



## **Mid-Term Review and Household Survey Report**

***[Nepal]***  
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## ACRONYMS

CC	Child Club
CDC	Community Discussion Centers
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
CFUGEC	Community Forest User Group Executive Committees
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women
CS	Creating Spaces
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal (FGD)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HPMC	Health Post Management Committee
GII	Global Gender Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HHS	Household Survey
KII	Key Informant Interview
MPI	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
P2P	Peer to Peer
SMC	School Management Committee
TOC	Theory of Change
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mid-term evaluation was conducted through peer to peer approach focusing both on quantitative and qualitative information. The tools and methods used included literature review, training for partner staff to enable them to apply the research tools such as focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interview (KII), 'I' stories collection and household survey (HHs). Slightly more than 60% of the target sample was surveyed bringing the actual sample size to 165 households, with equal ratio of women and men above the age of 18.

The evaluation found the community discussion centre (CDC) approach to be highly effective in enhancing women's leadership and community awareness about child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and violence against women and girls (VAWG). As compared to baseline data (55%), bigger percentage of the people (91.3%) covered by the evaluation agree that boys and girls should get married only after they reach 20 years of age. There has been positive change in perception regarding women's rights. As against the baseline data (85%), the percentage of community people, who now equate forcing a girl to get married with a crime stands at 86.15%.

Likewise, Considerable number of community women and men agree that women have the right to work. However, they do not seem as positive about women's right to have control over their earning. Data shows that girls and women are allowed to work and earn as long as they allow their families to decide as to how it should be spent. At personal level, the CDC members have increased understanding of the importance of education hence committed to send all their children, especially daughters, to school. At the community level, it is encouraging to find that majority of women and men describe it as the right of both girls and boys to continue their education even after marriage.

The evaluation finding shows increased awareness, leadership and confidence among women to challenge the status quo and claim their rights and dignity, especially in the public sphere. But it is yet to be reflected in their practice within the household, and with regard to intimate relationship, in particular. Quite shockingly, currently larger number of community people (32.7%) as against baseline data (17%) think wives do not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husband without giving any particular reason.

It is, however, encouraging to find that majority of the surveyed women and men in the project districts are against any form of physical abuse and assault regardless of who may do it—a family, a wife or a husband. Although it is generally perceived that male domination and discrimination against women and girls is higher in Muslim and *Madhesi* communities (Rautahat and partly Banke fall in this category), several data present a better picture in Rautahat than in Banke. Banke again comes out with highest percentage of respondents who think harassment and physical assault on women and girls acceptable.

As against the baseline data, which shows that overall 55% of female respondents were yelled, cursed and insulted by their husbands, the current situation indicates quite huge progress with only less than a quarter of the women complaining of such misbehaviours by their husbands. With regard to incidence of rape majority of community women and men do not think a girl/woman from their community committed adultery, if she has been raped. But quite shockingly, compared to baseline data (12%) more than a quarter of women and men (about 28%) currently think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by the victim. However, as a sign of good progress an impressive majority of women and men -- 78.5% in Banke, 48.8% in Dailekh and 53.6% in Rautahat stated that when a woman is physically assaulted or

abused by her husband she is able to seek support from family/friends or community members or community organizations for help.

The CDCs are lobbying the Local Government (LG) for incorporating provisions for ending VAWG and CEFM, and women's rights and entitlements in the upcoming laws, policies and programmes. CDCs and CCs have started getting registered with government authorities for official recognition and better access to public services. Considerable number of women and adolescent girl members of CDCs are serving in various capacities in local public entities.

Child clubs (CCs) have significantly contributed to enhancing their own members' awareness, confidence and leadership quality as well as to the campaign against CEFM and VAWG, especially at school level. The CC members in all four project districts have been able to convince their school teachers to allocate half day on each Friday for extracurricular activities. They have better understanding of CEFM, and legal provisions against this social malpractice and are using forum theatre as an effective tool for raising public awareness on harmful social norms. Impressed by the positive change in their children in terms of their increased knowledge of VAWG and CEFM, the way they are contributing to discouraging such social malpractices and their overall constructive behaviour, the parents are happy to support the CCs. Such recognition is an important achievement as it leads to sustaining CC achievements and initiatives.

Key informants in all project districts describe deep rooted harmful social norms, lack of adequate awareness, poverty, and alcohol abuse as the major causes of CEFM and VAWG. They feel the joint campaign of CCs, teachers and parents against CEFM has contributed to reducing these social malpractices. They also attribute the gradual change in males' attitude towards women and girls, and reduction in cases of VAWG and CEFM to CDC and CC activities being conducted in collaboration with different influential actors. They observed that unlike in the recent past when sending daughters and daughter in laws to school was very rare, they are now participating in public meetings, and increased number of VAWG cases is registered with the police thereby indicating growing awareness and confidence among the survivors and their supporters. They also appreciate CDCs and CCs role in facilitating vital registration.

Ujyalo Multi Media, CS media partner, is airing weekly radio programmes, which have contributed to bridging the gap between the centres of power and the grassroots. Apart from bringing to light the vulnerability, concerns and needs of women and girls, the programme is highlighting the changes brought about by the CS project on the ground, and new policies and government measures designed to combat VAWG and CEFM.

Likewise, CS advocacy partner Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) is found to have been using good practices and learning from the project as a tool for advocacy and lobbying at national level. It has led the development of a variety of useful information and communication materials, generating policy analysis, finding gaps in the constitution, and laws and lobbying authorities concerned to address the gaps. It has also facilitated the use of help lines (1098,1145 and 100), which have increased coordination and cooperation among CDC members, survivors of VAWG and CEFM and vulnerable women and girls, the police, child protection committee and other government entities concerned. CWIN, OXFAM and PLAN collaborated in developing and submitting to Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) a totally girls-led supplementary report in 2018, probably the first of its kind. The girls directly involved in developing the report included also those from CS project districts. The Ministry of Women and Children was so impressed by the flip chart on legal awareness on VAWG that CWIN developed as part of the CS project it published 15,000 booklets with the same content giving due

credit to CWIN and Oxfam and distributed throughout the country benefitting larger masses of population.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE P2P STUDY

- With the Local Governments currently formulating a variety of policies, plans and strategies independent of federal level intervention, it is high time the CDCs engaged in more policy influencing role and ensured the local level policies, plans and programmes include provisions to put an end to harmful social norms such VAWG and CEFM.
- Although there is growing awareness among wives that they should be treated as equal partners and their feelings and emotions respected, they still are not in a position to have it fully materialized within household, especially when it comes to intimate relationship. Stronger focus on SRHR by way of discussion in CDCs, some episodes of radio programme focusing on this topic etc would be a good start.
- It is advisable for the CDCs to seek Municipality/Rural Municipality's formal recognition as women's rights groups and strategic partners so that their say in LG plans and policy making is ensured.
- Cashing in on diverse stakeholders' positive impression of CDC and CC initiatives, and their results it is essential to intensify the current effort to affiliate CDCs and CCs with government entities concerned, and strongly lobby for Local Government support to sustain the initiatives and achievements.
- Although it is generally perceived that male domination and discrimination against women and girls is higher in Muslim and *Madhesi* communities and Rautahat and partly Banke fall in this category, several data present a better picture in Rautahat than in Banke. Banke also comes out with highest percentage of respondents who find harassment and physical assault on women and girls acceptable. Hence it calls for additional effort to find out why it is happening and revisit the programme approach and activities in the district.
- Over a quarter of respondents in three project districts think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by the victim. This is a quite serious problem, which has to be discussed among Oxfam, CDCs and partners including those at the central level. The discussion should focus on what made them think so. At the community level, it can be started with CDC members holding series of discussions designed to raise their own self-awareness about their own role, if any, in 'nurturing' a culture that not only allows but justifies sexual violence against women, and planning actions accordingly.
- Given the lack of authentic and reliable data on CEFM and VAWG as pointed out by some of the key informants, Oxfam can take lead on coordinating with different INGOs, the local and federal government authorities concerned and its other allies to conduct a research and generate authentic data.
- Creating opportunities for economic empowerment through entrepreneurship development of CDC members is essential for sustainability of the achievements and initiatives beyond the project's life.
- It is advisable to further explore opportunities for CDC members in all project districts to assume leadership positions in community and public entities such as school management committees, health post management committees, community forest users groups etc so that they can use their leadership skills in practice.
- Although there is growing awareness among wives that they should be treated as equal partners and their feelings and emotions respected, they still are not in a position to have it fully

materialized within household, especially when it comes to intimate relationship. Stronger focus on SRHR by way of discussion in CDCs, some episodes of radio programme focusing on this topic etc would be a good start.

- Need to increase coverage of the CDC activities to include orientation on women and girls' rights to in-laws and husbands, who have the traditional schooling against women's rights and gender equality.
- It is advisable for Oxfam and its partners to organize a gathering of school teachers, parents, and SMC and ward representatives of and familiarize them with the objectives of up child CCs and why CC activities are important. It would be much easier for the CCs to make their activities even more effective in coordination with all these stakeholders.

## CREATING SPACES THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change (TOC) is based on three strategic pillars that work together to contribute to the kinds of changes the project seeks to support. The project will take an integrated and multi-faceted approach, acting on multiple levels (individual, community, institutional and societal) with diverse actors. Underpinning the TOC are 10 guiding principles that shape Oxfam's approach to changing negative attitudes, social norms and behaviours around violence against women and girls (VAWG). Building on Oxfam's experience of working to shift power relations, the TOC takes a non-linear view of change, recognizing that work to reduce VAWG and CEFM is likely to provoke backlash or attempts to push back or reverse previous gains – these results must be anticipated and managed. The TOC builds on Oxfam's understanding that southern-based CSOs are key agents in determining the direction of change in their societies. Thus, building the capacity of project partners to work effectively to reduce VAWG and CEFM is a key to long-term project sustainability and therefore a central component to this project.

The overall project framework revolves around three pillars:

- Pillar 1 – Engaging key community actors to support and promote positive sex norms:** Strategies and activities for this project pillar target three groups: influencers (religious, community, political, and private sector leaders), youth/ adolescents, and women and girl community leaders, with the desired outcome of strengthening their engagement to advance women's leadership and rights, and to reduce VAWG and CEFM.
- Pillar 2: Supporting women and girls who have experienced violence:** Strategies and activities in this pillar target women and girls who have experienced violence, including CEFM, along with staff of key institutions—such as civil society organizations (CSOs), especially women's rights organizations (WROs), as well as state and private sector institutions—that offer social and/or legal support services or economic opportunities, with the desired outcome of improving access by these women and girls to such services.
- Pillar 3: Building knowledge and capacity of institutions and alliances to influence change:** Strategies and activities in this pillar target partner CSOs, especially WROs, and national and regional networks and alliances. The desired outcome is to support increased use of innovative knowledge, including best and emerging practice for response, prevention, and accountability mechanisms, to end VAWG and CEFM



## COUNTRY CONTEXT

The country's transition from centralized and unitary form of government to a federal system came to a close with the election of local, provincial, and federal elections in 2017. The transition has, among other things, paved the way for fulfilling the constitutional obligation towards gender and social inclusion in the government. The election of considerable number of women, especially from marginalized communities, to positions of power at all three tiers of government augurs well for achieving gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). Over The new developments entail both opportunities and challenges. Elected women representatives are most likely to be faced with a lot of challenges in their leadership and decision-making roles.

Primarily due to mandatory quotas for women candidates, especially women from *Dalit* (so called 'untouchable' community), local elections have brought to positions of power more than 14,000 women throughout the country. However, they are likely to be faced with various challenges. Patriarchal mindset of their elected male counterparts, the social construct and their lack of leadership capacity are to the detriment of the elected women representative's acceptance as leaders and decision-makers. They will be in a position to prove that they as good as or even better than their male colleagues in terms of performance despite their age old exclusion from formal leadership.

The period from 2015 to 2016 was a milestone in Nepalese history as women ascended to all three most crucial positions of the country's President, Speaker of Parliament and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. However, women in Nepal do not have a status equal to men. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) in Nepal is taking a huge toll on families, economy and productivity. The widespread prevalence of VAWG is particularly acute when it comes to child, early and forced marriages, domestic violence, and trafficking in women and girls. Despite some well intended policies and programmes implementation gap has remained a challenge. This gap is largely the result of deeply entrenched cultural values, attitudes and practices that are rooted in gender stereotypes and discrimination that continue to be used to justify the violence and exploitation of women and girls.

The 2016 Global gender Inequality Index (GII) produced by the UNDP ranks Nepal 144<sup>th</sup> among 188 countries pointing out the need for serious efforts towards reducing gender inequality. Similarly, the 2016-global report on HDI and GII brought out by the UNDP shows that less developed regions have higher gender-based disparities.

Province 6, 7, 2 and 5, which are also Creating Space Project's working areas, have HDI values less than 0.449. This clearly points out the need for the newly elected local, provincial and federal governments to prioritize plans and programmes to promote gender equality by putting an end to VAWG and CEFM. This is also consistent with the recommendations provided by the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) published by the National Planning Commission of Nepal in 2018. Meanwhile, this is high time civil society and women's rights organizations pressed the government for substantial change in the status quo.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overarching aim of the study was to contribute to a better understanding on whether peer-to-peer/CDCs collective learning leads to women's increased leadership on addressing harmful social norms

to end VAWG and CEFM, in order to formalize these structures as a municipality/rural municipality strategy to counter VAWG and CEFM.

