Informed consent
- Thematic content analysis

Participants summary

16 IDIs Young married women

8 IDIs Young married men

8 IDIs Older women with in-law status

6 IDIs Unmarried teenage girls

4 IDIs Community leaders (2 males, 2 females)

2 FGDs with unmarried teenage girls

2 FGDs with Older men with in-law status

2 FGDs with Older women with in-law status

1 FGD Service providers from govt. and non-
govt. bodies



Dominant gender norms associated with being a woman



- Female dignity was highly valued, reflected on the family's reputation
- An ideal woman was expected to be submissive to husband and in-laws
- In context of migrant husbands, women who were thrifty with remittances were considered to be of *“good female character”*
- Burden of domestic work

“A woman has to perform most of the household chores, cook food, and dispose of animal dung, wash the clothes of younger ones... particularly that of father and brothers as we have a custom where men are not supposed to wash their clothes themselves. During agricultural work, it is again women carrying out parma¹” (Unmarried teenage girl)



Dominant gender norms associated with being a man



- Men were seen as breadwinners, legal guardians and protector - to look after the welfare of the family

"It is my responsibility to arrange for things needed in the house. I am going abroad to work so I feel that she doesn't need to work." (Young married man)

"A duty of a man is to go abroad to earn so as to fulfil his duty. He needs to look after his family and children." (Unmarried teenage girl)

Violence Against Women and Girls

- **Husbands and mother-in-law were the main perpetrators**
- **“Jhagada”, disputes ranging from mere arguments to verbal or physical abuse against women**
- **Intergenerational conflict between the MiLs and DiLs**
- **Eve-teasing of teenage girls by boys is common and girls do not feel safe**

"When a girl walks alone, 2-4 boys follow her and tease her. I have experienced it in a few places and sometimes when I am alone and walking back from college, boys from the community tease." (Teenage girl)

Factors shaping VAWG

- The underlying causes of VAWG included societal expectations on women to maintain an ideal image of a “good female character” and male control over their wives
- IPV was seen to be occurring as a result of alcohol abuse and gambling

"When they are drunk, they come and hit their wives, and they are all good when they are not drunk." (Young married woman)

- IPV in migrant households also arose due to financial disputes

"The wife may lose the trust of her husband if she is not able to convince her husband on the expenses that she did with the money sent from abroad" (Older man)

Young married women's responses

- Young married women were expected to be submissive: when they were assertive, they became exposed to severe violence

- They resorted to keeping quiet
- Some sought emotional support from natal family
- Few reported to community elders

"The wife can go and complain to other people in the village about what the husband did to her." (Male community leader)

- Few husbands intervened in MIL and DIL conflict

"My mother gave birth to me and my wife is my life-companion. I have to console both." (Young married man)

- Poor VAWG response services at the community level

Potential shifts in gender norms at the community level

- **Some MiLs acknowledged that young married women were overworked**

“Now-a-days, we need to tell our daughter-in-laws to ear this and that. Our mother-in-laws ... did not utter any words of encouragement to us nor did they make any meals for us. I feel that they should not have done that.” (Older woman)

- **Some older men and women seemed to be supportive of DiLs working in paid jobs, that were usually outside their home**

- **Unmarried teenage girls stated that they preferred marriage only after being educated and independent**

“We need to stay focused on our education and set an example in our community and further in Baglung district. We need to study.” (Teenage girl)

Conclusions

- **The family is the most critical place to change gender norms**
- **Young married women have a limited voice and lack support**
- **Hence the family centred model is recommended**
- **Need for interventions to provide effective support mechanisms for abused women and girls and to change gender norms in these communities**



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