Women, work and violence

Violence Against Women and Women's Economic Empowerment: understanding gender dynamics within domestic, public and work spaces

Research on VAWG in South Asia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research sought to explore links between women's income and violence again women. In order to capture a complex and intersectional perspective the methodology was divided into three strands as follows:

Strand 1: In-depth Qualitative Interviews with Women and Men in two communities at the lower two economic quintiles.

The communities were selected during our scoping phase and through discussions with key stakeholders primarily DFID country staff. Our main criteria was to capture the experiences of women in the lower two economic quintiles and who had migrated from rural areas into the capital. We selected one community inhabited mainly by construction workers called Manohara (32 interviews with women and 10 with men). The second sites was Thamel were many women work in the informal entertainment sector (20 interviews conducted).

Strand 2: Interviews with women from higher socio-economic groups for comparative analysis against strand 1 and 3.

We interviewed 30 professional women living in and around Kathmandu engaged in a range of occupations. All the women had at least a Bachelors but most also had Masters level education. The women we interviewed were employed in the corporate sector (banking and IT), education, medicine, NGOs or ran their own businesses. We also interviewed 10 men from similar backgrounds. Some of the women were married and some remained single.

Strand 3: Organisational case study of the Integrated Women's Development Programme (IWDP).

In order to maximise uptake possibilities we decided to include a third strand that would explore our research questions in relation to one relevant national programme. During our scoping period and as a result of numerous discussions with stakeholder including at government level we decided to focus on the government led IWDP. The IWDP has been implemented for the past 30 years by the Government of Nepal, and in 2009 a component was added to it with DFID's assistance, with the intention of freeing women from Gender Based Violence (GBV). The programme covers 1 million women, who are formed into Self Help Groups (SHGs). Some of these have also been federated into cooperatives, with 1600 cooperatives spread over different districts of Nepal. Many SHGs had become defunct, and the government is currently engaged in reviving them.

In order to explore the impact of this programme on both promoting WEE and reducing VAW we conducted 83 qualitative interviews with women engaged in the programme and also with husbands of women involved and across 2 districts.

Findings from all three strands reveal a complex relationship between women's involvement in paid employment and their experiences of violence. Earning an income alone does not trigger an end to violence. Women across the socio-economic spectrum are vulnerable to IPV, other forms of domestic violence, work-based harassment and violence in public spaces particularly on transport. Belonging to a women's organisation rather than income is the most significant factor

for poorer women in terms of building resilience to end/challenge VAW. Pooling social capital for poor women is seen as vital. Professional women whose earnings are more could potentially use their income to secure exit routes and draw on their education to challenge violence. However concepts of family honour are strong and reduce the likelihood that a woman would leave a violent situation. Professional women are more isolated with less access to immediate social networks and capital. The normalisation of violence is challenged to a more immediate and widespread extent by MC/UC women. Violence is still accepted as normal by many of the poorer women interviewed for both strands 1 and 3. University education for women seems to be the strongest factor triggering a clear rejection of all forms of VAW. However this alone does not mean a woman will act to change her situation. Those women who married young (before 18) disclosed more extreme and ongoing violence compared to those that married later (MC/UC women married on average early 30's). A number of the men interviewed (all strands) felt that certain jobs were not suitable for women. Evidence of a backlash to women working emerged more clearly in relation to strand 2 and was not present at all in strand 1. Women who were employed across strands 1 and 2 suffered equal levels of work based harassment.

The data analysis is still on going with the final country report due by mid-march 2017. Uptake activities have been ongoing from the start. Researchers will present findings at a conference in Kathmandu on the 15th and 16th March 2017.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS REPORT

This report is divided into five sections. The first section introduces the research concept and design highlighting our key questions and thematic areas. It then gives detail on our methodology and analytical frames. The final sub-section offers a review of what we already know in relation to VAW and WEE.

The second section gives detail on the Nepal context in relation to VAW and WEE. It then moves to summarise the findings from our secondary quantitative analysis drawing on the DHS for Nepal.

Section three offers the findings and analysis from the first two strands of our qualitative research. Each strand presents the data and ends with a section that draws conclusions drawn through the application of our analytical frames.

Section four then stands back and draws an overall conclusion based on a comparison between the data from both strands one and two.

The final section goes on to draw a number of practical recommendations which we believe to be evidenced by the data. The report ends by reviewing the next steps and our intentions to communication, publications and uptake activities.

2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This reports presents data from a DFID funded research project 'Women, Work and Violence'. The overarching question was as follows: how can approaches to increase women's economic engagement also tackle violence against women?

The questions that shape the project design and which this report seeks to answer were identified as significant by stakeholders (including DFID staff, UN and government agencies) during a detailed scoping period (December 2015 – March 2016). This research acknowledged the significant resource directed at programming in the developing world specifically geared towards improving the financial independence of women. Micro-credit projects being the most common but also investment has been placed in vocational training and in creating safe workplaces. Underlying these interventions is the assumption that women who earn their own income will have control over how to spend it and will be given more leverage to make decisions at household level. In turn this will empower women to take control over other aspects of their lives including building resilience to violence.

The research sought:

- To understand how violence currently shapes women's economic engagement patterns, and to ascertain how best to address this.
- To uncover the complex ways in which earning or generating an income shapes/alters (both positively and negatively) the forms and levels of violence that women experience, and how it affects their levels of vulnerability.
- To unpack and describe how approaches to enhancing women's economic activity can support prevention of, protection from and responses to VAW.

The research was conducted in three countries; Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. These countries were chosen because of their potential for interesting comparability and cross learning. This report focuses on the findings from Nepal.

The research was framed around a number of linked themes.

Earning an income impacts on relationships within the home: Although much of the intra-household bargaining literature suggests that earning an income increases a woman's bargaining and decision making power others. For example Sen's cooperate conflict framework suggests that outcomes are very context-specific.

Key questions emerging from this literature:

- Do women have control over her own earnings?
- Does earning an income exacerbate or introduce tensions because it challenges traditional gender norms and power relations within the home?

- How do husbands, fathers and brothers respond to the earning power of female family members?

The Impact of Intersectional Features:

- Whether/how different groups of women are more or less vulnerable to particular types of violence and how this may or may not link to income levels and activities.
- We have sought to identify whether particular social norms can be associated with particular groups of men and women, or if they are widely expressed across the socio-economic spectrum.
- We have attempted to draw out men's attitudes to violence and explore intersectionally whether some groups sanction specific forms more than others.
- We have also tried to pinpoint specific triggers for male violence that may relate to a women earning an income.
- We looked at whether women show resilience to violence and if so, in what ways are they able to do this?
- Can we identify groups (e.g. members of a producing collective, employed by companies proactive in promoting women's wellbeing) who are able to draw on resources or display greater agency to ensure protection from and responsiveness to violence?

The Nature, Type and Conditions of Work: How the specific environment in which a woman earns an income impacts on her sense of wellbeing and experiences of both empowerment and violence.

In order to see answers we have explored the following:

- Work location,
- Management styles and composition,
- Relative access to income and assets,
- Access to financial services,
- Access to business development services,
- Level of economic decision making power,
- Amount of unpaid care and household work a woman is engaged in,
- Levels of skill capacity and leadership attributes,
- Access to women's collective action through cooperatives and unions, support services and networks available.

Nature and Type of VAW and Women's Resilience: In our field and case study sites, we mapped (using the VAW spectrum), and analysed intersectionally the range and types of violence that different groups of women are most vulnerable to. We will also mapped the resources available to women to counter, challenge and protect themselves from violence.

Migration and Travel: Rural to urban migration as well as cross border migration is on the rise in each of the study countries; as such, we have sought to capture the impact it has on women's earning capacity and vulnerabilities to violence.

- Are women more or less vulnerable following a move from the village home into a city?

- To what extent do migrationary bridges linked to other women from their wider families or places of origin affect women's vulnerability to violence?
- Is income the primary motivation behind migration, and are women also expected to contribute to families left behind?
- What are the income generating activities that newly migrated women are most likely to be engaged in?
- Does migration (in line with other themes) increase or decrease women's agency and control over their lives?

2.1   Methodology

This photograph depicts just some of the many dancing bars in Thamel, Kathmandu (taken by the Academic Lead)

In order to answer these questions and explore the associated themes we designed a three-stranded methodology which is as follows:

Strand 1: In-depth qualitative interviews with women and men in two communities at the lower two economic quintiles.

The communities were selected during our scoping phase and through discussions with key stakeholders primarily DFID country staff. Our main criteria was to capture the experiences of women in the lower two economic quintiles and who had migrated from rural areas into the capital. We selected one community inhabited mainly by construction workers called Manohara (near to the airport). The second sites was Thamel were many women live who work in the informal entertainment sector.

In Manohara we conducted 32 in-depth qualitative interviews with women working in the construction industry largely as unskilled labourers and 8 interviews with men from the same community also working in construction (mostly as masons). The women and men interviewed

ranged in age from 19-55. Most were or had been married. Most of the female participants married at 15 with a few married at 14 and only some married between 16-18. Husbands were only a few years older in most cases. Most of the marriages took place in rural districts prior to migration. Most of the marriages were arranged, a few forced and some were described as love marriages. Most were Hindu or Buddhist with some Christian and from a range of caste and ethnic groupings including; the Gurung, Lama, Chettri Bhandari, Limbu, Pariyar, Dalit ethnic/ caste group. Most had migrated from rural districts within the last 10-12 years only a few were born in Kathmandu. Educational levels were low with only two of the women having achieved the High School Leavers Certificate. Many had not been to school at all or only completed a few grades, most who went to school finished between grades 5-7. The educational level of husbands was about the same with some achieving a few grades higher than their wives. The sample was mixed in terms of women still living with their husbands and those now on their own due to husbands working elsewhere (including in the Gulf) or being abandoned.