### **The specific objectives of the study:**

- To understand the trend of gender based violence of past 2 years and the role of different agencies and institutions to reduce GBV and Child Marriage
- To know about the factors contributing to the increase or decrease of GBV and Child Marriage in working areas
- To understand the roles of supported groups in minimizing gender based violence in their communities
- To objectively assess whether community discussion centers are able to bring changes or awareness in community regarding child marriage and gender based violence
- To understand how the involvement in community groups have been able to change perceptions and views on GBV and child marriage personally and how they have contributed at personal level to reduce GBV and child marriage
- To report on the relevant indicators of the project performance framework
- To give suggestions for the project to meet its project objectives

## **METHODOLOGY**

*Include geographic areas, types of data collection (for both P2P and HHS), sampling, data analysis*

The study pursued the following tools and methods for the P2P evaluation that covered five districts. HHS, FGDs, KIIs and case study collection were conducted in three of the districts—Dailekh, Banke and Rautahat. As Baitadi did not have a partner, it was not covered by HHs; only FGDs and KIIs were undertaken there. Likewise, KIIs were conducted with central (Kathmandu) level advocacy and media partners CWIN and UJyalo Multi-Media.

### **a) Literature review**

A review of findings from existing research from Nepal and previous work done by OXFAM Nepal in same methodology were studied. Through literature review the research tried to identify where other organization have worked in same methodology to fight social norms.

### **b) Training for partner staff**

The mid-term review (MTR) followed peer to peer review approach. Each implementing partner assessed the progress and achievements of another partner. The consultants trained partner staff in required process, methods and tools, and reporting skill, and facilitated/supervised their review process. A two-day training was organized to enable the partner staff including project coordinators, documentation officers, finance officers and social mobilisers, who were involved in the research, to properly understand the research method and process and effectively and efficiently use the research tools. The training was conducted from 9 – 10 February 2019 in Nepalgunj.

### **c) Data collection**

### **Quantitative data collection**

Quantitative data was collected by using household surveys (HHS). The objective of the HHS was to collect information about the attitudes, norms and behaviours around VAWG and CEFM. Fieldwork was carried out from 11 to 19 February 2019 by four partner teams, each team conducting fieldwork in each of the project districts. The partner teams conducted HHS as well as FGDs and KIIs. The consultant also visited the field and conducted FGDs and KIIs in Baitadi. To promote and protect confidentiality, interviews were conducted in private locations convenient to the participants, within a room of their home or workplace.

The field team was supported to field-test the questionnaire. On completion of HHS, the evaluators (peer evaluation teams) team together with consultant converged for a briefing on their experience. For many in the teams peer evaluation was their first experience. They said the field test of questionnaires as part of the capacity building training became useful as its experience made them cautious of possible challenges. Describing the peer evaluation as a great learning opportunity, they said in some of their previous inter-district observation visits, they used to limit their 'observation' only to the surface level. "However, this evaluation required us to plunge below the surface, which helped a lot in getting a deeper insight into our programme in the districts covered." The evaluation teams then in a couple of days submitted their brief reports and the HHS data to the consultant. The following points were considered while selecting households for the survey:

- All households were selected using systematic random sampling,
- The sampling was not limited to households of direct beneficiary only, it was selected from among the target villages,
- Women and men from the same household were not surveyed
- Equal number of women and men were surveyed
- Women and men below the age of 18 were not surveyed.
- Ethical and safety guidelines were implemented for all data collection.

### **Qualitative data collection**

The following tools were used to collect qualitative data:

#### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

The methodology adopted for primary data collection through FGDs was mainly focused on perceptions, experience and anticipation of CDC members. The participants' views were assessed by using checklists easily understood by them. The FGDs focused more on discussions as to whether CDCs' collective learning has empowered women to take effective leadership in addressing harmful social norms so as to prevent VAWG including CEFM. Their efforts, achievements, challenges and learning also formed part of the discussions. A total of 5 FGDs were conducted in each district totaling 20 FGDs in 4 districts, three with CDCs and two with CCs.

#### **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

A total of 19 KIIs (four in Dailekh, three in Banke, seven in Baitadi and five in Rautahat districts) were conducted with key relevant stakeholders who primarily included duty bearers, journalists, religious leaders, teachers, school management committee (SMCs), Health personnel, local women's rights activists and CDC facilitators. A checklist was used to guide the interviews.

#### **Case Studies**

A total of six case studies were collected in four districts. Attempts were made to explore what women and girls do, what they say, and how they work, and what change they have seen or felt being a part of

CDC. Case studies were personalized and were more effective when they are conducted by researchers who were in the day-to-day, face-to-face contact with the influencers or role models. Therefore, the CDC facilitators were trained and mobilized for this purpose as they were in constant touch with the CDC members.

### **d) Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done by the consultant with the support of Oxfam and partner. The raw quantitative data was in the form of a structured questionnaire. Answers were collected during the HHS, and the raw qualitative data was in the form of field notes collected during the FGDs and KIIs. The quantitative data was carefully checked and coded before they were transferred to a computer. The HHS data was entered into Excel. The data was then imported to SPSS programme for analysis. The data was cleaned, entered and triangulated from different sources in order to validate them. The results were then tabulated and interpreted to generate the MTR report.

### **e) Ethics and risks**

The peer evaluators ensured that the language used was culturally appropriate and respectful of participants interviewed. It was made sure that the research is conducted in a space that is socially acceptable for participants and where they feel free to speak. Consent was sought from potential participants before interviews and FGDs so that participants are informed on what the evaluation is for, understand it, and are free to decide whether to participate or not (without inducement). The potential participants were informed of her/his right not to participate in the study or discontinue participation at any time of the interview or not to answer any question asked. The interviews were conducted in private in a non-judgmental manner. Confidentiality of the information given by the informant was ensured. All care was taken to keep their identities confidential and only relevant results were used to support the research.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As majority of the HHS questions required answers in Likert scale, there are considerable chances of surveyors' bias. There are also chances of respondents not being able to appropriately rate the statements on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. As some of the P2P evaluators did not have prior experience of such evaluation some capacity gap might have persisted despite the capacity building training. Number of days allocated for evaluation in the field for the P2P evaluators was not adequate given the quite big sample size and the geographical spread of respondents, and difficult terrain.

## **KEY FINDINGS FROM THE P2P STUDY**

### **Findings from 'I' stories**

"I" stories in the three project districts (Dailekh, Banke and Rautahat) show increased understanding among women and even men on women's rights and the need to do away with harmful social norms. Needless to say, discriminations against women that primarily emanate from patriarchal social construct and mindset are still prevalent in society. However, women are demonstrating increased level of awareness about their rights including legal and institutional provisions that help address VAWG and CEFM, a strong urge to claim and exercise their citizenship right, and a sense of collective and confidence to challenge the status quo.

The story of Ms. Prem Kala Acharya of Athbisa-8 of Dailekh district can be taken as an example. Married off at the age of 16, she was almost abandoned by her husband and ostracized by community people as she could not give birth, even 10 years after her marriage, and sterility had a stigma attached to it. Fortunately, when she participated in one of the Ward gatherings organised by Oxfam and its partner Everest Club (EC) as part of the campaign against VAWG, she was identified as a victim of VAW and offered the opportunity to join the CDC. Later she became the chairperson of the centre and learnt about harmful social norms such as CEFM, VAW, *Chhaupadi* etc and started discussing ways to address them. She was finally able to convince her in-laws and husband that infertility is a reproductive health issue that can be related to both a woman and a man. She and her husband are now saving money so that they can visit a hospital to conduct reproductive health check-up.

It was encouraging to find from “I” stories that there are many such stories in all project districts. Some of them are related to CDC’s role in saving marriages of couples estranged after the husbands were about to abandon them as the wives gave birth only to girl children. There are ample examples of women, who had undergone terrible suffering due to early and forced marriage, demonstrating their agency by sharing their lived experiences with adolescent girls and women in CDC and their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, they are alerting them against harmful social practices, attitudes and behaviours, raising their awareness about their rights, and empowering them to claim those rights.

The women members of CDCs, most of whom are illiterate, have understood the importance of education hence committed to send all their children, especially daughters, to school so that their daughters can stand on their own feet and need not suffer as their mothers did. In Rautahat district, CDC members, despite their illiteracy, are exploring ideas and opportunities to generate income and ensure their daughters have access to education. CDC member Piyariya Devi Shaha of Auriya-3 of Itahari, who had initially planned to not send her one of her daughters to school so that she could take care of the youngest child, changed her mind after she became part of the CDC. Now all her children go to school. There are cases of young women standing up for their rights. A case in point is the way Ms Amrita Budha of Dailekh Athbisa-5, who is also a CDC member, continued her study despite her mother in law’s resistance.

Amrita Budha of Dailekh Athbisa-5 got married at the age of 18 when she was in grade 10. After marriage, when she expressed her interest to continue her education, her mother in law said, *“as we have not sent our daughters to school, giving continuity to a daughter in law’s education is out of question.”* Dismayed by such statement, Ms Budha,25, discussed this issue with her husband, who pledged his support for her, hence they separated from their parents. Her husband went to India and started sending money to her, which helped her pursue higher education. Now she is recognized as a community leader actively working for putting an end to VAWG and CEFM.

Similarly, women of Rautahat directly involved in CS project as CDC members have become courageous enough to talk to their male counterparts in their families about their (women’s) needs, concerns and aspirations, some of which are, interestingly, well heeded. In one of the families the males, who were against the idea of sending the daughter out of the village for secondary level education, finally obliged and the daughter is currently studying in a secondary school out of her village.

### Findings from FGDs with CDC members

FGDs with CDC members in the project districts have also helped bring to light very encouraging trends. It was encouraging to learn that despite the restrictive social norms, values and practices, especially in Muslim and Madhesi communities in Rautahat and Banke districts, adolescent girls and women are regularly participating in the CDCs and conducting various activities collectively for the good of women and girls, and the community at large. Unlike in the past the women are discussing personal, family and community problems and also issues of public service they are entitled to.

They have developed the practice of identifying the causes of problems and taking action to resolve them. For example, almost all CDCs have submitted memoranda to the Mayors and Ward Chairpersons in their areas demanding actions to ban or at least regulate alcohol production and consumption, which has been identified as one of the main reasons behind VAWG. The women learnt in CDCs that it is the women, who brew alcohol in the community, fall victims of their own husbands' violent behaviours induced by alcohol abuse. They have therefore demanded that the municipality offices in their localities should provide resources to the poor women, for whom alcohol production is a good source of income, and thereby encourage them to stop this practice and opt for alternative livelihood options.

As the CDCs have equal numbers of adolescent girls and women, they are able to build a common understanding on why CEFM and VAWG need to be stopped. In a Muslim community a healthy marital life coupled with a good relationship make up the prime objects of '*Nikah*' or marriage ritual in which both the boy and girl should give their consent to the marriage. However, parents perform the ritual, mostly in the case of girls, well before they reach adolescence and understand what *Nikah* actually means. In many cases, it is tantamount to both early and forced marriage.

The CDCs in Rautahat have, therefore, included also the girls who have undergone the *Nikah* ritual, together with their mothers and created the opportunity for them to learn how CEFM ruins their lives. There are examples of such girls being active part of the campaign against CEFM. All CDC members are resolved to not force their daughters to marry before they reach 20 years of age. They are empowered enough to organize public rallies against such issues as duty bearers' negligence towards repairing bad roads, unrestricted production and consumption of alcohol, family restriction on free movement of daughters and daughter in laws, and their participation in public activities.

In an effort to combine education and entertainment, the CDCs have developed the practice of organizing quiz contests covering such areas as legal age for boys and girls to get married, disadvantages of CEFM, causes and consequences of VAWG including domestic violence, public service providers and access to services. Women and girls enthusiastically participate in such activities and gain knowledge in these areas in an entertaining way.

The CDCs are also lobbying the Local Government (rural/municipalities and provincial governments) for honest implementation of existing laws and policies, and for incorporation of provisions for putting an end to VAWG and CEFM in the laws, policies and programmes they are to develop under the federal structure.

The Rautahat CDCs have engaged diverse actors in such activities as 16-day campaign (63 events), advocacy and lobbying events (160 events), performance of forum theatre (40), and multi-stakeholder dialogues on women's economic empowerment (3). The actors include religious leaders *Madarsha* (Islamic religious school) and teachers of other schools associated with the CS project, local political



leaders and the community people in general. Some of the impressive results they have brought about include prevention of 87 imminent child marriages, 17 birth registrations and success in helping 18 women in obtaining their citizenship cards.

The CDCs also have also been able to effectively engage in their campaign against VAWG and CEFM the *Madarsha* teachers, who are generally considered the advocates of traditional socio-cultural practices such as perpetuating women and girls' subservience to male authority. Meanwhile, adolescent girl members of CDCs have been courageous enough to extend the boundaries of their limited individual freedom to taking part in sports like cricket and badminton.

CDCs' effective collaboration with municipality and ward offices, other government line agencies, *Madarshas* and other schools has resulted in 92 CDC members starting up goat farming, 19 adolescent girls receiving bicycles as a support from Isnath municipality, 66 drop-outs getting enrolled in schools for continuation of their education and 14 girls from *Madarshas* getting enrolled in formal schools. Likewise, CDCs in Rautahat have been able to address 16 VAWG cases—settling 12 of them locally and forwarding the four cases to the police. CDCs and CCs have also been able to stop a total of 87 child marriage in the last two years.