In Thamel we conducted 20 in-depth interviews with women working primarily in dance bars and massage parlours. The interviews took place in the safe space provided by Raksha Nepal and with staff present in case psychological support was needed. Most of the women were now living on their own with children (although in most cases the children were either in private boarding schools or if girls being cared for by Raksha Nepal). The women came from a range of caste and ethnic groupings from Dalit to Brahmin. Educational levels were very low with most women not excelling beyond grades 5-7. All the women interviewed had migrated from rural districts driven from home by domestic violence, violence at the hands of Maoist and/or the poverty left by the earthquake (or a combination of all). This is an area of Kathmandu with male and female hawkers, and shops run by both women and men. There is diversity of businesses, ranging from food, to mountain gear to the sex industry.

Raksha Nepal

Raksha Nepal's mission to empower the women working in dance bars, cabin restaurants, dohori restaurants and massage parlours. They are engaged on rescue and rehabilitation of women and girls who are confined in brothels, bars, hotels and massage parlours.

It is in the heart of Kathmandu's busiest business district Thamel. Most of the women engaged in Nepal's informal entrainment industry are employed in this area.

Raksha Nepal offers counselling and legal support to women who are victims of violence both at work and at home. The NGO has set up a shelter for children of women working in the entertainment industry. It has been running intervention programmes aimed at skill development and education programme for women who want to come out of the profession or want to learn something new. Hundreds of women have been trained in beautician, spa, sewing and tailoring courses. It has set up a cooperative in the Thamel area. Around 400 women are members of the co-operative and many have set up their own businesses. It has also formed Nepal's first union of women working in the informal entertainment industry. Its objective is to ensure work safely, increase their bargaining power with the employers and enhance their voice and agency.

Raksha reaches out to the women through door to door campaign and extensively uses mass media communication particularly radio to make their presence known. A big part of the campaign is to stop exploitation of women at work place which includes ensuring that women are fairly paid, not harassed by police and customers and are aware of their legal rights.

The entertainment and construction industries in particular are important sites for exploration of issues relating to WEE and VAW, and the causal relationships between them. On the one hand, extreme poverty leads women into these sectors. For migrant women there are very few options available to them and no opportunity to retrain to pursue education. In relation to the entertainment industry violence and sexual exploitation is embedded in the work. To an extent this can also be seen in relation to construction where male authority is used to maintain hierarchies and marginalise women in menial roles were they are susceptible to harassment. Market forces and the gendered nature of work keep women locked into these industries because the wages are relatively high compared with other unskilled work such as domestic or care work. However these slightly raised income levels come at a cost as VAW, it could be argued, is institutionalised within these sectors and in a number of ways. The nature and impact of this institutionalisation will be explored though this strand alongside consideration of the impact, physically and psychological that earning a reasonable income has for the empowerment of women.

Strand 2: Interviews with women from higher socio-economic groups for comparative analysis against strand 1 and 3.

We interviewed 30 professional women living in and around Kathmandu engaged in a range of occupations with at least a Bachelors but most also with Masters level education. The women we interviewed were employed in the corporate sector (banking and IT), education, medicine, NGO or ran their own businesses. We also interviewed 10 men from similar backgrounds. Some of the women were married and some single. The women were aged between 26-56. Those that had married had done so around their late twenties early thirties. Some of the women were still single and approaching their mid-thirties. Only a few women could be described as having recently migrated most lived at home in joint families who had settled in the city a few generations ago. We also interviewed 10 men who had similar educational backgrounds and were employed in professional contexts reflective of the female participants.

This strand is an important part of our research design it allows us to test out if the type or nature of income earning bears any significance on a woman's experiences of VAW. For example are women engaged in certain professions less likely to be exposed to work-based harassment? Does earning a higher income (compared to strand 1) have any significance in terms of building self-confidence to challenge forms of VAW? Are professional women more or less likely to experience domestic violence specifically IPV? Understanding the difference between women's experiences of income earning and VAW is vital if we are to pinpoint triggers and provide clear evidence of how income might (or not) empower and how this could be used as a driver to challenge and build resilience to violence in all its forms.

Strand 3: Organisational case study of the Integrated Women's Development Programme (IWDP).

In order to maximise uptake possibilities we decided to include a third strand that would explore our research questions in relation to one national relevant development programme. During our scoping period and as a result of numerous discussions with stakeholders including at government level we decided to focus on the government led IWDP. The IWDP has been implemented for the past 30 years by the Government of Nepal, and in 2009 a component was added to it with DFID's assistance, with the intention of freeing women from Gender Based Violence (GBV). The programme covers 1 million women, who are formed into Self Help Groups. Some of these have also been federated into cooperatives, with 1600 cooperatives spread over different districts of Nepal. Many SHGs had become defunct, and the government is currently engaged in reviving them.

The head of IWDP in Nepal reported that the group structures have proved useful not only in enhancing economic empowerment, but also in offering a forum where women can talk about and address GBV issues. There have also been several challenges. For instance, when paralegal workers started becoming effective at the group level, some began to take money to settle cases, and the formal judicial system then took an objection to the informal system of settlement of matters, which ought to be brought to the judiciary.

Early stage resolution of disputes at the community level, and filing criminal cases are two ends of a spectrum along which experiences are available, and can be studied in the WEE-VAWG research project. Similarly, economic situations and opportunities differ widely across communities, and the IWDP offers an opportunity to learn lessons across regions and ethnic communities, and is also interested in taking these lessons on board for planning their programmes differently across regions and ethnic groups.

In order to explore the impact of this programme on both promoting WEE and reducing VAW we conducted 83 qualitative interviews with women engaged in the programme and also with husbands of women involved and across 2 districts.

These are broken down as follows:

- Kaski District
- Total interviews 41.
- Female IWDO beneficiaries: 27 IWDP beneficiaries
- Male: 10
- Key Informant Interviews with IWDP staff: 4
- Syangja
- Total Interviewed: 42
- Female IWDP beneficiaries: 29
- Men: 13

Adopting a mixed approach for this strand we also conducted 700 interviews with women across seven districts: Ilam, Chitwan, Kaski, Jumla, Dadeldhura, Bardiya and Sarlahi.

The district selection, interview and survey tools were all finalised in negotiation with the department for Women and Children. The department authorised the research and facilitated the data collection by identifying gatekeepers in each site.

The data collected through this strand will be presented and used by government and its donors to further steer this programme, to evidence its success and pinpoint areas where further thought may be needed.

2.2   Data analysis

In the analysis of data we adapted and applied a number of well-established approaches. The social ecology framework is endorsed by numerous development institutions, including DFID (e.g. DFID 2012). It presents a picture of violence as inherently multifaceted, produced by the interaction of numerous elements of everyday life at various levels (e.g. household, community, nation). Its focus on the 'embedded' nature of violence is extremely important, as it highlights the fact that structural changes (such as legal reform) and even community-level interventions are unlikely to meet their full potentials unless efforts are also made to work on and within the broader cultural systems in which they are located, interpreted and enacted.

An intersectional approach recognises that gender is by no means an isolated social category. Rather, it acts to constrain women's freedoms in diverse ways by interlinking with additional categories such as race, caste, class, disability, sexual orientation and age, which contribute further to social, economic and political power inequities. The aim is to analyse the 'differential ways in which social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 205).

The VAW spectrum builds on a legacy stemming from Liz Kelly's (1988) work, which strove to demonstrate that violence against women should not only be analysed as episodic or deviant acts of cruelty, but rather must be seen as normative and functional within a broad spectrum of abuse.

The attitudes continuum: this way of documenting viewpoints will enable us to understand and evidence any shifts in attitudes towards both women's role as a caregiver and/or income earner and VAW. So, for example, is a woman earning an income, or working outside of the home generally thought of positively or negatively in different contexts? To what extent are forms of VAW normalised? It is likely that many people will express contradictory positions, for example women should earn an income but VAW is acceptable in specific circumstances? So the continuum has enabled us at community level to understand what appetite for change exists and amongst which groups. The very simple example below will of course the data has made correlations far more complex.
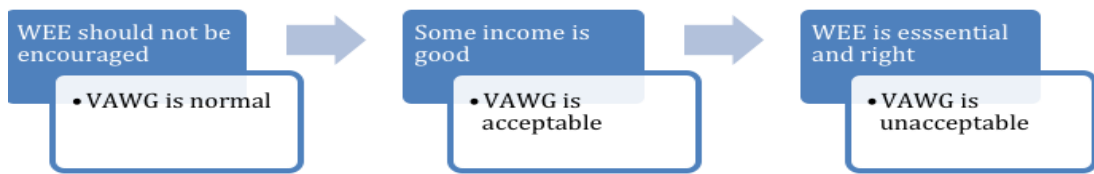
This section now goes on to introduce some critical terminology and conceptual perspectives that the research has applied and tested. Specifically, it unpacks the terms 'economic empowerment' and 'violence against women.' With more nuanced understandings of these concepts in place, this section of the report then proceeds to a brief summary of the current evidence related to how empowerment and VAW interact in everyday life.

2.3   Review of the global evidence

2.3.1   Economic engagement vs. economic empowerment: a critical distinction

Women's economic engagement refers to participation in activities that generate an income. This does not equate with empowerment, which is a holistic concept denoting a process in which an individual is able to access resources and build power and agency - normally increasing decision making power, building self-efficacy and self-esteem, gaining control of assets and generating positive outcomes (see figure 1).
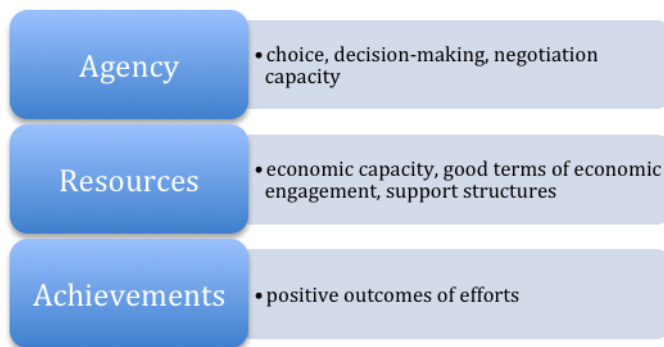

Figure 1 Conceptualising empowerment (Kabeer 2003)

Economic engagement is not ipso facto empowering, firstly because market forces often reproduce inequality rather than decrease it (Kabeer 2012). The market discriminates in wage rates, hiring practices and so forth (e.g. when women are offered only unskilled jobs) (Anker et al 2003).

In confusing economic engagement with empowerment, some common (but highly problematic) assumptions are: (i) that women who earn incomes can necessarily maintain control over them, (ii) that women have recourse to social and legal support if their earnings are taken away by others, and (iii) that financial independence makes leaving abusive relationships viable (ignoring social, and perhaps even legal, contexts).

Economic engagement therefore becomes empowering when it contributes not only to economic income, but to the enhancement of women's power and agency and the transformation of social norms (structure) that prevent the exercise of agency.

2.4   Defining violence against women and girls

Popular definitions of violence vary substantially; violence is a concept used to categorise certain forms of interpersonal behaviour, and as such it is subject to sociocultural interpretation. Thus, some acts and structures viewed as violent by western societies may not be viewed as such by others, and opinions about whether/how to challenge them will therefore vary. This diverse understanding of violence also applies to academic research, which frequently operates with different definitions according to discipline (gender studies, law, peace studies etc.).

This lack of clarity across contexts and academic fields can lead to difficulty in cross-cultural approaches to programme and policy design. In research on VAW a broad definition of violence is required, which recognises that violence is both a physical and psychological phenomenon, and that it operates on multiple levels from the personal to the macro-structural. We have chosen, therefore, to follow the example of the What Works Programme in adopting the DEVAW definition of VAW:

> **"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and/or girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life"** (UN 1993; see also Scriver et al 2015: 8).

The What Works programme (Scriver et al 2015) supplements this definition with a vantage point gained from the social ecology approach. As explained above, this theoretical perspective facilitates the understanding of violence as multidimensional, with inter-linkages between personal, situational and sociocultural (structural) factors. We will be refining this perspective somewhat through the addition of intersectional analysis, and two VAW spectrums.

2.5   Violence against women and girls: a universal phenomenon?

This understanding of violence as inherently multifaceted necessitates a cautious approach to arguments concerning the so-called universality of VAW. The main issues are as follows:

In general terms, VAW is an endemic global problem, with over a third of women experiencing VAW globally at some point in their lives (WHO et al 2013). Some theorists do argue that universal (cross-cultural) risk factors for VAW can be identified (e.g. alcohol abuse, young age, external sexual relations, experiencing childhood abuse, growing up with domestic violence etc.) (Abramsky et al (2011). However, while considering universal factors may be helpful, their intersection with diverse features of different sociocultural environments create contextual particularities that must be understood if interventions are to succeed.

VAW is broadly universal, and yet is entirely context-specific in terms of its triggers and manifestations. If it is to be prevented, this complexity must be understood in terms of the interplay of various contextual factors operating from the personal to the structural levels. Gender norms are embedded in complex webs of symbolic and material culture that are reflected in institutional structures such as the media, religious teachings and legal frameworks. These factors combine to create unique environments that perpetuate discriminatory behaviour based on interlinked understandings of ethnicity, race, gender, age class and caste (Fulu & Heise 2015).

Understanding localised manifestations of VAW therefore requires in-depth, context-specific qualitative research (complemented and partially directed by quantitative findings).

2.6   What is already known about the relationship between VAW and women's economic engagement?

Economic engagement (income generation) has a complex and often thorny relationship with VAW. While positive impacts are well known (and perhaps, at times, over-emphasised), research that has been conducted tends actually to present contradictory findings. Women's experiences of violence often increase when they have jobs because they face sexual discrimination, intimidation and violence at the workplace, as well as in public spaces during their commute. For some women, the violence experienced at home may also increase due to male backlash, discussed further below. As noted above, this is likely to be linked to differences in the socio-cultural contexts of the various studies. Although our research in Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan will is culturally specific, we do have some generalisable information that may be used to shape our investigation of changing patterns across cultures:

2.7   Experiences of violence at work

Negative masculinities structure workplace culture in many contexts. These culturally-defined gender concepts 'are reinforced by organisational norms, the behaviour of managers and leaders, a lack of codes of conduct and workplaces dominated by men' (Taylor 2015a: 13).

So-called "female" job sectors also subject women to higher levels of risk. Patterns of horizontal segregation (job roles/sectors in which women dominate) ensure that women are often confined to specific sectors with higher violence exposure (e.g. domestic work, assembly line manufacturing, teaching and nursing) (Cruz & Klinger 2011).

Violence at work includes the psychological distress caused by discrimination and bullying as well as physically harmful acts.

The 'world of work' (Cruz & Klinger 2011) also encompasses women's experiences on their way to and from work, and therefore incorporates the harassment that women in all countries face (albeit to varying degrees) in public spaces, including on public transport.

2.8   Experiences of violence at home

A consistent cross-cultural indicator for VAW is the contravention of local gender norms (Jewkes 2002), and the failure to maintain cultural expectations of masculinity/femininity. The transgression of traditional gender norms (e.g. through employment and/or earning) may actually lead to increased oppression at home: to violent 'backlash' that seeks to redress the power balance (Goetz and Sen Gupta 1884).

Relative Resource Theory suggests an inverse relationship between men's economic resources and VAW (Goode 1971), and even more importantly, an inverse relationship between spousal economic disparities and IPV (the greater the difference between a husband and wife's material resources, in other words, the greater the chance of IPV) (McCloskey, 1996; Macmillan and Gartner, 1999. In India, for example, one study finds that 'where wives are better employed than their husbands, physical violence is higher' (Panda & Agarwal 2005: 834), and another highlights the 'frustrations that men felt at their inability to fulfil the socially expected sole breadwinner role [and] the frustration felt by many men was magnified when they perceived women to be 'getting ahead' or doing well' (Neville 2014: 16). This cultural perspective may help to explain the vastly inconsistent findings of studies that have examined the relationship between women's economic engagement and VAW in various locations (see Vyas & Watts 2009 for an overview).

Gender norms intersect with other issues, including other social divisions including class and caste, life histories, legal frameworks, religious institutions/ideology, local economic structures, marriage patterns and so on, creating varied experiences of violence within countries and cultures. This intersectional focus will remain a consistent analytical lens for our research in each country.

3 OVERVIEW OF THE WEE AND VAW CONTEXT IN NEPAL

In reviewing the VAWG context in Nepal we apply the ecology framework introduced earlier. By exploring the context of VAWG across a number of intersecting spheres we are able to build a comprehensive picture of the landscape. We focus on women's vulnerabilities to specific forms of violence across differing contexts. We also consider the support and justice mechanisms that may exist and views on their effectiveness. This overview will set the scene for the presentation of our qualitative data that digs into individual perceptions of the ecology of VAW. It also captures personal experiences of how earning an income links to VAW.

In Nepal the law is reasonably well formulated in its approach to gender concerns. However, women's organisations warn that official attitudes to implementation - spanning employers, police and the courts - remain relatively indifferent. Women's organisations also report that patriarchal attitudes remain deeply embedded in the general population, and that intimate partner violence is often considered 'normal.'

A recent study of women with disabilities in Nepal (Puri et al 2015) reveals that 57.7% have experienced violence, including emotional violence (55.2%); physical violence (34%); and sexual violence (21.5%). Women in paid employment were more likely to have experienced violence.

In 2014, 83% of women participated in the labour force, compared to 89% of men (WEF 2014). However, 53.8% of women employees report having experienced workplace violence (ILO 2004: xiv).

3.1 The societal level

National Politics: The Nepali Constitution has prioritized gender equality and elimination of VAW in Nepal as major national goals. Women in Nepal enjoy equal voting rights and the right to participate in political parties. The interim Constitution of 2007 also stipulates that at least one third of candidates for the Constituent Assembly must be women. However, FWLD's (2011) CEDAW Shadow Report highlights that 'violence against women in politics' is an area of serious concern that ought to be addressed by the state, so as to allow more women to exercise their right to vote and stand for political office.

3.2 The law

Gender equality: The Gender Equality Act was passed in 2006, repealing and amending 56 discriminatory provisions of various Acts, and incorporating extra provisions to protect women's

rights (Saathi 2009). However, the CEDAW Committee (2011) notes that a number of discriminatory laws still exist.

Workplace Harassment: The long-awaited Sexual Harassment at the Workplace law came into force in February 2015. However, people working in the informal sector – which is 92.6% of workers – have no recourse to its provisions.