The CDCs are widely sharing their knowledge of negative consequences of CEFM and VAWG from their own homes to also the households not represented by the CDCs. Each district has 45 CDCs with at least 25 members in each of them bringing the total number of women and adolescent girls campaigning against CEFM and VAWG to 1,125 in each of the project districts. That the 1,125 women and adolescent girls in each district are raising the level of awareness and knowledge of the effects of CEFM and VAWG in their respective families, is an achievement in itself.

Meanwhile, as learnt from FGDs with the CDCs in Banke, the CDC members organized 45 such campaign events covering non-CDC households that benefited about 9,000 women and men so far. Religious leaders, teachers and police personnel also joined the CDC women in the door to door campaign, briefed the family members about the need for ending VAWG and CEFM, giving reasons for this from their respective perspectives and providing them various information materials produced as part of CS project. All of the households visited have committed to not commit violence against women and girls and stand against CEFM in their homes and in the community. These families, who are now aware of different forms of VAWG and CEFM, have also signed the banner the campaigners were carrying demanding an end to VAWG and CEFM affirming their commitment. CDC members feel that the campaign has helped build a wider support base for their campaign against these social maladies.

The CDCs have also engaged about 1,200 multiple stakeholders together with community people in general in various events organized as part of the 16-day campaign. Two municipalities (Duduwa and Raptisonari) even supported financially to organize the events. The CDCs have also raised community people's awareness about vital registrations. As a result about 1,800 such registrations (marriages, births, deaths etc) have taken place so far. 774 women are making and using sanitary pads, four women have accessed social security fund and 41 survivors of VAWG have received counseling support.

The CDC members in Banke are also managing a saving scheme with a total collection of about NPR 500,000 and utilizing the fund for income generating activities. The CDC members are, meanwhile, approaching ward and municipality level elected officials and government line agencies seeking access to public services. They have developed good rapport with district livestock office, district agricultural

development office, health posts, cooperatives and ward and municipality offices. As a result of this about 1,200 CDC facilitators and members have received life skill, leadership and vocational training.

However, it has been quite challenging for the CDC members to familiarize the (newly) elected officials, who have come to power after the local government elections under the federal structure, with the CS project, its rationale, approaches, and objectives. Therefore, collaboration with them has been slow but steady. CDC members feel that their collaboration with the ward and municipality offices, and provincial government is all the more crucial now as they will be developing local government level policies and programmes independent of the federal government, and it will be an opportune moment for CDCs to lobby and press for the elected local government (municipalities/rural municipalities) to develop and implement policies and laws reflecting the rights, needs and concerns of women and children, and proscribing VAWG and CEFM.

Despite the challenges, the Banke district CDCs have been able to garner multiple stakeholders' support and solve 41 cases of violence against women and prevent 26 impending child marriages. Likewise, collaboration with various government stakeholders 90 CDC members have been able to start up their own small businesses and 72 others have assumed executive committee positions in public entities such school management committees, community forest user committees and various cooperatives.

As learnt from FGDs with CDC members in Dailekh, there is a growing practice of getting CCs and CDCs registered with government authorities, for example, district women and children development committees and ward and rural/municipality offices. They have developed good rapport and working relations with diverse government and non-governmental stakeholders. They include ward and rural/municipality executive committee members, government line agencies, police office, religious leaders, school management committees, teacher-parent association, mothers' groups and financial institutions. These stakeholders participated in CDCs' campaign against VAWG and CEFM including the five 16-day campaign events and 45 events of door to door campaign. The campaign events benefited about 13,000 women and men, who also committed to stop CEFM in their families and fight other harmful social practices in their communities. While CDCs treat the government stakeholders as supporters for some of their activities, they also consider them as advocacy targets.

The CDC held three lobby meetings with a total of 105 representatives of provincial government, rural/municipalities and district coordination committee demanding laws, policies and programmes reflecting the needs and interest of women and children, and with provisions for elimination of VAWG and CEFM. They have also prepared a list of 62 public service providers along with the kind of services they are supposed to provide, and widely distributed it to the community people. This has helped them access public services more easily.

Thanks to CDCs' effective collaboration with various stakeholders, 33 women and adolescent girls have received sewing machines from local government to start their tailoring enterprises, five most deprived out-of-school children, three of them girls, received scholarship for their education. Likewise, 893 women and adolescent girl members of CDCs are serving in various capacities in local public entities such as school management committees, community forest user group executive committees, health post management committees, women's development committees and cooperatives.

Dailekh CDCs are also using forum theatre as an effective tool for promoting community discussions on issues of VAWG and CEFM and prompting actions against these malpractices. They have so far performed 40 forum theatres engaging a total of 4,313-strong audience. They have also been able to stop 53 child



marriages and settle 12 cases of domestic violence. Similarly, CDCs' campaign against *Chhaupadi* practice resulted in 336 adolescent girls currently living in their homes during their menstruation without having to stay in dingy shades outside the homes.

Multi-stakeholder discussions on women's rights and elimination of VAWG and CEFM have been proved instrumental in raising awareness of the stakeholders. They have now increased awareness of child and forced marriage, VAWG and the urgency of collectively combating these harmful social norms and ensuring women's and girls' rights. During FGDs with CDC members in Baitadi district, it was learnt that the discussions proved a useful platform for the newly elected local government representatives also to familiarize themselves with the pressing issues affecting women and girls in the community, the roles of CS project and local project partners, the CDCs and CS in addressing these issues. The participants of the Baitadi discussions included among others representatives of government officials, child clubs, cooperatives, political parties, religious leaders, journalists and representatives from newly elected government bodies.

CDC members also said that the gaps identified in the Constitution of Nepal, Domestic Violence Act 2066, Civil and Criminal Code 2074 and Citizenship Act 2063 with the support of all project partners served as a useful advocacy tool for them. On the basis of the gaps analysis a demand paper was developed and lobby meetings were held on its basis with related government authorities and lawyers. CDC members in Baitadi said that the efforts made by the CDC and CC members in collaboration with influential actors in the community have resulted in reduction of VAWG, CEFM, *Chhaupadi* practice, and production and consumption of alcohol.

Unlike in the past, women have developed an increased sense of confidence to claim their rights. They no longer give all the money they earn; rather they spend it the way they like. However, compared to the CDCs and their work in other districts those in Baitadi seem not to be up to the mark apparently because of the problems in partnership between Oxfam and local NGO and the time it took to address the problem and bring another partner on board.

### Findings from FGDs with Child Clubs (CCs)

As learnt from FGDs with CC members in all four project districts, the children have been able to convince their school teachers to allocate half day on each Friday for extracurricular activities. They have been able to include and conduct the activities designed as part of CS project for school children into the school calendar as extracurricular activities. They also invite their parents and community women and men in general to the events they organize.

Thanks to the support of Oxfam and its partners, and their own effort and commitment CC members have been able to overcome their inhibitions. Increased number of boys and girls are actively taking part in school level activities and are confidently putting across their perspectives of various issues within and outside their schools. They have been able to initiate discussion with their teachers and also local elected representatives on the need to give continuity to extracurricular activities even beyond the CS project period.

It is very encouraging to find that the children associated with CCs as well as other school children, who participate in the CC activities, are well aware of equal rights and dignity of a son and a daughter. They can verbalize negative consequences of child and early marriage, and legal provisions against this social malpractice, which generally is beyond the understanding of many of the community adults and even

elected representatives. They also discuss these issues with their parents and awaken them to the need for equal treatment to sons and daughters, at times by even citing the laws that have provisioned equal rights of boys and girls. The CC members share their knowledge of the ruinous effects of early and child marriage, and VAWG with their younger brothers and sisters in their homes.

Meanwhile, they also participate in community discussions on prevention of domestic violence and VAWG due to alcohol abuse by community males, and support the community adults by, for example, suggesting police action against the perpetrators. The members of all 40 child clubs –10 each in the four project districts-- are resolved to not marry before they turn 20 years of age and contribute to stop CEFM in their families and their community, and are joining hands with CDCs for preventing child and forced marriage.

For official recognition, they are also getting registered with government authorities concerned – 10 CCs in Dailekh have been registered with the district women and children development office. At the initiative of CCs 23 out-of- school children have been enrolled in schools and five deprived children, who had to leave school due to sheer poverty, have been provided government scholarship to continue their education. Most of the forum theatre artists come from among the CC members, and they are using the theatre tool very effectively in raising public awareness on various issues related to child marriage and VAWG. The CCs performed a total of 160 forum theatres –40 in each of the project districts—focusing on child marriage, gender based discriminations and violence against women. Over 14,000 community people were part of the theatre audiences.

Impressed by the positive change in their children in terms of their increased knowledge of issues concerning VAWG and CEFM, the way they present their logics against such social malpractices and their overall behaviour, the parents are always willing to work with and support the CCs. Children associated with CS Project through CCs say they are totally against CEFM and VAWG and are working together with their mothers, who are either CDC members or supporters of CDC and CC activities. It is not only the community women, a large number of men highly appreciate the CS project activities and the contribution of CCs and CDCs to the community. Such recognition of the CCs and CDCs in the community is a very important achievement in its own right as it goes a long way towards sustaining the achievements and initiatives of the CS project.

In one of the FGDs with CC members in Rautahat the children also mentioned some challenges that included participation of lower number of girls in school curricular activities despite the teachers' preference for girls over boys in such activities. The teachers in some of the schools do not come forward eagerly to support the CC members to organize the Friday-school events, and despite the children's request and formal invitation the presence of parents and local elected representatives in such events is lower the children's expectation.

Some of the CC members call for Oxfam and its partners' one-time initiative to bring together school teachers, parents, and representatives of school management committees and Ward offices, and apprised them of the reasons behind setting up child clubs. They are of the view that once the stakeholders are aware of the importance of CC activities in their schools, homes and in the communities, it would be much easier for the CCs to make their activities even more effective in coordination with all these stakeholders. They also pointed out that training on effectively conducting (school) events and on life skills would help increase the CC members' capacity, efficiency and confidence.

### Findings from KIIs

Key informants in Dailekh district echoed each other's views when it came to the key factors of VAWG and CEFM, and other discriminations against women and girls in the district. All of them described deep seated harmful social norms, lack of adequate awareness, poverty and alcohol abuse as the major causes of all the problems. However, they also see light at the end of the tunnel.

Head master Nanda Sharma of Ganesh Secondary School expressed the view that the CC activities have become highly instrumental in spreading positive messages at school, family and community levels. With special reference to forum theatre that the CC members are using as an effective tool to make people aware of the causes of VAWG and CEFM, he said ***"For the last two years no student of my school has got married and left school for that reason,"*** and observed, meanwhile, that the campaign launched jointly by the children, teachers and parents has resulted in reduction of incidences of VAWG and CEFM. He also proudly spoke of the all-round development of students including the increase in their active participation in extracurricular activities and their leadership skill due to CS support.

Dhankala Jaishi, woman member of Aathbisa municipality-6 attributed the positive changes in the CS project area in the district to the efforts of CDCs and CCs. She talked about gradual changes in male's attitude towards women and girls, and reduction in cases of VAWG and CEFM. She said, ***"This has become possible due to effective activities such as forum theaters being conducted by the CCs and CDCs, the campaign launched by CDC in collaboration with different influential actors such as 16-day campaign, door to door campaign, and their good working relations with the local government."*** She also pledged her support for the campaign against child marriage and violence against women.

Another key informant Tulasa Shahi, Assistant Nurse Midwife of Aathbisa Municipality-6 found very effective activities such as CDCs' door to door signature campaign, during which the people visited affirm their commitment to doing away with VAWG and CEFM. She also appreciated awareness raising campaign through the use of posters and distribution of information materials, and installation of toll-free helpline (1098 and 100) to register complains and seek support in the event of VAWG and CEFM. ***"CC and CDCs have been able to engage large masses in discussions on VAWG and CEFM, legal provisions that prohibit these practices, legal age for boys and girls to get married, which have significantly contributed to reducing VAWG and CEFM,"*** she further said.

Likewise, facilitator of Kalika CDC of Aathbisa municipality-6 spoke about the excitement that the CDC members have always demonstrate to learn new things and apply them in practice. This has currently led them to educating the community women and men about the ruinous effects of VAWG and CEFM, and legal and institutional arrangements for addressing these malpractices. Meanwhile they are developing good rapport with diverse influencers and enhancing access to public services. ***"When we developed good understanding on these areas, we started reaching out to our neighborhoods and gradually the wider masses. Finally, our efforts have started paying off; we have been able to significantly contribute to reducing VAWG and CEFM, and increase access to public services,"*** she said.

A key informant in Banke chairperson Krishna Gopal Yadav of Janata Basic School management committee said, ***"In this area, where sending daughters and daughter in laws to school was not so common not to talk of allow them to participate in public meetings, initiatives of CDCs and CCs have brought about encouraging results."*** Now women and adolescent girls are part of CDCs, they have started saving schemes and started small enterprises, and increased awareness through CDCs and CCs at family and community levels has led to growing number of girls attending schools, he said. Members of CDC as well as other students of the school now understand that they should not marry before the age of 20 and oppose CEFM at home and in the community.

Head master Purushottam Khanal, who was equally appreciative of CC activities, said because of these activities school children are already aware of why they should stand against CEFM and VAWG and they are resolved to do it. That increased number of VAWG cases are being registered in the police office nearby is indicative of growing awareness and confidence among the survivors and their supporters that such incidences should be brought out rather than keeping them confidential, he observed.

Ward Chairperson of Raptisonari Municipality-6 Janak Bahadur Tharu, who has participated in various events organized by the CDCs and CCs described their activities highly effective in facilitating vital registration, alerting people against and reducing VAWG and CEFM, and gradually bringing about attitudinal change in the community. ***“Inspired by such activities and the positive results my ward has formed a ward level network for reduction of GBV with the local CDC facilitator heading it,”*** he said and proudly announced his plan to develop the ward into a child-friendly one. He, however, sounded quite skeptical about the sustainability of these initiatives without any project support as, he said, the ward will provide some support but it might not be adequate to work for these kinds of issues that take pretty long time to be resolved.

Most of the key informants in Rautahat district were critical of the harmful social belief in Muslim community in the district that *Nikah*. Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police (women and children’s serve centre) Fulmaya Chaudhari said the facilitators and members of CDCs have been coordinating well with various stakeholders including the police and working effectively for ending VAWG and CEFM. She finds the CS project coverage little too limited and suggests that ideas need to be explored to replicate the good practices and continue the programme at scale.

Chanchal Jha, a journalist in the district, spoke of the need to make further effort for a longer time to bring about attitudinal change that helps change the social belief that daughters should not be allowed to go out of home, women should wear veils and *Nikah* should be performed when girls are under age. ***“As it is still difficult to find authentic and reliable data on VAWG and CEFM in the country; different organisations have their own data, which cannot be relied on, organisations like Oxfam can coordinate with like-minded government and non-government stakeholders and generate genuine research-based data”***, she pointed out. The CDCs’ success in convincing large number of Muslim families to keep their daughters, who have undergone *Nikah* ritual, with them until they reach the age of 20 years has played an important role in discouraging CEFM and VAWG, she observed.

*Madarsha* teacher Anasir Rehman, who was a little hesitant to talk about social and religious values and beliefs, said if there are any aberrations they should be corrected in the interest of women and girls. Ward chairperson of Ishnath Municipality-4 Sheikh Id Mohammad was of the view that all social norms and values are good; the important question is how these norms and values are interpreted. Awareness to certain level is good but it’s important to not totally oppose these beliefs. What these two key informants from Muslim community said is indicative of the how difficult it is to bring change in the lives of women and girls in that community.

Findings from KIIs conducted with individuals from different sectors in Baitadi district show that the key stakeholders are aware of the issues affecting women and girls, and the causes of VAWG and CEFM. Police constable Keshav Bahadur Pal of women and children service centre under the police office attributed VAWG and CEFM incidences in the district to male domination, alcohol abuse by males, and general perception that girls are burden on the families. As most of such cases are settled at the community level as far as possible, only few cases are registered with the police. He was aware of the activities of CDCs

and other CBOs, and said he has participated in some of the activities that focused on preventing VAWG and CEFM. Meanwhile the police office has also conducted various awareness programmes in collaboration with CDCs and other stakeholders in the community. Expressing his commitment to extend all possible support when approached by the CDCs and women and girls in general, the police constable observed that compared to the past, less incidences of VAWG and CEFM have taken place in the area during the last two years.

Representative of Seti village secondary school, Paramananda Joshi appreciated the role of CCs in raising awareness on issues concerning women and girls' rights, VAWG and CEFM, and the related legal provisions among school children, their family members and the community people in general. ***"This has led to growing realization among community members that they need to ensure equal rights for girls and boys, and stop VAWG and CEFM. Teachers are fully supporting the child clubs for organizing school level activities and helping them to grow as responsible citizens,"*** he said.

Women's rights activist Krishna Bishta spoke of the positive results brought about as a result of collective efforts of CDCs, CCs and influential actors in the community. Unlike in the past, girls on period are not compelled to practice *chhaupadi*, they rather go to school. ***"We together challenged the status quo and worked for doing away with harmful practices like VAWG and CEFM, which has paid off well,"*** she said.

Senior public health officer Nisha Bishta described child marriage and alcohol abuse as the two major issues calling for urgent attention in the district. Under-age girls and/or boys get married by force or on their own will, and by the time they reach marriageable age they experience myriad problems that compel them to separate from each other. Then many of the girls visit district public health office for pregnancy test—some of them requiring abortion, which, in most cases, leads to deterioration of their health. Similarly, alcohol abuse has caused VAWG and ruined many families, she said and added in a positive note that ***"for the last two years these social maladies are in downward trend thanks to collective effort of CDCs, CSOs and multiple influential actors in the communities."***

District women's development officer Lilavati Joshi said while women's development office itself is conducting a variety of programmes to stop violence against women. It is giving equal importance to collaboration with women's groups including CDCs, other CBOs and community stakeholders. According to her, such collaboration has been fruitful in bringing about positive results as addressing deep rooted social malpractices such as VAWG and CEFM is beyond the capacity of individual organizations.

Key informant from Ujyalo Multi Media, Kathmandu, one of the CS project partners, Gopal Guragain gave the information that the '*Khulla Dharati Khulla Aakash*' (open world open sky) weekly radio programme (in magazine format) is significantly contributing to building public awareness on different aspects of VAWG and CEFM. The radio programme has also contributed to bridging the gap between the centres of power and the grassroots, he said. The programme, he further said, is bringing out the vulnerability, concerns and needs of women and girls, taking up their concerns with the policy makers and other government authorities. The radio programme highlights best practices on the ground, changes brought about by the CS project practices in the community, and new policies and government measures designed to combat VAWG and CEFM. As most of the CS project beneficiaries have mobile phones and access to internet, they are benefitting from the radio programme and Ujyalo's online service which also includes materials lifted from the radio programme, he said. He further said, ***"The radio team found during one of their field visits that usually under age boys and girls fall in love when they are in grade 9 or 10 and get married after their school leaving certificate examinations. Therefore, the team is developing a radio programme focusing on this issue. During the team's discussion with key stakeholders, some Ward***



***Chairmen in Banke district expressed their willingness to supporting local FM radio stations to develop and air similar radio programmes for a longer time.”***

CWIN, the national level advocacy partner of CS is significantly contributing to CS project effort towards eliminating VAWG and CEFM by using the good practices and learning from the project as a tool for advocacy and lobbying at central level. At the same time, it has contributed by leading the development of a variety of useful information and communication materials, generating policy analysis, finding gaps in the constitution, and laws and lobbying authorities concerned to address the gaps. These materials are used widely also by CWIN's own chapters throughout the country. Nirijana Bhatta of CWIN highlighted the effectiveness of the use of help lines (1098,1145 and 100), which have facilitated coordination and cooperation among CDC members, survivors of VAWG and CEFM and vulnerable women and girls, the police, child protection committee and other government entities concerned.

She sounded very happy to note that more and more vulnerable women and girls, and VAWG and CEFM survivors are coming forward challenging injustice and claiming their equal rights. While there is increased awareness among the women and girls on the need for economic independence, the women directly or indirectly associated with the project are committed to their daughter's education, she observed. Probably for the first time, she said, CWIN, OXFAM and PLAN collaborated in developing and a submitting to Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) a totally girls-led supplementary report in 2018. The girls directly involved in developing the report included those from CS project districts also. The Ministry of Women and Children was so impressed by the flip chart on legal awareness on VAWG that CWIN developed as part of the CS project it published 15,000 booklets with the same content giving due credit to CWIN and Oxfam and distributed throughout the country benefitting larger masses of population, Nirijana said.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE P2P STUDY

- With the Local Governments currently formulating a variety of policies, plans and strategies independent of federal level intervention, it is high time the CDCs engaged in more policy influencing role and ensured the LG level policies, plans and programmes include provisions to put an end to harmful social norms such VAWG and CEFM.
- It is advisable for the CDCs to seek Municipality/Rural Municipality's formal recognition as women's rights groups and strategic partners so that their say in LG plans and policy making is ensured.
- Cashing in on diverse stakeholders' positive impression of CDC and CC initiatives, and their results it is essential to intensify the current effort to affiliate CDCs and CCs with government entities concerned and strongly lobby for Local Government support to sustain the initiatives and achievements.
- Given the lack of authentic and reliable data on CEFM and VAWG as pointed out by some of the key informants, Oxfam can take lead on coordinating with different INGOs, the local and federal government authorities concerned and its other allies to conduct a research and generate research-based authentic data.
- Creating opportunities for economic empowerment through entrepreneurship development of CDC members for sustainability of the achievements and initiatives beyond the project's life.
- Exploring opportunities for CDC members in all project districts to assume leadership positions in community and public entities such as school management committees, health post

management committees, community forest users groups etc so that they can use their leadership skills in practice.

- Need to increase coverage of the CDC activities to include orientation on women and girls' rights to in-laws and husbands, who have the traditional schooling against women's rights and gender equality.
- It is advisable for Oxfam and its partners to organize a gathering of school teachers, parents, and SMC and ward representatives of and familiarize them with the objectives of up child CCs and why CC activities are important. It would be much easier for the CCs to make their activities even more effective in coordination with all these stakeholders.

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Although the stipulated sample size for Nepal was 268 households, given time and resource limitation, 167 CDC and non-CDC households with equal ratio of women and men above the age of 18 were surveyed across the three target districts. Only FGDs and KIIs were conducted in Baitadi district as new partnership is yet to be developed after termination of the existing partner in the district.

	<b>Rautahat</b>	<b>Dailekh</b>	<b>Banke</b>
Total beneficiary HHs	1125	1125	1125
No. of CDCs covered for HH survey	7	3	7
Total No. of HHs surveyed	61	52	61
FGDs	3 CDCs, 2 CCs	3 CDCs, 2 CCs	3 CDCs, 2 CCs
KIIs	Police, Mayors, Ward Chairpersons, journalists, teachers, religious leaders, CDC facilitators, CMS Chairpersons, CDC facilitators etc.		

## Socio-economic background of the respondents

### Banke District

This section presents a brief description of the respondents' household characteristics. A household unit (CDC and non-CDC) was chosen for data collection and data analysis. Of the total respondents, 51 % were female majority of them (98%) following Hindu religion. In terms of ethnicity, the survey participants included 37.7% each from Brahmin/Chhetri (so called 'higher caste') and Janajati (ethnic) communities, followed by 24.6% Dalits (so called 'lower caste'). Age of the respondents ranged from 20 years to 71 years. Majority of them (45%) fell in the 26 to 40 years age group. The education level of the respondents in Banke district seems to be quite poor with 33% of the respondents not having any formal school education, while none of the respondents have further education beyond secondary level.

The respondents described four major occupations as their major source of earning: agriculture (48.5 %), domestic service (23.7 %) and craft work (10.2 %). Very few households (6.8 %) were found engaged in formal job/service. In terms of marital status, 84% respondents were married, 13 % unmarried and 3% divorced. Surprisingly, majority of the respondents (66%) were under the age of 20 years when they got married, which shows the prevalence and extent of child and/or early marriage in the district. The marriage arrangement was made by their parents for 72% of respondents. Twenty-six percent of the respondents, however, met and fell in love before getting married.

In terms of asking for permission for marriage, 52.6% of respondents gave their permission for their marriage after discussion with parents or family members, while it was not discussed nor informed in the case of 18.5% of respondents, who knew about their own marriage shortly before the marriage itself. Marriage was not discussed but it was arranged and informed to 21% of the respondents.

### Dailekh District

Of the total respondents, 52 % were female -- all of them Hindus. In terms of ethnicity, majority of them (69.2%) come from Brahmin/Chhetri community followed by Dalit community (26.9%). Age of the respondents ranged from 20 years to 60 years, majority of them (50%) falling in the 26-40 years age group. Education opportunity for the respondents in Dailekh district seems to be quite unequal with 46.6% having no formal school education. However, 28.9% of the respondents have attended university level education.

In terms of occupation, agriculture is the major source of earning for 76.9% followed by formal job (11.5%). Majority of the respondents (94.2%) were married. At the time of their first marriage 51% of the respondents were under 20 years of age. This shows the prevalence and extent of child or early marriage in the district. Majority of the marriage arrangements for the respondents (65.3%) were made by their parents, while only 24.5% of them met and fell in love and got married.

In terms of parents or family members asking boys' and girls' consent before arrangement for their marriage, only 32.4% respondents got the opportunity to discuss this issue with their parents or family members before giving their permission for marriage. In the case of 10.8 % of the respondents, discussions were not held nor were they informed well before their own marriage. Likewise, 40.5% of the respondents said their marriage was not discussed with them; it was arranged and they were informed about it just before the marriage. Marriage of 16.3% of the respondents took place despite their reluctance to get married.

### Rautahat District

Out of the total respondents, 50% were female -- majority of them (68%) Hindus followed by Muslims (37%). In terms of ethnicity, the respondents were composed of 37.5% of Brahmin/Chhetri, 32.1% Muslims and 25% of Dalits. The respondents were in the 20 - 68 years age group, majority of them (42.6%) between 26 and 40 years of age. Unequal education opportunity in the district is reflected in the data, which shows 40.7% have no formal school education, while 31.5% have attended university level education.

In terms of occupation, agriculture is the major source of income for 51.8% and formal job for 26.7% of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (83.3%) were married and 82.6 % of them were below 20 years of age at the time of their first marriage. This shows the prevalence and extent of child or early marriage in the district. Majority of the marriage arrangements (89.1%) were made by parents. Only 2.2% of the respondents met and fell in love, and got married.

In terms of parents or family members asking boys' and girls' permission before arrangement for their marriage, only 23.9% of the respondents got the opportunity to discuss this issue with their parents or family members before giving their permission for marriage. In the case of 41.3% of the respondents, discussions were not held nor were they informed well before their own marriage. Likewise, 21.7% of the respondents said their marriage was not discussed with them; it was arranged and they were informed



about it just before the marriage. Marriage of 13.1% of the respondents took place despite their reluctance.