Domestic Violence: In 2009, Nepal passed its first domestic violence law, the Domestic Violence and Punishment Act, which defines domestic violence as physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse (OECD 2014). However, it is argued that the new law is unlikely to make significant impact unless its sanctions are strengthened and police responses improved (Freedom House 2015; OECD 204; USDS 2013, 2014).

Rape: Prison sentences for rape range from 5-20 years depending on varied factors (USDS 2014). Spousal rape is experienced by as many as 74% of married women (Saathi 2009), and while it is recognised as a crime, husbands face lesser terms of three to six months.

It is notable that the NGOs interviewed as part of this research (for example Raksha Nepal) claimed that the policy and legal framework provides no meaningful protection to female victims of violence.

The labour force: In 2014, 83% of women in Nepal participated in the labour force, compared to 89% of men (WEF 2014). The informal sector makes up 92.6% of the workforce and only 1.5% of employed women are working in the formal sector (ILO 2010: 9). There is also a marked urban/rural divide, with women in cities significantly less likely to be working.

Some labour unions in Nepal have strong women leaders and have clear policies that promote gender equality. In many sectors, however - notably the entertainment and construction sectors - women lack a common platform to represent their issues.

Interviews with NGOs such as Raksha Nepal revealed common views that job options for women are more limited than men's, and that women are underpaid, overworked and have poor working conditions (including sexual exploitation, especially in the entertainment industry). Entertainment and sex industry workers are particularly vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation. In most cases women are forced to take work in the entertainment industry as they are illiterate and unskilled. Many of the women employed in this sector have migrated from rural areas to Kathmandu.

The Media: Not currently under strict censorship, but it is noted that 'negative or stereotype portrayal of women in [the] media is commonly prevalent' (FWLD 2011: ix).

Education: The government of Nepal has made substantial efforts to promote gender equality in education (Saathi 2009). UNICEF (2014) figures state that primary attendance rates were slightly higher for boys than for girls (96% vs. 91%) and substantially higher for the secondary level (74% vs. 66%). This is in marked contrast to the WEF's (2014) enrolment figures, which place girls ahead of boys in secondary schooling.

3.3   The community level

Overview: During the scoping research, women and institutional representatives stated that in Nepal, the belief that a woman is a 'liability' is deeply embedded in men. Male child bias is extremely common. There is a general lack of attention to the health and education of girls, with high differentials in literacy and education levels, although in the recent years this gap has been narrowed. Women also lack abilities and opportunities for formal work.

Official structures (local level): During the scoping fieldwork, representatives of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social welfare admitted during an interview that a lack of human and financial resources, and a general lack of government agency coordination prevent effective action related to WEE or VAW at the district level. In government structures, women officers are typically not heard, and lack both authority and competence.

Harmful practices: The CEDAW Committee (2011) highlights the predominance of harmful practices in Nepal (see also Asia Foundation 2010; Paudel 2007; Saathi 2009; UNFPA 2013; USDS 2014). These include mainly dowry harassment, but also accusations of witchcraft and chhaupadi (the refusal to allow menstruating women into the home) and deuki (whereby girls are 'married' to God but then regularly prostituted).

Caste-based and ethnic discrimination: These remain common, with Dalit women being exposed to more violence than any other social category (HRW 2014b). Madheshi and Muslim women are less likely than other women to be allowed to work or to travel outside the house. This is a consequence of intersecting social issues including unequal educational access, literacy, poverty levels and caste/ethnic discrimination that constitute barriers to these groups' employment (Coylet et al 2014).

Public space & mobility: Much of the sexual harassment that women face 'at work' from colleagues actually takes place outside the premises (Dhakal 2009; Saferworld 2014). Sexual harassment in public spaces is common; on public transport it is said to be endemic.

3.4   The household level

Generally speaking, women's free (unaccompanied) movement in public spaces reflects badly on their families' ijjat (honour) (Coyle et al 2014). Many women are ultimately prevented from working by their husbands' families. Patriarchal norms maintain household decision-making and economic control as masculine preserves (FWLD 2011).

3.5   Summary of our secondary quantitative research

Prior to fieldwork beginning we conducted analysis of the 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) data. Our focus was on exploring what the data could tell us about the association between women's employment, and experience of various forms of violence (physical, emotional and sexual), with socio-demographic and other background factors at the provincial, household and individual levels. The key findings are given below with the full report in annex 1.

Women's participation in work: Our findings indicate that rural women are significantly more likely to work compared to urban women- with the highest proportion of working women residing in the rural mountain zone, while the lowest proportion reside in the urban Terai zone. Poverty plays a significant role in women's employment in Nepal with over 95 percent of women

from the poorest households engaged in work (both paid and unpaid) compared to 61 percent of women from richer households. In addition, the multivariate analysis that explored the determinants of women's work participation indicates that after accounting for other variables, factors such as residence in a specific ecological zone, household wealth, age and involvement in family decision making have a significant influence on women's participation in work. While factors such as the age of the woman and involvement in family decision making were positively associated with women's employment, household wealth was negatively associated.

Violence against Women: Our results suggest that almost one fifth of the women had experienced some form of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey by partner. Physical violence was the most cited form of violence followed by emotional and sexual violence by an intimate partner. Among factors associated with experience of violence, although place of residence was not associated with the experience of violence, residence in specific ecological zones was significant with women from the Terai zone reporting higher odds of experiencing violence compared to other zones.

The women from the richest households in urban areas were less likely to be victims of any form of violence from their husband/partner as compared to women from the poorest households. Women's education significantly reduced the odds of experiencing any form of violence in both rural and urban areas, while women who had witnessed their father beating their mother were more likely to experience violence. In addition, in the multivariate analysis, marital control and experience of witnessing father beat mother were significantly associated with experiencing violence. However, no significant association was established between women's work and experience of any forms of violence.

The extent to which these secondary findings map out in our primary research will be considered in the final section of this report. What they clearly highlight is the difficulty in correlating income with forms of violence not least because the forms of violence women may be experience are numerous and therefore not captured fully through DHS data.

4 PRIMARY DATA FINDINGS

4.1 Strand 1: In-depth qualitative interviews with women and men in two communities at the lower two economic quintiles.

As outlined in the methodology section this strand focused on capturing the experiences of women (and some men) in the bottom two economic quintiles. Semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting between 1-2 hours each. Our two field-sites focus on women engaged in as unskilled labourers in the construction sector and women working in the informal entertainment industry. The findings are given below with examples of interview passages given as illustration.

Interviews with women and men working in the construction sector

There is no direct correlation between earning an income and greater resilience to all/any forms of violence. In applying the gender spectrum all the women interviewed have suffered at least one form of violence within the last year. Types of violence they talked about included; intimate partner violence (e.g. marital rape), sexual harassment and physical intimidation at work, harassment travelling to and from work, high levels of anxiety around getting home safely with fear of rape being very significant for many of them.

All the women felt that earning an income was important not just for their survival and that of their children but also for their self-esteem and confidence. Degrees of willingness to challenge violence differed and membership of a women's organisation was the key dimension. Women who belonged to a local organisation working specifically on ending violence were much more vocal in their determination to recognise a wider spectrum of violence and also to challenge it.

All the women had stories of being verbally harassed at work by male workers and contractors. They acknowledged the pay differences and many talked about how difficult it was for women to progress beyond the role of manual labourers. Two barriers emerged; the gendered perception of roles (only unskilled labour is suitable for women) and lack of time and opportunity to train.

4.2 Experiences of work

This section presents the themes emerging from questions focused on women's experiences of earning an income.

4.2.1 Acceptance of women working

In the interviews with men there was widespread acceptance and support of women working. Many of the men talked on the one hand about women being equal in respect to working but only a few said that they shared the domestic and child care work. In some of the interviews the

pressures on men to earn enough to support families was a very clear and heavy burden. Earning a good wage was certainly seen as an important dimension of masculinity and the male role in the household.

Women who have migrated from rural districts are expected to work and this is widely accepted by husbands and extended family. Women born into rural families have a long tradition of working in the agricultural sector and most of the women talked about their mothers working in this sector. Their aspirations for their children and daughters in particular suggests that they hope that they will be engaged in higher skilled work.

Commitment and investment in children's education girls and boys (no difference detected here) was very high. Many of the women were paying for children to be educated in private boarding schools.

An over burdening of women is very clear

For example the follow account of the working day was common:

I go to do labour work. While going for work, I wake up at 4 in the morning, cook food, pack it and go to work. I work till 10 a.m. After 10, there is a lunch break till 11 a.m. Then again I start working. After starting to work, I rest for a while when the employers are not there. When the employers are there, they will say, "you don't work, you lazy people". So in the absence of employers and contractors, I hide and rest. Again at 2 p.m. it is snacks break. Even while having snacks for a while, I don't delay and have it quickly and again start working wanting it to be 5 p.m. soon. At times I go to "toilet" where I can rest for a while. It is easy for those who smoke cigarette; they pretend like smoking and rest for a while. But I don't smoke. So even though I don't need to use "toilet" I go to there and rest for a while. After resting, I come back to work; carry bricks and sand. Some masons tease and try to speak but I do not feel like speaking to them so I work on my own. I get angry when they tease a lot. They could have stopped teasing to those who do not speak. But they tease both; those who speak and even those who do not speak. I scold the masons saying I do not like people making noise. They should only tease those who joke around with them. I do not know how to joke around with people; I do not know how to speak random things. I only speak what is there, otherwise it is finished. I immediately get angry if they tease. So, I scold and fight with masons and work on my own until 5 p.m. Then I come to home, cook food, eat and sleep. Again in the morning I wake up at 4, cook food, carry and go to work. I do not have appetite in the morning to eat food at home so I carry with me while going to work in the morning.

One woman recounts her husband's frequently expressed view: "Yes, he thinks that only women have to do all the household chores. "The household work is for women otherwise, why to "marry"?" He says so."

4.3   The glass ceiling

Many women talked about a glass ceiling in their work and lack of opportunities for skill progression. Some women had received training to become masons but none of the sample actually worked in this position. They all acknowledged the pay gap even between men and women working in the same unskilled sector. They talked of men being seen as stronger and therefore more productive and so paid more highly. Women also spoke of the role of the mason being easier and much better paid (three times more per day). When asked if they would like to be a mason they said yes because the work is easier and better paid but said that even with the training they would not be able to go for such work due to fear of being more vulnerable to harassment. The job of a mason is seen as a man's role and women who try and break into it are looked upon very harshly. The difference in pay between men and women doing the same job was put down to men being stronger and so more productive carrying more etc. This gendered mind-set was shared by a significant number of the men and women interviewed with a few of both genders challenging it. The issue of pay equality seems to be something men and women reflect on and hold opinions (one way or the other).

"Actually, we [women labourers] are the ones to do the work. It is more difficult than the work they [masons] do; we have to prepare mixture [refers to cement, sand and water], carry bricks and carry sand. They only build the walls still we are paid less. I do not know why. "

Relatively high wages keep women in the construction sector

All female participants recognised that the construction sector offered them the highest possible daily rate for unskilled labour. They did not want to move into any other sector because of the rate of pay in construction. However all participants acknowledged that women were paid less than their male counterparts.

The relatively higher wage also comes at the price of having to work in a harsh male dominated environment.

"Some [contractors] are arrogant. They speak badly, speaking rubbish words without thinking how other people feel about it. Some are of dominating nature and think that they [contractors] can say and do anything to us [labourers]."

In answer to the question; 'Why do you think they dominate you? She replies:

"Maybe because I am a woman. Some are of dominating nature while some are good. If we are working with new contractors then they try to dominate us [labourers]. They think that we should be continuously doing our work. Instead of helping us they try to be the boss and threaten us to bring the materials required."

In many of the interviews women talked about how they worked together in order to challenge the unfairness they experienced. In one case a group of women joined together and confronted a contractor who had not paid them: "I got tensed when I heard that the contractor ran away without paying money. We used to go to his house to find him in the mornings without having meal, only to find out that he was not home. Once, we waited from morning to evening, and then finally met him and threatened him that we will call the police if he did not give our money. Many of us were there. We returned after he promised that he will bring our money on the fixed day. Ever since, we never went to do his work; we did other contractor's work. Later, due to fear as well, that contractor did give us all our money that he owed to us. "

Earning an Income Increases confidence

All of the women interviewed stated that they would work even if they did not need to. They talked about the material necessity, the need to earn to buy food, pay for school fees was widely cited as the main things women spent their income on. However, most of the women also said that earning an income increased their confidence and meant that they could influence decisions at household level. This control and financial independence was considered vital and worth the hardships of working in a manual capacity. Some of the women retained control over their income and did not hand any over to their husbands or other family. Some women talked of pooling their income with the husbands. Only a few women stated they handed all of their income to their husbands and then received an amount back.

An example of the psychological benefit of earning an income can be seen in the following response; "To me, even if it is not difficult, working is better because it satisfactory to my body too. It "exercises" my body. If any good work comes through my husband I am ready to do anything; may it be carrying loads or anything else, I am ready to work."

The link between income and decision-making power is also clearly perceived, for example:

"It is very obvious thing that if one earns; others will not say anything but if one doesn't then others try to dominate you."

4.4   Health implications

The perceived benefits (e.g. greater financial stability, provision of food, clothes and school fees) are seen by the participants to far outweigh even the health implications of construction work.

All the women suffered health problems which could be linked to their work. Access to affordable medical care is very limited and a drain on their salaries. A number of the women used alcohol to numb the pain after work.

"It does harm sometimes. There is the excessive discharge of white fluid [from the vagina]; at that time I go to "Manohara clinic", bring medicine and that instantly works and makes me feel better. When I ask it, they say the white liquid is discharged because of lifting heavy loads and prescribes me medicines."

Another participant disclosed:

"Here, there used to be lump of this size. [Showing the size of lump with her hand near her chest] Then I went for check-up several times to the hospital in =Khotang= but nothing was diagnosed. They just gave me the medicine for gastritis which I took but nothing happened. After coming here, [Kathmandu] I went for checkup in =Sanjeevani= [Name of health facility] then it was diagnosed that I had ulcer.

I was suffering from ulcer so after taking the medicine and injections, the lump here has disappeared. But I have a burning sensation; it has been two days that I am staying home. When I went for the check-up to the same hospital they said that the ulcer has increased and suggested me not to carry loads. I then took 2 injections and returned back [From health facility]. Those medications did decrease the burning sensation. That is it; I have been suffering."

4.5   Recognising and challenging violence

The women varied in their responses in terms of recognising a wide spectrum of violence including work based harassment and also in their willingness to challenge it. Some of the women maintained that husband beating their wives was "just what happens, if a wife does something wrong she should expect to get beaten."

Sexual harassment at work

Sexual harassment at work was most commonly talked about but not necessarily categorised by the women as violence. The hyper masculine nature of construction sites seems to be at the root of institutionalised VAW within this sector. Whilst accounts of physical harm on the sites were few all the women recounted instances of male workers and contractors using 'rude' language towards them. For example one participant stated; "It is heard that contractors assault the woman labourers physically. It will happen if mason and contractor do not have morality."

Another woman interviewed stated; "It is usual that workers use rubbish words at the work place."

Some women though were very clear in how they viewed this behaviour, for example; "speaking and also other type of violence like touching and teasing. Also, when we ask them not to speak they use unusual words. I think this is called violence."

Strategies for avoiding sexual abuse

Many women talked about the strategies they employed to try and avoid sexual comments, touching and teasing from male workers and also the contractors. These strategies include working closely together making sure none of them are left alone.

Some of the participants felt that a few women encouraged attention from male contractors in particular and this impacted negatively on their fellow female workers by giving the impression that all female workers are easy. A significant number of the women talked of times when female workers seek the affections of the contractors as a way of increasing their chances of being paid. "Well, may be the contractors think woman cannot speak. I heard that they give to those who flirt, smile and talk with them. Some of the female labourers are in "love" with the contractors, hence they are paid but on the other hand, we are not paid. Well, we do not know how to flirt and talk with them like that so when we do not do that it is difficult to get the money. They immediately give money to those [refers to other women workers] who flirt, laugh, talk and touch them."

Those women who worked alongside their husbands felt a much lower level of harassment and anxiety around travelling to and from work. They felt the presence of their husband offered them protection.

Feelings of being unsafe travelling to and from work

Many women felt very high levels of anxiety travelling to and from work for example one woman disclosed; "I just feel scared. I walk hastily on the way. It is problematic to cross the way under the bridge up to Dial [Referring to the name of community school in Manohara settlement]. After crossing that way, I walk slowly as I know many people this side of the settlement. "

Another participant states; "I mostly do not walk at night, I feel very problematic while walking outside at night. Women walking late at night; those who see this might say something. I feel afraid thinking people might tease when a woman walks alone at night. When I come on "time" I do not feel afraid because if someone says something I feel like I can also hit in response but I feel afraid at night."

Rape was commonly cited as the form of violence women mainly feared whilst travelling home from work and in the dark. This concern was present while women walked in the dark from bus stops to the edge of their community. Once they were insider the boundary they felt more secure because they knew many people who they felt would come and help them. The interviews did not reveal personal experiences of rape on the way home from work but many of the women talked of a reported incident which was obviously playing heavily on their minds and feeding their concerns.

Strategies to reduce risk travelling to and from work

The interviews revealed a number of strategies used by women to try and reduce their risk of harm whilst travelling to and from work they ranged as follows; walking quickly from bus stop to community, travelling to work in pairs or groups, carrying a pin to be used if harassment takes

place on public transport. Some women (for example in the passage above) claimed they would hit out if threatened.

Experiences of IPV

Many women had extreme accounts of beatings from their husbands for example one woman shared her harrowing story of extreme abuse:

"He again started talking to the other girl again. Then he beat me up saying that there was nothing wrong with him just talking to her. So I stayed at my parent's house for a week. He had said that he did not need me and that I should get out of his house. So, I told him to bring her home and then I left. He again felt love for me and came to call me back home. I also love him and so I returned home. Still, he kept talking to her. If they were simply talking as friends then why would I have a problem! I have not asked them to stop talking completely. But they keep referring to each other as husband and wife. She asks him why he does not come to meet her. And if I say anything against it then my husband beats me! I have so many bruises in my body."

Those women who still remained in a marriage with a violent husband talked of regular beatings as a normal occurrence between man and wife. Whilst they did not like to be beaten they said they would not do anything about it because it is "just what husbands do".

Those women who attended sessions run by a women's organisation stated that they would discuss instances of violence with other women there. They also said this helped them work what to do and feel as if they were not alone. As covered below many women also talked about the role of the social mobilisers. None of the women talked about sharing experiences with their husbands or other family members.