### Key Findings

It is encouraging to find that majority of the respondents in Banke district agree to the rights of girls and women (70%), and boys and men (77%) to continue their education even after they are married. However, the difference between these percentages still indicates a bias against girls and women's education. Presenting a slight grimmer picture, large smaller percentage of respondents (48.2%) believe that girls and women have the right to continue their education even after they are married compared to a bigger number of respondents (64.3%), who agree that boys and men have the right to continue their education even after they are married. The situation in Dailekh is much grimmer. Only a meager percentage of respondents (28%) feel girls and women have the right to continue their education even after they are married, while in the similar case of boys and men the percentage is quite high (51%). This data is clear indication of persisting discrimination against girls and women in terms of their right to education.

Majority of the respondents (83.3%) in Rautahat district were found to have been married. A whopping 82.6 % of them were under 20 at the time of their first marriage. Most of the marriage arrangements (89.1%) were made by parents with only 2.2% of the respondents met and fell in love before getting married. Situation in Banke district is slightly better but still not less worrying. Majority of the respondents (66%) were found to have been married before turning 20. Marriage arrangement for majority of them (72%) was made by their parents with 26% of them falling in love before getting married. Compared to the two districts, Dailekh presented a better picture. At the time of their first marriage 51% of the respondents were under 20 years of age and majority of the marriage arrangements (65.3%) were made by their parents, while only 24.5% of them met and fell in love and got married. This finding indicates the seriousness of CEFM primarily in Rautahat and Banke, and also in Dailekh calling for more efforts to improve the situation.

When it comes to girls and women's right to work, especially after marriage majority of respondents in Dailekh (46.5%), Banke (77%) and Rautahat (53.6%) agree that girls and women have the right. However, they are against girls' and women's right to have control over their earning as huge percentage of respondents in Dailekh (46.5%), Banke (49%) and Rautahat (52.6%) feel women must give their earnings to their family. This indicates that girls and women are allowed to work and earn as long as they give their earning to family, which means the husbands or in laws and that their control over their earning is not yet accepted.

As for awareness on the legal age for boys and girls to get married, the level of awareness among the respondents in the three districts (Banke-93.4%, Rautahat - 84.9% and Dailekh – 98.1% against the baseline data – overall 55%) is highly impressive. They agree that boys and girls should get married only after they reach 20 years of age. This scenario serves as a huge success of CS in raising public awareness in all project districts in this regard.

Quite shockingly, 48.8% of the respondents in Dailekh, 44% of them in Banke and 40.7% in Rautahat think that wives do not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husband without giving any particular reason. To 34.9% of respondents in Dailekh, 28% in Banke and 14.2% in Rautahat it is acceptable even if a husband initiates sexual intercourse with his wife even if she does not give her permission.

Although it is generally perceived that male domination and discrimination against women and girls is higher in Muslim and Madhesi communities, and Rautahat and partly Banke fall in this category several data present a better picture in Rautahat than in Banke, hence it calls for additional effort to find out why it is happening. Majority of them in Banke (51%), Dailekh (69.8%) and in Rautahat (75.5%) are against any family members physically abusing boys and girls if they are unhappy with them. But still 23% of them Banke, 7% in Dailekh and 3.7 % in Rautahat and 7.2% in Rautahat find it acceptable for a husband to physically abuse his wife such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if he is unhappy with her.

A strong majority of respondents in the three districts are opposed to harassment and physical assault on women and girls, and think that women and girls have the ability to protest against such practices and seek support from inside and outside their homes. Large number of people in Dailekh (78.6 %), Banke (49%) and Rautahat (77.8) find harassment and physical assault on women and girls unacceptable. Only a small number of people in the districts except for Banke (Dailekh-2.4%, 1.4% in Rautahat and 29.5% in Banke) find it acceptable. Banke again comes out with highest percentage of respondents who accept harassment and physical assault on women and girls acceptable requiring additional attention.

As against the baseline data, which shows that overall 55% of female respondents were yelled, cursed and insulted by their husbands, the current situation indicates quite huge progress. Almost one quarter of the surveyed women in Banke (26.7%), Rautahat (26.7%) and Dailekh (18.5%) stated that they were yelled, cursed or insulted by their husbands during the last 12 months.

With regard to rape, all three surveyed districts present quite surprising pictures. Majority of the respondents in Banke (52.5%), Dailekh (55.8%) and Rautahat (32.1%) do not think a girl/woman from their community committed adultery, if she has been raped. But quite shockingly 32.8% of respondents in Banke, 28.8% in Dailekh and 28.3% in Rautahat think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by the victim. Still a large proportion of respondents did not have a definite answer; they were not sure about this.

When it comes to the ability of women to seek support when they are assaulted or abused, an impressive majority of women and men -- 78.5% in Banke, 48.8% in Dailekh and 53.6% in Rautahat stated that when a woman is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she is able to seek support from family/friends or community members or community organizations for help. But still 18% of them in Banke, 25.6% in Dailekh and 31.5% in Rautahat think that women and girls in such situation are not able to seek such support. Based on the overall assessment a deduction can be made that the women have the ability to seek support but for reasons such as indifference and retribution (in family) and delayed justice in police office and courts, the women hesitate to seek such support.

## Detailed Findings of Household Survey

### Banke District

#### In terms of household expenditure:

It was interesting to find that contrary to general perception emanating from the exclusion of women from decision-making both at household and public domains in Nepalese society, majority of the respondents (70%) said that usually the husband and wife decide together on how the money should be

spent in the household as against the 7%, who were in disagreement. The rest of the respondents were not sure whether it should be like this or not.

### In terms of work and education

It was equally interesting to note that majority of the respondents (70%) were of the view that girls and women have the right to continue their education even after they are married, while 10% of them were opposed to this view and the rest of the respondents fell within 'swinger' brackets. Likewise, majority of the surveyed women and men (77%) agreed, some of them strongly, that it is the rights of boys and men to continue their education even after they are married. Only a small percentage of them (3.2%) were in disagreement. The rest of the surveyed women and men chose to remain neutral on this issue. That a larger percentage of respondents (10%) were opposed to girls and women having the right to continue their education even after marriage compared to the 3.2% in same issue but in the case of boys and men suggest that discrimination against women and girls' education still persists.

Seventy-four per cent of respondents agree that girls and women have the right to work against the 2 %, who do not agree. Rest of the respondents remained neutral. Those who believe that girls and women have the right to work after they get married figured at 77%, while 3.2% of them were against it and the rest were not sure whether it was right or wrong. The survey's attempt to assess the extent to which male support women to be able to work showed that 39% of respondents say men help with household and care work if their wives are working to earn a living. Thirty-one per cent of them disagreed with this statement, while the rest could not say anything for sure.

When it comes to access to, and management and control of financial resources, the survey found that majority of the respondents (51%) are of the view that women can open their own bank accounts but usually their husbands or fathers manage it for them against 17% of those who do not agree with this view. Rest of the people surveyed did not have a clear view on this issue. Out of the women and men surveyed those who believed women can open their own bank account and manage it themselves stood at 47.5% against 25% of them who did not think so. Rest of the respondents could not come up with a clear idea on this issue. While quite a large number of respondents (51% of the total) agree that women can keep and manage their earnings against 20% of them who disagree, 49% of the respondents said women must give their earnings to their family. However, 16.4% of them expressed disagreement with it, while the rest had no clear opinion.

As for women's ability to access loans for business or other personal use and make independent decision on how to use it, majority of the women and men surveyed (49%) responded in the negative with only 29.5% responding in the affirmative. Rest of them could not say clearly whether women have the ability or not.

### In terms of marriage

The women and men who believe girls and women, and men and boys have the right to choose who they marry figured at (46%) and (50.8%) respectively as against those who believe women and girls (34.5%) and men and boys (31%) do not have this right. The rest of the respondents did not have a clear opinion.

As for the importance of taking permission of a girl/woman and a man/boy before arranging for her/him to marry bigger percentage of women and men surveyed (59% in the case of girl/woman) and (57% in the case of man/boy) said it is important to take such permission, while 15% (in the case of girl/woman) and 17% (in the case of man/boy) stood against such permission. Rest of the respondents in both cases remained neutral.

It is encouraging to find that majority of the women and men surveyed are not in favour of a girl and a boy getting married before the age of 16. Fifty-four percent (in the case of girl) and 51% (in the case of boy) respondents are opposed to boys' and girls' marriage before 16 years of age against 25% and 31% of those who believe a girl and a boy can marry before the age of 16 respectively. Despite the law proscribing marriage for both boys and girls before they turn 20, majority of the people covered by the survey (49% in the case of girls) and (47.6% in the case of boys) say it is acceptable for girls and boys to be married before the age of 18. Those who are opposed to this belief stand at 28% (in the case of girls) and 29.6% (in the case of boys). Rest of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with 18 as marriageable age of girls and boys.

Sixty-six per cent of the women and men who participated in the survey were of the view that a girl or a woman can ask her family/friends or community members or community organizations to intervene if she is being forced to marry, while 11.5 % of them did not agree with this view and rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether they can or cannot. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents think that girls and women are unable to do anything if they are being forced to marry, although the percentage of those who think the girls and women are not that helpless (36%) is not too small a percentage.

### In terms of intimate relationship:

As per the survey 44% of the survey participants think that wives do not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husband without giving any particular reason, while 29.5% of them think wives do have the right and the rest of the participants did not know whether they have the right or not. While a majority of respondents (51%) are opposed to a husband initiating sexual intercourse with his wife even she does not give her permission, a husband taking such initiative is acceptable to 28% of them. Rest of the participants did not come up with a clear idea as to whether it is acceptable or not.

To a majority of women and men (47.5%) it is not acceptable for a husband to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate his wife if he is unhappy with her about something. Still 34% of the respondents describe it as acceptable, while rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether it is acceptable or unacceptable. Similarly, larger percentage of women and men surveyed (59%) think it is not acceptable for a wife to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate her husband if she is unhappy with him about something. But 23% of them think that it is acceptable, while rest of the respondents expressed no clear idea about this issue.

As for family members verbally abusing and intimidating boys and girls if they are unhappy with them, 46% of the survey participants think it is unacceptable, while to 33% of them it is acceptable. There is also a neutral group without any clear opinion about this issue. A still larger percentage of respondents (51%) is found to be against the practice of family members physically abusing boys and girls if they are unhappy with them. But to 23% of the respondents such a practice is acceptable, while the rest were not sure whether it is acceptable or not.

It is encouraging to find that majority of the women and men who participated in the survey are against any form of physical abuse and assault regardless of who may do it—a family, a wife or a husband. Out of them 51% say it is unacceptable for family members to physically abuse boys and girls if they are unhappy with them, while 23% of them find it acceptable and rest of the respondents lack a clear idea whether it is acceptable or not. Forty-one per cent of the women and men find it unacceptable for a husband to physically abuse his wife such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if he is unhappy with her. But still to 38% of them such a practice is acceptable, while there are also respondents among them, who cannot say whether it is acceptable or not.

Similarly, 51% of the women and men think a wife should not physically abuse her husband such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if she is unhappy with him. However, 31% of them find such practice acceptable, while rest of the respondents replied neither in the affirmative nor in the negative. To a majority of respondents (62%) it is unacceptable for a husband to tie up his wife, hit her while restrained or lock her up against the 33% of them, to whom such a practice is acceptable. The other respondents remained neutral. Sixty-two per cent of respondents think a wife also should not tie up her husband, hit him while restrained or lock him up. But 20% of them feel a wife can do so, while rest of them could not say whether it is acceptable or not.

When it comes to harassment and physical assault on women and girls, and their ability to protest against such practices and seek support inside and outside their homes, it is equally encouraging that a large number of respondents find such practices unacceptable and think women and girls have the ability to oppose and get support when they need. Forty-nine per cent of the respondents find it not acceptable to whistle at women and girls and make comments about their appearance or call them names when they are in public spaces, although 29.5% of them find it acceptable. The rest of the respondents were not sure whether it is acceptable or not.

Majority of the respondents (49%) do not think that when a woman/girl is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she normally does not do anything to get help. However, 35.3% of them believe that in such event women and girls do not do anything to get support, while the rest of the respondents do not have clear idea whether the women and girls in such situation do anything or not. An impressive majority of women and men (78.5%) are of the view that when a woman is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she is able to seek support from family/friends or community members or community organizations for help. But 18% of them think that women and girl in such situation are not able to seek such support. Equally large percentage of people covered by the survey (78%) believe women and girls are able to get help or protest when they face lewd comments in public spaces, while 18% of them responded in the negative and the rest could not say anything for sure.

### In terms of health and nutrition:

It is interesting to find that despite girls and women's improved access to family planning, their families' preference as to when they can access it is indicative of the society's boy preference. Majority of respondents (88.5%) believe that girls and women have the right to access family planning as against 5% of them, who do not believe this. Rest of the survey participants could not say for sure whether women and girls have the right or not. Compared to the percentage of respondents (64%), who stated that typically a family prefers it if a girl child is born, the percentage of those (88.5%) who said typically a family prefers it if a boy child is born shows that a family typically can rest assured once a boy child is born. Likewise, the difference between the percentages of respondents (19.7%) and (3.3%), who disagree that typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a girl child is born and typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a boy child is born respectively also corroborates the above analysis.

As for eating at home, 77% of respondents said men and women eat together and eat the same food with small percentage of them (8.2%) disagreeing with this statement and with the rest of the respondents remaining neutral. However, only 44.3% of respondents said women eat after the men in the family finish their food as against 47.5 % of them who do not agree with this statement. Rest of the respondents stayed neutral on this issue.

As for women's freedom to visit the doctor on their own if they are unwell, 80.4% of women and men surveyed said the women have the freedom. However, 13.1 % feel they do not have the freedom, while rest of the respondents could not say anything for sure. As generally perceived, especially in the case of the *Terai* districts (eg: Banke), where male domination is higher as compared to hill districts, majority of the respondents (59%) said women must be accompanied by a family member or friend to visit the doctor, while 13% of them were opposed to this view. Rest of the respondents remained neutral.

## In terms of family and friends relationship:

It is indicative of various restrictions on girls and women's movement and other activities in Banke district that 72% of the respondents said girls and women cannot go out on their own to meet friends and family without seeking prior permission. Twenty-three per cent of the respondents, however, believe girls and women need not take such permission. The rest of the respondents were unsure about this issue. Similarly, 69% of the survey participants said girls and women cannot speak to men who are not their family members or relatives but 19.6% of them said girls and women can speak to outsiders. There was also a neutral group of respondents, who did not have any definite view on this.

## In terms of husbands' misbehavior with their wives in different situations:

In different situations such as wife going out without telling husband, arguments between wife and husband over certain issue, husband not being happy with food or clothes, wife questioning the husband about spending money, wife questioning about husband's suspected girlfriend etc, majority of the women who participated in the survey said the wife and husband sit together, calmly discuss and resolve the issues. Almost similar percentage of women said despite these situation the husbands do nothing. Slightly smaller percentage of women reported that in such situations their husbands yell, curse and insult them. Only very small percentage of respondents said that in such situations their husbands slap or spank and throw something at them. This is reflected in the following table:

Forms of Misbehave	Wife goes out without telling him	Wife argues with him, does not obey or show respect (like looking	The food is late or not well prepared, the house/clothes are not	He feels his wife neglects the children	Wife refuses to have sex with him	Wife used family planning without telling him	Wife questions him about spending money	Wife questions him about girlfriends or going to sex workers	Wife did not bring enough dowry from parents	Wife gives birth to female child	Wife wants to visit her family/
Calm discussion and/or agrees to wife's requests	34.4	23.0	44.3	55.7	44.3	19.7	36.1	8.2	6.6	11.5	31.1
Yelling, cursing or insulting	44.3	14.8	29.5	31.1	31.1	31.1	27.9	39.3	16.4	11.5	1.6
Slapping or spanking	19.7	37.7	4.9	4.9	6.6	27.9	9.8	11.5	16.4		
Throwing something at the		13.1			1.6	1.6	1.6	4.9	1.6		



## CREATING SPACES to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls

other, pushing, shoving or grabbing and twisting the arm											
Knocking on the head, kicking, biting, pulling hair, punching, hitting		6.6	1.6				3.3	8.2			
Hitting while restrained or tie her up			1.6					1.6			
Threatening with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid											
Burning or choking											
Threaten their life or that of a loved one											
Not allowed to leave house or locked in the house						18	1.6	6.6			
Not allowed to work or earn a living				1.6							
Not allowed to spend money or keep their income				1.6	6.6		3.3				
Does nothing	1.6	4.9	18	4.9	9.8	1.6	16.4	18	59	77	67.2
Other (Second marriage)											

Note: All figures are % of respondents

### In terms of health and well-being:

The household survey also explored personal experiences regarding women's health and well-being. The respondents were asked if anyone has ever been behaved in the following ways in the last 12 months.

**Table: Percentage of women respondents experiencing different forms of behaviour in the last 12 months in the surveyed households in Banke district**

Forms of behaves	Yes	No
Yelled, cursed or insulted you	16.1	83.9
Slapped or spanked you	3.2	96.8

## CREATING SPACES to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls

Thrown something at you , or pushed, shoved or grabbed and twisted your arm	3.2	96.8
Knocked you on the head, kicked, bitten , pulled your hair, or punched your	6.5	93.5
Threaten you with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid	3.2	96.8
Burned or choked	0	100
Forced you to have sex or sexual activity that you did not want	3.2	96.8
Threaten your life or that of a loved one	0	100
Not allowed you to leave the house or locked you in the house	6.5	93.5
Not allowed you to work or earn a living outside the home	0	100
Not allowed you to spend money or keep your income	6.5	93.5

A total of 30 women participated in this survey. The findings show that almost one quarter of the respondents (26.7%) were yelled at, cursed or insulted in the last 12 months. About 21% of respondents experienced slapping or spanking. None of the respondents were threatened with knife or other weapon, burned or choked nor did they face threat for of their own and that of their loved ones. However, 3.2 % of the respondents were forced to have sex against their will. It is interesting to know that 6.5% of the respondents were not allowed to spend money or keep their own income.

A total of seven cases of behaves were reported by the respondents and in-laws were the main persons to behave them badly. Three of the misbehaviors were meted out by in-laws and two each by husbands and friends. This shows the prevalence of VAWG in the district.

When asked if they seek support from anyone from within the family when they experience such behaviors, none of the respondents were found to have sought support from the family members. They did not seek support from the family probably because they did not feel comfortable fearing indifference as the misbehavior took place within the family. However, the victims seek support from outside the family. Once a victim went to the communal authority, where as one reported the case to the police and received supported to resolve the issue.

### In terms of increased awareness of girl rights:

All the respondents agreed that women/girls should have equal access to education on par with men/boys. 32.8 % of the respondents describe secondary education (10<sup>th</sup> grade) as the minimum level of education that preferably a boy is required to have, whereas another 49.2% think boys should have university level education. Similarly, in the case of girls' education, 36.1% of the respondents think girls should complete at least 10<sup>th</sup> grade, while another 44.3% prefers higher level of education s, that is, university level also for girls.

In terms women's right to earning, majority of the respondents (78.7%) agree that a woman should be allowed to earn a living and some of the appropriate professions for a woman to pursue are formal job (85.3%), business (27.9%), and vocational training that increases their employability (32.2%). Above 70% of the respondents also think that a woman has the right to spend her income the way she thinks is right.

A strong majority of respondents (93.4%) are aware of the legal age for marriage for boys and girls (20 years) and think that girls or boys should get married only after 20 years. Very high proportion of the respondents are aware that both girls and boys have the right to choose when she/he should get married and that permission should be taken from them for their marriage, and it is a crime to force a girl or boy to get married.



## Respondents' perception about marriage (% of households)

Boys or Girls Rights	Yes	No
A girl has the right to choose when she should get married	72.1	27.9
A boy has the right to choose when he should get married	78.7	21.3
It is important to take permission from the man/boy prior to their marriage	93.4	6.6
It is important to take permission from the woman/girl prior to their marriage	86.9	13.1
It is a crime to force a girl to get married	98.4	1.6
It is a crime to force a boy to get married	98.4	1.6

When asked under what circumstances girls get married before the age of 20 respondents cited various reasons. As a girl falling in love or dating a boy is not yet easily accepted her family finds it against the 'family honour' and force her to get married, according to 59% of the respondents. The other reasons include lack of awareness (24.5 %), dowry (21.3%), poverty (19.7%), traditional social practice (16.4%), and family tradition (13.1%). Reasons for boys to get married before the age of 20 are similar to those of girls. The respondents were aware that girls can complain and even take legal action if she is forced to marry against her will. About 59.1% of the respondents think that they can go to police/court, whereas 4.9% of them think they share with relatives or friends and ask them to intervene. Similarly, 31.2% of respondents think that they can go to village elders/community leaders and 16.8% think help centres/NGOs can also be mobilised.

About 46% of the respondents think it is quite uncommon in their community for a girl to be married before the age of 18. Still, a good number of respondents think that it is quite common for a girl to get married before the age of 18, while 19.7% stayed neutral. Only 6.6% of the respondents said it does not happen at all in their community.

Shockingly, 44.3% respondents still think that a husband has the right to force his wife to have sex even if she does not want to. Respondents think that a wife can refuse to have sex only if she is menstruating or feeling unwell, has recently given birth, and husband has STD or HIV/AIDS.

Although, majority of the respondents (52.5%) do not think a girl/woman from their community committed adultery, if she has been raped, quite surprisingly 32.8% of respondents think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by the victim. Still a large proportion of respondents are not sure about this. Similarly, 62% of the respondents do not blame a girl or woman, if she is raped, while 24.6% of them think the girl or woman is to blame for the rape. Again, 13.1% of the respondents have no clear idea about this. However, 13.1% of the respondents think that even sex workers can experience rape as against 39.3% of respondents do not agree with this view. 47.5% of respondents do not have definite view on this issue.

SN	Statement	Yes	No	Don't know
1	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, she has actually committed adultery	32.8	52.5	14.8
2	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, is it a woman or a girl/woman's fault	24.6	62.3	13.1
3	Sex workers can experience rape too	13.1	39.3	47.5

Asked to assess their own feelings the women respondents came up with the following mixed results:

## Women's perception about themselves

SN	Statements	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that I am person of worth, at least on an equal place with others	75	25
2	I feel that I have number of good qualities	82.1	10.7
3	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	42.9	32.1
4	I am equal to my peers (sisters, friends, neighbors etc.)	100	0
5	A woman can be a leader, just like a man	92.9	7.1
6	It is unacceptable for a man to verbally or physically abuse a woman no matter what	25	50
7	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence in their home	89.3	10.7
8	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence outside their home	71.4	17.9
9	It is acceptable for a woman or girl experience rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help within their family	75	7.1
10	It is acceptable for a women or girl who experiences rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help outside their family	46.4	35.7
11	It is acceptable for a woman to decline having intercourse with her husband if she does not want to	42.8	35.7
12	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek help as a result of violence	67.9	7.1
13	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek justice or legal action as a result of violence	67.9	7.1

Note: The missing percentage out of 100% is neutral.

SN	Ability of women to:	Yes	No	Don't know
1	Regularly be able to attend community group meetings	89.3	10.7	
2	Travel to markets or other spaces on your own without seeking prior permission	39.3	60.7	
3	Make decision about your daughters' education	17.9	71.4	10.7
4	Make decision about your son's education	35.7	46.4	17.9
5	Make decision about when your daughter gets married	28.6	60.8	10.7
6	Make decision about household purchases	57.4	42.6	
7	Please provide some information about what type of purchases are you able to make decision about:	Grocery and other household consumption items		

### Dailekh District

#### In terms of household expenditure:

It was not encouraging to find that exclusion of women from decision-making at household level still persists in Dailekh. Majority of the respondents (58.1%) do not think that the husband and wife decide together on how the money should be spent in the household. Only 41.9% of the men and women surveyed believe that husband and wife together decide on money to be spent in the family.

#### In terms of work and education

Only a slim majority of the respondents (28%) are of the view that girls and women have the right to continue their education even after they are married, while 25.6% of them disagree with this view and the rest or a huge percentage of the respondents remained neutral on this issue. Indicating a bias for boys and men, majority of the respondents (51%) agree that it is the rights of boys and men to continue their education even after they are married. Only a small percentage of them (11.5%) disagree with this statement, while a large percentage of respondents (48.8%) did not have a clear opinion on this issue. This data is clear indication of persisting discrimination against girls and women in terms of their right to education.

Also as for girls and women's right to work, especially after marriage, husbands of working women sharing household care work, women's right to have their own bank account, manage the account and their earning and access loan on their own, the data paints quite a grim picture. While 46.5% of survey participants agree that girls and women have the right to work against the 9.3%, who do not agree, the percentage plunges quite sharply as 37.2 % of the participants say girls and women do not have the right to work after they get married, although 32.6% of the respondents disagree with this view. A meager 14% of respondents say men help with household and care work if their wives are working to earn a living, while those who disagree with this statement stand at 44.2%. Rest of the respondents could not say anything for sure.

When it comes to access to, and management and control over financial resources, the survey found that majority of the respondents (34.9%) are of the view that women cannot open their own bank accounts and usually their husbands or fathers manage it for them against only 27.8% of those who do not agree with this view. Rest of the people surveyed did not have a clear view on this issue. Out of the surveyed women and men, those who believed women can open their own bank account and manage it themselves stood at only 20.9% with a higher percentage of them (34.9%) who did not think so. Rest of the respondents could not come up with a clear idea on this issue.

While quite a small number of respondents (18.5%) agree that women can keep and manage their earnings against 46.5% of them who disagree, quite a large percentage of the respondents (46.5%) said women must give their earnings to their family. However, 30.2% of them expressed disagreement with it, while the rest had no clear opinion. As for women's ability to access loans for business or other personal use and make independent decision on how to use it, majority of the survey participants (60.5%) responded in the negative with only 4.7% of them responding in the affirmative. Rest of them could not say clearly whether women have the ability or not.

#### In terms of marriage

As for the right of girls/women and men/boys to choose who they marry, marriageable age of girls and boys, support from inside and outside their homes when girls require to avoid forced marriage, and girls and women's ability to do anything, the data present an encouraging picture. The surveyed women and men who believe girls and women, and men and boys have the right to choose who they marry figured at (41.9%) and (58.1%) respectively as against those who believe women and girls (34.9%) and men and boys (27.9%) do not have this right. Rest of the respondents did not have a clear opinion.

As for the importance of taking permission of a girl/woman and a man/boy before arranging for her/him to marry slightly bigger percentage of women and men surveyed (37.2% in the case of girl/woman) and (37.2% in the case of man/boy) said it is important to take such permission, while 34.9% (in the case of girl/woman) and 41.9% (in the case of man/boy) stood against requirement of such permission. Rest of the respondents in both cases remained neutral.