Alcohol as a trigger

A number of the women talked about their husband drinking as a trigger for beatings in a different interview a participant recounted:

"When he was here, he used to work as labourer. He used to earn money and spend it on alcohol. And then he started to fight with me [from the gate of house] and call me names such as raddi, bhalu [Means bitch and prostitute; verbally abusive words]. I had to work hard and manage the house hold. But still I could not have food in peaceful environment as he used to beat me. So, I sent him abroad in order to make it easy for me for some "time" and get rid of the fights and also with an expectation that he will feel my love when he will be far away from me. When I ask him to send money [for household] then he says that he has gone there only due to my pressure and he does not have good income there.

I tried it many times. He beat me wherever he finds me. I tried to separate from him by calling my parents but he asks for forgiveness for his mistake with them [means mother, father, brother, and sister-in-laws] as well. Then, they [means parents] return back to their home; they cannot always live with me here. Then after that he continues his regular way of living by drinking alcohol. [Laughs]And I could not go and ask for help with them time and again. Often we fight. So, many people ask me that why I compromise my whole life for such a man by tolerating his beatings. But I feel like he [husband] is my fate which will never change even if I go with someone else, may be that person will also turn out to be like him. Hence I remain silent. [Laughs] Nobody can know about the internal behaviour of people by seeing their face. If I had known about all this before the marriage then I would never have come with such a person."

Another participant stated; "I was actually married. But my husband had married another woman and brought her home. Then he continuously kept beating me very badly that I stopped living in that house. Even others advised me not to live like that. Since my husband had another wife, I did not stay there."

4.6 Membership of a women's organisation

These stories have completely different actions by women. One chooses to stay in the marriage and considers it fait accompli that she is abused, whereas the other steps out of the abusive situation. Understanding what triggers a woman to act to end violence against her is important. As already stated membership and regular attendance at women groups focused on ending violence seems to be the key factor. This is important to note because all the women did talk about sharing problems with their friends and female work colleagues this sharing is not itself enough to mobilse a woman to leave a violent husband.

Some of the women interviewed had actually set up their own saving groups independent of any formal group.

The role of the social mobiliser

The role of the social mobiliser was highlighted by a significant number of women who talked about them as the first point of contact if violence at home became too much. The passage below also suggests that the mobiliser can influence mindset change as in this instance it was the intervention of the mobliser that encouraged the woman to stand up to her husband.

"I did not do anything like I should leave my husband. I used to rather think that I should die. Once I told about this issue to the social mobilizer of this place, she came and asked him not to repeat such acts in the future but the very next day, he beat me again; He had beaten me in the middle of the road in front of the other people. Then I threatened him that I would file a case against him and get a divorce."

The link between the mobilsers and women's groups comes through in this passage: "If it happens nearby here we say to the social mobilizer of this place [refers to elder sister]. They belong to the same organization. There will be discussion at their place and then reporting happens."

Lack of faith in the justice system, specifically the police

The women who had in the past and still suffer violence from their husband talked about not reporting or if they had how nothing was done. Very little faith was expressed towards the justice systems and mechanisms. The perceived ineffectiveness of justice mechanisms in-particular a police force indifferent to the needs of women seems to be acting as a strong deterrent in both mind-set change around VAWG but also the likelihood of agency being used to end it. "There is no point reporting violence to the police they don't do anything. Anyhow they don't care about us living here."

Interviews with men

The interviews with men highlighted that husbands largely support their wives going out to work. However it was clear in a number of the interviews that it would not be appropriate for wives to exceed their earning potential in relation to their skill level. In other words, most of the men interviewed were masons and when asked most did not feel that being a mason was a job for women. The perception coming through was that only men possessed the capacity to do such skilled work which was harder than manual labour. This view unsurprisingly was not held by the women interviewed who felt their work was much more challenging.

Most if the men interviewed were unaware of the level of sexual harassment women faced while working and also the fear women had travelling to and from work. Most men felt that husbands and wives working together was the best approach but not always possible. Some of the men interviewed disclosed that they used force on their wives and felt this was legitimate if they did not "fulfil their chores correctly". Most of the men felt that domestic chores were the remit of their wives even if they worked.

4.7   Interviews from the informal entertainment sector

All the women had suffered very extreme forms of violence either sustained beatings from family members (pre migration) or from husbands post migration including marital rape. Some cases of kidnap by Maoist and sustained sexual torture endured over a period of time. The psychological trauma endured by all the participants was considerable.

Leaving behind abusive husbands and family was a positive turning point for most of the women even despite their daily hardships.

For all the women prostitution offered their best option of an income high enough to look after their children and secure a roof.

Even despite the means of income generation all the women talked about the importance of earning their own money and the level of self-esteem they got from being able to provide for their children. They all talked about their desire to set up their own business and learn new skills to lead into different work.

All the women suffer very high levels of violence at work and therefore feel very unsafe at work.

All felt that contact with an organisations such as Raksha Nepal had increased their confidence and helped them process the violence they had and continued to suffer.

The women talked about the ineffectiveness of the police if they reported an assault at work or at home. The police made up a significant number of their clients yet raids and arrest were frequent and an ongoing cause for anxiety.

The caste or educational background made no difference to the levels of violence suffered or the ability of the participant to mitigate it.

All the women recognised the importance of saving earnings but not all of them were able to do so.

A significant number of women mentioned problems with getting citizenship status for their children and this was a source of anxiety.

Interviews with those working to support the women talked about how challenging the environment was given that most of the clients were politicians or policemen. Bringing about the radical change needed in this sector is unlikely given the vested interest in maintaining the status quo of the main client groups.

Case study 1

In this case study the women narrates her own story.

"I was married in April 1990 I was 14 and was studying standard 10. I come from a Brahmin family. My father is a priest and commands a lot of respect. My husband had proposed marriage to me to my father. He was reluctant for a number of reasons: I was too young and still going to school. We were upper caste and the boy was known to be of bad character but he put pressure on my father and threatened to kidnap me. My father married me off taking into consideration his family reputation and prestige (Izzat).

My husband started beating me only weeks after our marriage. It became more frequent and server (sometimes he would thrash me with a table). He would usually beat me up when drunk. No one came to protect me including my husband parents, 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

I was still studying. I would wake up at dawn and cook food for the entire family. In our culture the daughter in law is not expected to eat food before serving her husband's family so I used to go to school on an empty stomach. If I would eat my in laws would not.

My in-laws expected me to do all the housework and was not happy with my going to school. Eight months into our married my in-laws asked my husband and me to leave because they no longer wanted to witness his beatings.

Whilst I was studying so was my husband. We used to make money by selling rice. We moved to Kathmandu in December 1990 we didn't know anyone except a cousin. We stayed in Dharmsala and then my cousin found a place on the outskirts of the city near the airport. My husband had no money so the cousin paid the rent. Ratioj money came from my in-laws.

Meanwhile I became pregnant and at the very advanced stage of my pregnancy my husband kicked me very hard and beat me ruthlessly. I came to know that day that re remarried someone else. So after a few days delivery came I was alone in the hospital, I gave birth to a dead child. The doctors thought it was due to my husband beating me.

My sister in law came and I had to restart my life. I started working in a candy factory. My job was to wrap candies. I earned Rs 40 a day and rented a room for Rs 1200. I lived like this for 3 years until I was 17. Then my husband returned one day and pleaded for us to live together again. He was sorry for what he did and promised he would be a good man. I became pregnant again and gave birth to a baby boy in 1994. The beatings resumed in June 1995. I was sent home to the in-laws and helped with the farming. In 2001 my husband returned and I became pregnant again.

I stayed with him because of the Izzat of my father and in-laws. I had nowhere to go and I thought life would be harder for my children without a father. Poverty though hit hard so I returned to Kathmandu in search of work. I stayed with my sister in law but she didn't give us any food. I sued to cycle 20 Kms a day selling vegetables but business was bad. Then a friend told me about sex work. Purely out of desperation I worked as a contract sex worker for a year and I am not ashamed of it. I couldn't let my children starve. I made 3000 a day and slept with 3 men. Some customers were violent they beat me and didn't pay me. Police harassment was huge.

After one year I had earned enough to start a new business. I used to import cloths from the Indian border and sell them. I made around Rs 15000 a year. I did occasional contract sex work and lived like this for about 5 years.

I 2009 a friend told me about Raksha Nepal and their cooperative. The chair person asked about my life and then introduced me to the savings scheme. I took out a loan and open my own restaurant bar in Thamel. The business did well and I paid off my loan and then opened a guest house. Today I employ 7 women and will buy another guest house.

Today my children are doing well. The eldest is studying engineering, the second son management and my daughter is in school and wants to be a lawyer. "

Case study 2

The second example case study is 51 and no longer living with her husband. She has six children four sons (35,31,37,28) two daughters (29, 26). She is Hindu and from the Chettri caste. She was 11 when she got married her husband was 27. They lived in Dholaka village. Her grandparents believed in marrying daughters before mensuration. She first got pregnant at 13 but miscarried. Her husband left her and remarried when her youngest child was 6 months .she moved to Kathmandu 24 years ago. Before that her husband worked in the police in capital whilst she remained in the village living with in-laws and working in the fields.