It is equally encouraging to find that majority of the survey participants are not in favour of a girl and a boy getting married before the age of 16. An impressive 79.1% (in the case of girl) and 79.1% (in the case of boy) respondents are opposed to boys' and girls' marriage before 16 years of age. Equal numbers of respondents (11.6% in both cases) believe that a girl and a boy can marry before the age of 16. In what seems as a high level of awareness about the legally marriageable age (20 years) for both boys and girls majority of the people covered by the survey (58% in the case of girls) and (53.5% in the case of boys) say it is not acceptable for girls and boys to be married before the age of 18. Those who are opposed to this belief stand at 23.2% (in the case of girls) and 27.9% (in the case of boys). Rest of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with 18 as marriageable age of girls and boys.

Likewise, 23.3% of the respondents were of the view that a girl or a woman can ask her family/friends or community members or community organizations to intervene if she is being forced to marry, while 20.9 % of them did not agree with this view and rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether they can or cannot. Quite a small percentage of respondents (16.3%) think that girls and women are unable to do anything if they are being forced to marry, although the percentage of those who think the girls and women are not that helpless (62.8%) is considerably high.

### **In terms of intimate relationship:**

The survey shows that 48.8% of the respondents think that wives do not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husband without giving any particular reason, while 27.9% of them think wives do have the right and the rest of the participants did not know whether they have the right or not. While a majority of respondents (48.8%) are opposed to a husband initiating sexual intercourse with his wife even she does not give her permission, a husband taking such initiative is acceptable to 34.9% of them. Rest of the participants did not come up with a clear idea as to whether it is acceptable or not.

Likewise, to majority of the survey participants (32.6 %) it is not acceptable for a husband to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate his wife if he is unhappy with her about something. However, 18.8% of the participants consider it acceptable, while rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether it is acceptable or unacceptable. Larger percentage of women and men surveyed (51.2%) think it is not acceptable for a wife to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate her husband if she is unhappy with him about something. But 27.9 % of them think that it is acceptable, while rest of the respondents expressed no clear idea about this issue.

As for family members verbally abusing and intimidating boys and girls if they are unhappy with them, 53.5% of the survey participants think it is unacceptable, while to 25.6% of them it is acceptable. There is

also a neutral group without any clear opinion about this issue. A still larger percentage of respondents (53.5%) is opposed to the practice of family members physically abusing boys and girls if they are unhappy with them. However, 25.6% of the respondents describe such a practice as acceptable, while the rest were not sure whether it is acceptable or not.

It is highly encouraging to find that majority of the surveyed women and men are against any form of physical abuse and assault no matter of who may do it—a family, a wife or a husband. Out of them, 69.8% find it unacceptable for family members to physically abuse boys and girls if they are unhappy with them. To a small percentage of them (7%) such a practice is acceptable, while there are also respondents among them, who cannot say whether it is acceptable or not. Similarly, 53.5% of the respondents are of the view that a husband should not physically abuse his wife such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if he is unhappy with her. But 32.6% of them find such practice acceptable, while rest of the respondents replied neither in the affirmative nor in the negative.

To quite a huge majority of respondents (69.8%) it is not acceptable for a wife to physically abuse her husband such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if she is unhappy with him as against 7% of them, to whom such a practice is acceptable. The other respondents remained neutral. Similarly, majority of respondents (81.4%) say a husband should not tie up his wife, hit her while restrained or lock him up. However, 2.3 % of them feel a husband can do so, while rest of them could not say whether it is acceptable or not. As to whether it is acceptable for a wife tie up her husband, hit him while restrained or lock him up, a robust 83.7% of respondents replied in the negative, while it was acceptable to 2.3% of them. Rest of the respondents stayed neutral.

It is encouraging to find that a strong majority of respondents are opposed to harassment and physical assault on women and girls, and think that women and girls have the ability to protest against such practices and seek support from inside and outside their homes. Out of them 78.6 % of respondents find it unacceptable to whistle at women and girls and make comments about their appearance or call them names when they are in public spaces. Only 2.4% of them find it acceptable, while the rest of the respondents were not sure whether it is acceptable or not. Majority of the respondents (53.5%) do not agree that when a woman/girl is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she normally does not do anything to get help. However, 13.9% of them believe that in such event women and girls do not do anything to get support, while the rest of the respondents do not have clear idea whether the women and girls in such situation do anything or not.

Majority of surveyed women and men (48.8%) are of the view that when a woman is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she is able to seek support from family/friends or community members or community organizations for help. But 25.6% of them think that women and girls in such situation are not able to seek such support. While 46.5% of respondents believe women and girls are able to get help or protest when they face lewd comments in public spaces, 16.3% of them think women and girls are unable to get help and protest in such situation. The rest could not say anything for sure.

### **In terms of health and nutrition:**

It is interesting to find that despite girls and women's improved access to family planning, their families' preference as to when they can access it is indicative of the society's boy preference. Majority of respondents (50%) believe that girls and women have the right to access family planning as against 38.5% of them, who do not believe this. Rest of the survey participants could not say for sure whether women and girls have the right or not.

Compared to the percentage of respondents (15.4%), who stated that typically a family prefers it if a girl child is born, the percentage of those (59.6%) who said typically a family prefers it if a boy child is born shows that a family typically can rest assured once a boy child is born. Likewise, the difference between the percentages of respondents (59.6%) and (19.2%), who disagree that typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a girl child is born and typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a boy child is born respectively also corroborates the above analysis.

Likewise, 55.7% of respondents said men and women eat together and eat the same food with smaller percentage of them (13.5%) disagreeing with this statement and with the rest of the respondents remaining neutral. However, only 13.5% of respondents said women eat after the men in the family finish their food as against 46.2 % of them who do not agree with this statement. Rest of the respondents stayed neutral on this issue.

As to whether women are free to visit the doctor on their own if they are unwell, 34.6% of respondents said the women have the freedom. However, 30.8 % of them are of the view the women do not have the freedom, while rest of the respondents could not say anything for sure. Majority of the respondents (55.7%) said women must be accompanied by a family member or friend to visit the doctor, while 13.5% of them were opposed to this view. Rest of the respondents remained neutral.

### **In terms of family and friends relationship:**

It is indicative of various restrictions on girls and women's movement and other activities in Dailekh district that 75% of the respondents said girls and women cannot go out on their own to meet friends and family without seeking prior permission. Only a small percentage of respondents (7.7%), however, believe girls and women need not take such permission. The rest of the respondents were unsure about this issue. Similarly, 76.9% of the survey participants said girls and women cannot speak to men who are not their family members or relatives but 5.7% of them said girls and women can speak to outsiders. There was also a neutral group of respondents, who did not have any definite view on this.

### **In terms of misbehavior meted out by husbands to their wives in different situations:**

In different situations such as wife going out without telling husband, arguments between wife and husband over certain issue, husband not being happy with food or clothes, wife questioning the husband about spending money, wife questioning about husband's suspected girlfriend etc, majority of the women who participated in the survey said the wife and husband sit together, calmly discuss and resolve the issues. Almost similar percentage of women said despite these situation the husbands do nothing. Slightly smaller percentage of women reported that in such situations their husbands yell, curse and insult them. Only very small percentage of respondents said that in such situations their husbands slap or spank and throw something at them. This is reflected in the following table:

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Forms of Misbehave	Wife goes out without telling him	Wife argues with him, does not obey or show respect (like looking	The food is late or not well prepared, the house/clothes are not	He feels his wife neglects the children	Wife refuses to have sex with him	Wife used family planning without telling him	Wife questions him about spending money	Wife questions him about girlfriends or going to sex workers	Wife did not bring enough dowry from parents	Wife gives birth to female child	Wife wants to visit her family/ parents
Calm discussion and/or agrees to wife's requests	51.9	36.5	37.3	65.4	42.3	45.1	61.5	34.6	11.5	15.4	50
Yelling, cursing or insulting	30.8	25	11.8	15.4	19.2	23.5	9.6	19.2	5.8	11.5	3.8
Slapping or spanking	17.3	21.2	23.5	5.8	17.3	9.8	11.5	9.6		3.8	
Throwing something at the other, pushing, shoving or grabbing and twisting the arm			2		5.8	3.9		5.8	3.8		
Knocking on the head, kicking, biting, pulling hair, punching, hitting					1.9			3.8			
Hitting while restrained or tie her up											
Threatening with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid											
Burning or choking											
Threaten their life or that of a loved one											
Not allowed to leave house or locked in the house											



Not allowed to work or earn a living											
Not allowed to spend money or keep their income											
Does nothing		17.3	25.5	11.5	13.5	17.6	19.3	26.9	78.8	57.7	46.2
Other (Second marriage)				1.9						9.6	

## In terms of health and well-being:

The household survey also explored personal experiences regarding women's health and well-being. The respondents were asked if anyone of them has experienced any of the following behaviors in the last 12 months.

**Table: Percentage of women respondents experiencing different forms of behaves in the last 12 months in the study area of Dailekh district**

Forms of behaves	Yes	No
Yelled, cursed or insulted you	18.5	81.5
Slapped or spanked you	7.4	92.6
Thrown something at you , or pushed, shoved or grabbed and twisted your arm	0	100
Knocked you on the head, kicked, bitten , pulled your hair, or punched your	0	100
Threaten you with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid	0	100
Burned or choked	0	100
Forced you to have sex or sexual activity that you did not want	0	100
Threaten your life or that of a loved one	0	100
Not allowed you to leave the house or locked you in the house	0	100
Not allowed you to work or earn a living outside the home	0	100
Not allowed you to spend money or keep your income	0	100

A total of 27 women participated in this survey. The findings show that almost one quarter of the respondents (18.5%) were yelled at, cursed or insulted in the last 12 months. About 7.4% respondents experienced slapping or spanking. However, it is good to know that the respondents did not experience other forms of misbehavior that is life threatening or that prevents them from working or earning a living outside the home.

A total of five cases of misbehaviors were reported by the respondents, and husbands were the main perpetrators. A high proportion of respondents (80%) reported that they were misbehaved by their husbands, followed by in-laws (20%). This shows the still persisting VAWG in the district.

When asked if they sought support from anyone within the family, when they experienced such behavior, only one respondent is found to have sought support from family member (brother in-law). Similarly, the victims did not seek support even from outside the family. If such misbehaviors continued to be kept unreported, it might most probably encourage the perpetrators.



## In terms of increased awareness of girl rights:

All the respondents agreed that women should equal access to higher education as the boys. 48.1% of the respondents think the minimum education level sufficient for a boy is secondary education (10<sup>th</sup> standard), whereas another 28.8% prefer university level education for boys. Similarly, in the case of girls' education, 51.9% of the respondents are in favor of a minimum of 10<sup>th</sup> standard education, while another 30.7% is in favor of university level education also for girls.

In terms women's right to earning, majority of the respondents (86.3%) agree that a woman should be allowed to earn a living and that some of the appropriate professions for a woman to pursue are formal job (56.4%), business (66.8%), and vocational training that increases employment opportunity (27.7%). Above 70% of the respondents also think that a woman has the right to spend her income in any way she likes.

Majority of the respondents (98.1%) are aware of girls' and boys' legal age of marriage and say girls or boys should get married only after 20 years. A very high proportion of the respondents (88.5%) think that both girls and boys have the right to choose when she/he should get married.

## Respondents' perception about marriage (% of respondents)

Boys or Girls Rights	Yes	No	Don't know
A girl has the right to choose when she should get married	88.5	11.5	
A boy has the right to choose when he should get married	96.2	3.8	
It is important to take permission from the man/boy prior to their marriage	73.1	26.9	
It is important to take permission from the woman/girl prior to their marriage	75	25	
It is a crime to force a girl to get married	90.4	9.6	
It is a crime to force a boy to get married	88.2	11.8	

When asked under what circumstances girls get married before the age of 20 years, 84.6% of the respondents describe lack of awareness as the primary reason followed by poverty (46.2%), traditional social practice (34.6%) and family tradition (28.8%), and fear of effect on family honor (26.7%). Circumstances for boys to get married before the age of 20 are similar to those of girls. The respondents were aware that girls can complain and even take legal action if forced to marry against their will.

About 54% of the respondents think they can share with relatives or friends and ask for their support to intervene, whereas 51.9% think that they can go to a help centre/NGO, the police/court (38.5%), village elders/community leaders (32.7%), and seek advice from lawyer (7.6%). However, interestingly 7.7% of the respondents think that girls should keep quiet and do nothing in this situation.

Still, it is surprising to know that 17.3 % of respondents were neutral when asked how common they think it is in their community for a girl to be married before the age of 18, although 36.5% said it is quite uncommon and 19.2% described it as not very common.

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Shockingly, 23.1% of the respondents still think that a husband has the right to force his wife to have sex even if she does not want to and another 11.5% remained neutral on this issue. Respondents think that a wife can refuse to have sex only if she is menstruating (59.5%) and feeling unwell (80.8%), has recently given birth (53.8%), and the husband has STD or HIV/AIDS (50%) and/or is cheating on the wife (44.2%).

Although, majority of the respondents (55.8%) do not think a girl/woman from their community committed adultery, if she has been raped, quite surprisingly 28.8% of respondents think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by her. Still a large proportion of respondents are not sure about this. Similarly, 59.6% of the respondents do not blame a girl or woman, if she is raped, while 36.5% of them think the girl or woman is to blame for the rape. Again, 35.8% of the respondents have no clear idea about this. Although 57.7% of the respondents think that even sex workers can experience rape, 26.9% of respondents do not agree with this view. Considerable percentage of respondents (15.4 %) does not have definite view on this issue.