When asked if her in-laws treated her well she replied "no because I did not bring in any dowry so they beat me regularly. It wasn't a caste problem it was because I was poor. My husband used to come home once a year during festival. He was having an affair in Kathmandu. Her husband called her to Kathmandu he had lost his job so she took up work as a domestic servant then she was introduced to the entertainment sector. As a domestic servant she earned Rs 2000 a month as a sex worker she earned Rs 5000. To begin with she only slept with one man a day but by the end it was five. She described her situation; "I had a lot of problems. I was bleeding. I wasn't aware about condoms. Some men were violent." Her employees said that her husband was beating her up so at least in sex work she was earning a living. She worked in the entertainment sector for 10 years and then finally left using her savings to set up a small tea shop. Later she worked for WATCH as a field worker.

When asked why women face violence she replies "its because we aren't educated. I think women are strong and they should speak out and not allow men to dominate."

4.8   Applying the theory

If we apply our various analytical frames to the data we reach a number of conclusions. Firstly the ecological frame, at the household level there is a clear overburdening of women with domestic duties shared only in a few cases. Work is accepted and expected but also highly gendered, women are not encouraged to progress into skilled positions despite training opportunities being available. Decision making is on the whole shared with most women able to retain at least a proportion of their salary which many save.

Outwards at the community level there is evidence of women supporting each other through informal networks encouraged by the presence of local organisations and social mobilisers. Al the women interviewed knew who to turn to within their community if they decided to confront violence. At state level most women did not trust the justice apparatus and felt it to be corrupt and ineffective. These perceptions also stretched to government levels which they felt generally alienated from.

A clear link can be made between women who are defiant and prepared to challenge violence that they suffer but also support other women and engagement with local women's organisations that focus specifically on ending VAWG. Many women are active in saving and are

part of saving schemes, however being a member of such schemes does not have any bearing on their willingness to challenge violence.

There is evidence that the international sphere is having an impact in terms of funding specific interventions at a local level promoting gender rights. Effective connectivity between international, national and local spheres of organisations working on gender equality seems to be evident to some extent at least.

Two dimensions emerge as key to women challenging violence; a mind-set that recognises the range of violence that women suffer (de-normalisation of for example, IPV and domestic violence, harassment at work and also whilst travelling to and from). Access to a supportive network or organisations that provides safe spaces where women can share experiences, receive advice and work through the process of recognises the forms of violence women are exposed to.

Mind-set change and organisation membership seem often to go hand in hand. The recognition of violence may also be aided by the discussions and mutual sharing that takes place in a membership organisation. The courage to face it, talk about it, may come about due to mutual support among women.

Applying the attitudes continuum, most of the women interviewed could be positioned in the middle, appreciating the importance of earning an income and understanding that all forms of violence are wrong but displaying very little agency in challenging it mainly because of a lack of options and general distrust in state structures.

Additionally theories around social-cultural capital are relevant here. Better understanding is needed of the informal mechanisms women use in this sector to challenge each other in mind-sets around different forms of violence. And how they work together and with local actors to combat and navigate violence. This understanding could help to position interventions to strengthen collectives to build social capital.

5 PRIMARY DATA STRAND 2

In order to apply the intersection approach and understand how earning an income may impact differently on the lives of various groups of women we interviewed 30 middle/upper class women engaged in professional occupations.

All the women were at least graduates and most also have a masters with some also holding a PhD. The participants had studied a range of subjects from social science, business, medicine and humanities. The women were engaged in a range of professions from the corporate sector, to government, NGO, CSOs, to medicine and teaching, to owning their own businesses. The women were a mix of being married and unmarried, some living in joint families and some in a nuclear set up. Some of the women had children and some did not. Many of the women claimed not to practice any religion but originated from Hindu or Buddhist families. Ethnicities ranged from Brahmin, Chettri, Newar.

It needs to be stressed that the sample size is too small to draw any rigorous evidence but saturation in responses was achieved.

Experiences of violence

A few cases of IPV were captured triggered by resentment that the wife works and is independent. However harassment from other family members was the most prevalent form of violence at household level. Levels of harassment seem to increase the more successful a woman is and particularly if she has reached a more senor level than her husband. Harassment comes in the form of accusations that the woman is not fulfilling her domestic role because she is working. Work-based harassment was widespread among those women (the vast majority) who were not home-based for work.

High levels of work-based harassment

The large majority of the women interviewed had experienced forms of work-based harassment ranging from name calling to more serious sexual assault.

At times only, once in a blue moon it happens. When it happens, just like in my previous job situation with the GM of a bank had reached to this level for a certain task. He had told me that to start hanging out with him and if I do that he will do this for me, in that case when he said that I could not even expose him because he did a good thing but the best for me was to not to stay in touch with him, try and avoid him as much as I can. Not to do any kind of personal conversation just does official conversation if I have to. I had to treat him like he does not exist there, when that happened he knows that what he did.

Feelings of being unsafe travelling to and from work

Those women that had to commute to work reported feeling afraid and at high risk of attack during their journey regardless of if using or public transport. Only those women who had private cars or scoters felt safer but still acknowledged that security to and from work was a major concern for women.

it might be when traveling at night the feeling of unsafely it there. At times when you have travel in a taxi when I feel unsafe. Though I feel like nothing is going to happen, but we feel risks. When you know that person has a bad intention and you have to travel and work with that person I feel uncomfortable.

Apart from that travelling to my work is very hard; it's a very long process. I travel in a scooter, people come up to me, it has happened so many times they pass nasty comments and after listening to it I get angry, their comments I feel like to reciprocating it, there is so much of confusion at that times. So many questions are also raised in my mind, by the time I reach office my mind is full of questions due to it I am so occupied that I cannot work or function in the office in one part of it. And commuting back from my work is also very scary because it is a night shift, at night I leave office at 1 or 2 am I have to go back home, so it's not safe for women is what they say and how much ever precaution I take to cure it is also not on my hands. Even though I take precaution I don't know if other people are taking it, I cannot take guarantee on it. So, while returning back in the evening I feel very scared because I don't who is hiding where in the dark I don't know, now days there are news section such as crime patrol after watching them they have filled my brain with disturbing things.

5.1   Reduced productivity as a result of fear and harassment

Many of the women felt that fear of safety getting to and from work coupled with ongoing harassment while at work drastically reduced productivity. Some talked about the personal impact that this fear had but all talked in general terms. The psychological stress women have to endure was noted by a significant number of the participants.

"It hampers your concentration and also one type of insecurity it generates in an employee and the fear, if I have to take any work form him I would not of in front of him. The gap increases, I feel something and I cannot even express it. So obviously yes."

5.2   Difference in experiences of violence

In terms of the above findings no differences between ethnicities, marital status, and migration status can be seen. Some differences do emerge across sectors. Women employed in the corporate sector (IT and Banking) and government recorded higher levels of work-based

harassment compared those working with INGOs, CSOs, in medicine or teaching. As the sample is relatively small in this research, this points to areas of further research.

In work settings where gender policies existed (separate toilets, maternity leave) these measures did not reduce the violence women experienced. Again, this points to an area of further research before the hypothesis of the link between sanitation and maternity benefits, and VAW can be rejected.

Fear of harassment was higher than concerns of pay inequality or lack of rights over maternity etc. Participants employed in government and corporate sector recorded concerns over promotion.

5.3 Gender but not complete acceptance of women working but no widespread expectation

Most of the participants had supportive families who were liberal in their attitudes towards women working. In fact many of the women described how their mothers had also worked in professional roles. For those women who lived in a more conservative family they recorded higher levels of harassment at home with a number of women reporting instances of IPV and also psychological harassment from other family members.

Harassment at home has not appeared earlier as an issue, only IPV, harassment on the way, and at work. If we introduce this, then we must track it consistently wherever it is mentioned in the interviews, in each strand.

5.4 Generational change

All the participants felt that things had changed for them compared to their mothers with more opportunities available. They all felt even more optimistic about the next generation of girls/daughters.

Income increases self-esteem and decision making power

The vast majority of women felt that earning an income gave more power to influence household decisions (not just how to spend household collective income) but over the direction of family life. Some of the women directly stated that have influence over decisions was a key reason for earning money, the money itself was not as important as this leverage.

Earning an income was vital for all the women interviews. All participants linked income to increase in self-esteem and confidence. Most of the women felt that whilst the risk of violence is not reduced by income. In fact many stated that earning an income increases the range of violence women are exposed to. Most did feel more able to challenge it, report it and stand up to perpetrators and support other women.

If I was given the choice not to work and that I was getting the same amount of salary wit out working I would take the choice, take that money and look for another job cause I cannot live

without working. (Laughs) But I cannot digest the fact that they will give me money with working. I would prefer work.

The satisfaction you receive after working, you have your own recognition, you have respect that and also your personal satisfaction after working the money, I guess that is it. There is a saying instead if stealing and eating it better to do and eat.

Today since I am economically independent whatever I do, whatever I want to do, I can pursue my dreams because at this stage of life I am not dependent on my father, my father cannot say anything to me. He cannot say do this and don't do that because what ever I am doing I am doing it with my own money. I also feel confident, accordingly I have learned to do savings as well, accordingly I have understood the value of everything. To become independent amongst men and women of the community as a youth is very important from my opinion. If we attain economic independence from an early age we develop different perspective as well is what I feel.

> ### Income builds resilience
>
> It is because of my position slowly courage is built within a person slowly. Before I used to scared of speaking now I do not feel such. In front of everybody if that person has done something bad I scold them as well and I appreciate them as well. Especially to females they need a lot of grooming, they need to give more opportunities to them as well I talk about these as well. Yes I may think. When you have stability in you, that courage comes to you on its own. Throughout the course I felt it myself.
>
> I think yes, the financial independence, which I have, this thing my mother not feels it but she never got the opportunity to feel it. At times while talking with her while sharing, I think they have a lot more money than us but because they did not earn it themselves they feel that way is what I think. There is, such as in terms of decision making for us we can make our own decision but for them they at least have to ask once.

5.5 Low membership of women's organisations

None of the women interviewed belonged to any women's organisations so their resilience to violence was directly linked to the empowerment they felt their acquired through earning money.

Interviews with men

As with strand 1 on the whole the men interviewed were happy with the idea of women working. However most stressed that "they have to be careful not to stretch themselves too much because of the demands of also looking after the home and children." The perception here is that women can only work up to a level they leaves them relatively free to still fulfil a domestic role. Concerns were expressed over women working in roles that took them away from home for a period of time or that involved evening meetings or socialising with colleagues. Concerns here

were over travelling home at night (which women also shared) but also the risk of rumours starting over inappropriate behaviour with male colleagues.

Two of the men interviewed disclosed that they were violent towards their wives. When probed they stated they felt this was normal behaviour and necessary to ensure she behaved well towards him.

5.6   Applying the theory

As already stated applying an intersectional lens to this group does not produce any differences between age, marital status, ethnicity, religion, migration. Applying the ecological approach, women in this group are more engaged with state apparatus through work and struggle to influence decisions at higher levels. So whilst they are confident working e.g. in the public sector they can see a clear glass ceiling with a disproportionate number of female employees at lower administrative levels. Part of this glass ceiling relates the gendering of professions with these views existing at household level translating then into the workplace. This gendering excludes women from progressing equally and generates tension at home as well as at work.

Entrepreneurship is the most accepted form of work for women specifically because it can be built around domestic responsibilities and can be done at home.

Attitude change can be seen across generations with women expression optimism the next generation. What attitudinal change are we referring to? However, challenges clearly exist.

The lack of engagement with local organisations is very apparent. Women in this group do not therefore access support from women's organisations instead they draw on their own self-confidence and friends. Given the very high level of harassment and fear recorded as a result of work it could be argued that greater attention needs to be placed on developing a network of support targeting this group of women.

6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Applying our attitude continuum the ecology/web and the intersectional approach we can draw out a number of key differences across contexts and groupings.

Belonging to a women's organisation is more significant for poorer women in terms of building resilience to end/challenge VAW than for MC/UC women. Pooling social capital for poor women is seen as vital. Professional women whose earnings are much more feel that they can use their income to secure exit routes if need be and so draw less on immediate social networks and capital. However, there are more local women's organisations targeting poorer women with few such network opportunities available for richer women. Poorer women seem to automatically draw on and from each other to strategies and implement solutions to the problems they face.

The normalisation of violence is challenged to a more immediate and widespread extent by MC/UC women. Violence is still accepted as normal by many of the poorer women interviewed for both strands 1 and 3.

University education for women seems to be the strongest factor triggering a clear rejection of VAW as normal in all contexts. Education to secondary level, which many women in strand have, is not sufficient to produce this widespread trigger. In relation to university degrees, the subject itself has no bearing, it is the achievement of graduate status.

Caste did not emerge as a significant factor. High and low caste women were interviewed in all strands and experiences of violence were common across.

Those women who married young (before 20) disclosed more extreme and ongoing violence compared to those that married later. The age of married did not relate to caste.

Male attitudes towards women working and the normalisation of violence did not differ so significantly across class divides. In other words a significant number of the men interviewed for all strands felt that certain jobs were not suitable for women. Divided opinion over the legitimisation of VAW was split equally within each strand with no conclusions in terms of one group being more or less likely to use violence against wives and other female family members. Men interviewed from strand 2 did talk about harassment and tensions being brought into the home if women became too successful in their careers to such an extent that they could no longer fulfil domestic duties. Some men for strand 2 also claimed that many men do not like their wives to be more successful as it challenges their role as breadwinners. This attitude was not present in the interviews with men from strand 1 but women in these groupings are restricted by a much more rigid glass ceiling making the likelihood of out succeeding husbands remote.

Evidence of a backlash to women working emerged more clearly in relation to strand 2 and was not present at all in strand 1.

Women who were employed across strands 1 and 2 suffered equal levels of work based harassment.

Women across all strands talked about the fear of travelling on public transport and in taxis.

The combined forms of violence experienced by women has psychological impact that was acknowledged by participants reduces women's productivity at work.

The vast majority of all women interviewed claimed that even if they did not have to they would want to earn an income. They correlated income with independence and a sense of control. The MC/UC women interviewed went further and claimed that earning an income helped them build resilience to violence through increased confidence and defiance. The poorer women did not see any link between income and violence.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

7.1 Recommendations

Promoting local women's organisation and building capacity at this level to challenge VAW and advocate for survivors is important and should extend to supporting professional women.

Programmes to challenge the gendering of work are crucial and need to target male attitudes specifically.

Work-based harassment policies and procedures need to be reviewed across sectors and evidence of good practice identified and encouraged more strongly.

Women only transport schemes are clearly needed.

VAW sensitive police training is needed.

The role of social mobilisers could be extended and focused more specifically on ending VAW.

7.2 Next steps

The strategy for research uptake for this project has the following aims:

- Establish interest in and ownership of the research amongst a broad range of stakeholders
- Raise awareness of the links between VAW and WEE amongst relevant stakeholders
- Inform the design, implementation and evaluation of existing and future programmes
- Share knowledge with researchers and practitioners
- Strengthen capacity amongst national researchers to engage with VAW issues and support women who participate in the research
- Influence policy and practice

As noted in previous reports, the period up to September 2016 represented a phase in which we built our engagement with stakeholders and developed key tools and products to support communication and research uptake. During this period, we focused on sharing information about the project. This involved developing stakeholder engagement and sharing learning about the research methodologies and process. As the findings from thorough data analysis emerge, we anticipate that research uptake activities to the end of the project will concentrate increasingly on the development of specific knowledge products for the national and regional contexts that inform researchers and practitioners and influence policy makers.

The approach we have taken in the last quarter is to shape activities relevant to the research uptake aims by initially holding stakeholder workshops at the national level, where stakeholders

from a range of sectors (public, private, NGO, academic and media) are present.1 Stakeholder workshops took place in Nepal on June 28th 2016 (39 attendees).

This workshop enabled us to establish interest, and ownership and raise stakeholder awareness, and have led to the following immediate outcomes:

- Identification of members for country level advisory forum. This forum is the key reference for research uptake and dissemination activities for the duration of the project, and are also likely to sustain the influence and impact of the project beyond its completion.
- Insights gained into the knowledge sharing landscape within each of the three countries which are now informing design of knowledge products and dissemination activities
- Development of an initial wider list of relevant stakeholders and contacts who can be influential in sharing the key findings from the research.

A second visit to Nepal on in October 2016 by the Uptake and Academic leads enabled further engagement with the forum and opportunity to share the top level findings, identify a good date for the final workshop, and a steer on suitable knowledge products.

In order to inform and share knowledge, we now have a fully established online presence. Our website, www.gendersouthasia.org, shares project news, blogs, articles and resources. It will continue to be developed over the coming months and we have made plans to maintain it beyond the project's lifespan. We are committed to designing engaging digital content that responds to needs of different audiences, provides information about the project, and shares learning and resources related to the research process and findings. As such, we have recently launched a twitter account (@gendersouthasia) and a Facebook community (see www.facebook.com/gendersouthasia), so there will be a variety of ways in which we will seek to keep stakeholders up to date.

Our aim is to reach wide audiences in and indeed to connect with global debates and discussions on gender, work and violence. We have also circulated the first of our bi-monthly project newsletters (annex) to stakeholder lists, in addition to making it available through the website. These globally accessible digital knowledge products will provide value for money communication of learning across the project team, its partners and stakeholders and more widely (including targeting those identified during network mapping sessions conducted at the national stakeholder workshops).

As we progress with data analysis, we will be using infographics on these forums to convey key quantitative messages. We intend also to make use of multimedia to share qualitative findings and insights, drawing on stories from participants and interviews with team members and partners. Once analysis has enabled critical reflection on our tools, we will make the resources developed for the research available as open licensed content. So for example we plan to share the survey questions and guidance notes, and intend to share learning about the process followed for the mobile survey produced with UNDP and the tools used. Subject to ethical

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1 In Nepal, workshop attendees (total 39) included representatives from DFID Nepal, the Government of Nepal, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO, the World Bank and NGOs including (but not limited to) Raksha Nepal, Unnati, Lakasa Nepal, United Mission to Nepal, Mercy Relief Singapore.

considerations we also intend to provide avenues through which some of the research data gathered could be made openly available for others to use.

Finally, in order to Share knowledge with researchers and practitioners we have identified a range of journals and publications (including open access) through which we will be seeking to publish articles and key findings from the study. This activity will progress as we analyse data more comprehensively. At this stage, with input from the country level advisory forums we will also identify opportunities to develop country specific knowledge products, and relevant events and windows of opportunity to enable the project to influence policy and practice. The end of project regional stakeholder event will provide an excellent opportunity early in 2017 to showcase and share knowledge from the project.

The following knowledge products are planned for Nepal:

- Key Findings Briefing document.
- A mini documentary and radio programme for roll out across media.

c. An on-line open access university level module on 'Women. Work and Violence' utilising the findings and resources generated by this project. This course will be designed for professional development across sectors and for possible inclusion in university courses.

- Academic Outputs
- Two Peer Review Articles
- Section in the Project Monograph
- Section in the projects special edition of the journal 'social identities'.

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