SN	Statement	Yes	No	Don't know
1	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, she has actually committed adultery	28.8	55.8	15.4
2	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, is it a woman or a girl/woman's fault	36.5	59.6	35.8
3	Sex workers can experience rape too	57.7	26.9	15.4

Asked to assess their own feelings the women respondents came up with the following mixed results:

### Women's perception about themselves

SN	Statements	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that I am person of worth, at least on an equal place with others	25	46.2
2	I feel that I have number of good qualities	21.5	46.4
3	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	28.6	53.6
4	I am equal to my peers (sisters, friends, neighbors etc.)	71.5	14.3
5	A woman can be a leader, just like a man	39.2	10.7
6	It is unacceptable for a man to verbally or physically abuse a woman no matter what	28.6	57.1
7	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence in their home	32.1	50
8	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence outside their home	7.2	75
9	It is acceptable for a woman or girl experience rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help within their family	35.7	46.4
10	It is acceptable for a women or girl who experiences rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help outside their family	10.7	53.6

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11	It is acceptable for a woman to decline having intercourse with her husband if she does not want to	7.1	75
12	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek help as a result of violence	64.3	28.6
13	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek justice or legal action as a result of violence	64.3	25

Note: The missing percentage out of 100% is neutral.

SN	Ability of women to:	Yes	No
1	Regularly able to attend community group meetings	70.4	29.6
2	Travel to markets or other spaces on your own without seeking prior permission	48.1	48.1
3	Make decision about your daughters' education	37.1	62.9
4	Make decision about your son's education	62.9	37
5	Make decision about when your daughter gets married	59.3	40.7
6	Make decision about household purchases	51.8	48.2
7	Please provide some information about what type of purchases are you able to make decision about:	Grocery and other household consumption items	

### Rautahat District

#### In terms of household expenditure:

Majority of the survey participants are in favour of women's equal say in decision making at household level in Rautahat district. Out of them, 46.4% participants agree that usually the husband and wife decide together on how the money should be spent in the household. However, 29.6% of them do not agree with the statement, while the rest of the respondents are not sure whether women have equal space in decision making in their families.

#### In terms of work and education:

As for girls and women's right to education after their marriage, the participants of the survey do not sound as fair as they do in the case of boys and men. However, they look pretty positive about girls and women's right to work, and even after they get married. Similarly, they do not sound very confident as to whether men share their working wives' work load. While 48.2% of the survey participants believe that girls and women have the right to continue their education even after they are married as against 35.2% of them, who disagree with it, a strong majority of respondents (64.3%) think boys and men have the right to continue their education even after they are married. Only 20.4% of them disagree with it and the rest of the respondents remained neutral on this issue. This is indicative of discrimination against girls and women in terms of their right to education that still exists in society.

While the surveyed women and men were pretty positive about girls and women's right to work, even after marriage, and positive about husbands of working women sharing household care work, they present not so encouraging picture when it comes to women's right to have their own bank account, manage the account and their earning and access loan on their own. While 53.6% of the survey participants agree that girls and women have the right to work against the 29.6%, who do not agree, the percentage goes down with only 50% of the respondents agreeing that girls and women have the right to work after they get married. 27.8% of the respondents, however, disagree with this view and the rest of them could not say for sure whether the girls and women have the right or not. A slight majority of respondents (44.5) think men help with household and care work if their wives are working to earn a living, while those who disagree with this statement stand at 40.7%. Rest of the respondents could not say anything for sure.

As a clear indication of restrictions on women's access to, and management and control over financial resources, the survey found that majority of the respondents (50%) believe a woman can open her own bank account but usually her husband or father manages it for them as against 37% of those who do not agree with this view. Rest of the people surveyed did not have a clear view on this issue. While only 33.9% of the surveyed women and men believed women can open their own bank account and manage it themselves, a higher percentage of them (50%) did not think so. Rest of the respondents could not come up with a clear idea on this issue.

Similarly, a small number of respondents (35.7 %) agree that women can keep and manage their earning, while 38.9% of them disagree with it. Big percentage of the respondents (52.6%) said women must give their earning to their family, although a meager 24.1% of the respondents expressed disagreement with it, while the rest had no clear opinion. As for women's ability to access loans for business or other personal use and make independent decision on how to use it, majority of the survey participants (53.7%) responded in the negative with 25% of them responding in the affirmative. Rest of them could not say clearly whether women have the ability or not.

### In terms of marriage:

In what seems as a clear bias against girls and women's choice, the surveyed women and men who believe girls and women, and men and boys have the right to choose who they marry figured at 32.1% and 42.9% respectively as against those who believe women and girls (57.4%) and men and boys (37%) do not have this right. Rest of the respondents did not have a clear opinion.

Similarly, the percentage of respondents (48.2%) who believe it is important to take permission of a girl/woman before arranging for her to marry is smaller than that of those (57.2%) who think it is important to take boys and men's permission before arranging for him to marry, while 37% (in the case of girl/woman) and 25.9% (in the case of man/boy) stood against requirement of such permission. Rest of the respondents in both cases did not have definite say on both cases.

It is, however, encouraging to find that a huge majority of the survey participants seem to be highly aware of the disadvantages of early marriage and positive about girls and women's ability to avoid forced marriage and the support they can get from inside and outside the homes to intervene if they are forced to marry. An impressive 75.9% (in the case of girl) and 66.7% (in the case of boy) respondents are opposed to girls' and boys' marriage before 16 years of age. Only small percentage of respondents (7.2% in the case of girls) and (8.9% in the case of boys) believe that a girl and a boy can marry before the age of 16. Similarly, majority of the people covered by the survey (50% in the case of girls) and (57.4% in the case of boys) say it is not acceptable for girls and boys to be married before the age of 18. Those who are opposed

to this belief figured at 18.5% (in the case of girls) and 12.5% (in the case of boys). Rest of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with 18 as marriageable age of girls and boys.

Likewise, 44.7% of the respondents were of the view that a girl or a woman can ask her family/friends or community members or community organizations to intervene if she is being forced to marry, while 31.5 % of them did not agree with this view and rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether they can or cannot. Quite a small percentage of respondents (17.9%) think that girls and women are unable to do anything if they are being forced to marry, although the percentage of those who think the girls and women are not that helpless (61.1%) is considerably high.

### **In terms of intimate relationship:**

As for intimate relationship between husband and wife the finding shows that there is growing awareness among wives that they should be treated as equal partners and their feelings and emotions respected. Although 40.7% of the respondents think that wives do not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse with their husbands without giving any particular reason, almost equal percentage of them (38.9%) think wives do have the right, and the rest of the participants did not know whether they have the right or not. While a majority of respondents (53.7%) are opposed to a husband initiating sexual intercourse with his wife even she does not give her permission, a husband taking such initiative is acceptable to 14.2% of them. Rest of the survey participants had no clear idea as to whether it is acceptable or not.

The participants of the survey also displayed high level of awareness that verbal abuse and intimidation between husband and wife and in the family as a whole need to be done away with. To majority of the survey participants (64.8 %) it is not acceptable for a husband to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate his wife if he is unhappy with her about something. However, 12.5% of the participants consider it acceptable, while rest of the respondents could not say for sure whether it is acceptable or unacceptable.

Larger percentage of women and men surveyed (66.7%) think it is not acceptable for a wife to verbally abuse or scare and intimidate her husband if she is unhappy with him about something. But 12.5% of them think that it is acceptable, while rest of the respondents expressed no clear idea about this issue. As for family members verbally abusing and intimidating boys and girls if they are unhappy with them, 66.7% of the survey participants think it is unacceptable, while to 9.3% of them it is acceptable. There is also a neutral group without any clear opinion about this issue.

It is highly encouraging to find that majority of the surveyed women and men are against any form of physical abuse and assault no matter who may do it—a family, a wife or a husband. A large percentage of respondents (75.9%) is opposed to the practice of family members physically abusing boys and girls if they are unhappy with them, although 3.7% of the respondents describe such a practice as acceptable, while the rest were not sure whether it is acceptable or not.

Similarly, 68.5% of the respondents are of the view that a husband should not physically abuse his wife such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if he is unhappy with her. But 7.2% of them find such practice acceptable, while rest of the respondents replied neither in the affirmative nor in the negative. To quite a huge majority of respondents (74.1%) it is not acceptable for a wife to physically abuse her husband such as slapping, beating or hitting with objects if she is unhappy with him as against 7.2% of them, to whom such a practice is acceptable. The other respondents remained neutral.

Majority of respondents (72.2%) say a husband should not tie up his wife, hit her while restrained or lock him up. However, 5.6 % of them feel a husband can do so, while rest of the respondents could not say

whether it is acceptable or not. As to whether it is acceptable for a wife tie up her husband, hit him while restrained or lock him up, 79.6% of respondents replied in the negative, while it was acceptable to 7.4% of them. Rest of the respondents stayed neutral.

It is equally encouraging that a strong majority of respondents (77.8 %) finds it unacceptable to whistle at women and girls and make comments about their appearance or call them names when they are in public spaces. Only 1.4% of them find it acceptable, while the rest of the respondents were not sure whether it is acceptable or not. Majority of the respondents (59.3%) do not agree that when a woman/girl is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she normally does not do anything to get help. However, 11.1 of them believe that in such event women and girls do not do anything to get support, while the rest of the respondents do not have clear idea whether the women and girls in such situation do anything or not.

Majority of surveyed women and men (53.6%) are of the view that when a woman is physically assaulted or abused by her husband she is able to seek support from family/friends or community members or community organizations for help. But 31.5% of them think that women and girls in such situation are not able to seek such support. While 41.1% of respondents believe women and girls are able to get help or protest when they face lewd comments in public spaces, although almost similar percentage of respondents (38.8%) think women and girls are unable to get help and protest in such situation. The rest could not say anything for sure.

### In terms of health and nutrition:

It is interesting to find that despite girls and women's improved access to family planning, their families' preference as to when they can access it is indicative of the society's boy preference. Majority of respondents (51.8%) believe that girls and women have the right to access family planning as against 37% of them, who do not believe this. Rest of the survey participants could not say for sure whether women and girls have the right or not.

Compared to the percentage of respondents (51.8%), who stated that typically a family prefers it if a girl child is born, the percentage of those (90.7%), who said typically a family prefers it if a boy child is born shows that a family typically can rest assured once a boy child is born. Likewise, the difference between the percentages of respondents, who disagree that typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a girl child is born (33.3%) and those who disagree that typically a family prefers a woman's family planning if a boy child is born (9.3%) also supports the above analysis.

Likewise, 66.1% of respondents said men and women eat together and eat the same food with smaller percentage of them (27.8%) disagreeing with this statement and with the rest of the respondents remaining neutral. 25% of respondents said women eat after the men in the family finish their food as against 46.2 % of them who do not agree with this statement. Rest of the respondents stayed neutral on this issue.

As to whether women are free to visit the doctor on their own if they are unwell, 64.3% of respondents said the women have the freedom. However, 14.8 % of them are of the view the women do not have the freedom, while rest of the respondents could not say anything for sure. Majority of the respondents (64.3%) said women must be accompanied by a family member or friend to visit the doctor, while 13% of them were opposed to this view. Rest of the respondents remained neutral.

### In terms of family and friends relationship:



It is indicative of various restrictions on girls and women's movement and other activities in Rautahat district that 72% of the respondents said girls and women cannot go out on their own to meet friends and family without seeking prior permission. Only a small percentage of respondents (22.2%), however, believe girls and women need not to take such permission. The rest of the respondents were unsure about this issue. Similarly, 83.3% of the survey participants said girls and women cannot speak to men who are not their family members or relatives but 16.7% of them still think girls and women can speak to outsiders.

## In terms of husbands' misbehavior with their wives in different situations:

In different situations such as wife going out without telling husband, arguments between wife and husband over certain issue, husband not being happy with food or clothes, wife questioning the husband about spending money, wife questioning about husband's suspected girlfriend etc, majority of the women who participated in the survey said the wife and husband sit together, calmly discuss and resolve the issues. Slightly smaller percentage of women reported that in such situations their husbands yell, curse and insult them. As even smaller percentage of women said other misbehaviors in such situation include slapping or spanking and throw something at them twisting arm, knocking on the head, kicking, hitting while restrained etc. A very small percentage of women said despite these situation the husbands do nothing. This is reflected in the following table:

Forms of Misbehave	Wife goes out without telling him	Wife argues with him, does not obey or show respect (like looking	The food is late or not well prepared, the house/clothes are not	He feels his wife neglects the children	Wife refuses to have sex with him	Wife used family planning without telling him	Wife questions him about spending money	Wife questions him about girlfriends or going to sex workers	Wife did not bring enough dowry from parents	Wife gives birth to female child	Wife wants to visit her family/ parents
Calm discussion and/or agrees to wife's requests	42.6	51.9	38.9	40.7	33.3	35.2	42.6	16.7	14.8	22.2	47.2
Yelling, cursing or insulting	37	31.5	37.0	27.8	25.9	27.8	33.3	27.8	16.7	20.4	17.0
Slapping or spanking	14.8	13	16.7	22.2	25.9	22.2	13	31.5	11.1	9.3	9.4
Throwing something at the other, pushing, shoving or grabbing and twisting the arm				3.7	3.7	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	
Knocking on the head, kicking,					5.6		1.9	5.6	3.7	5.6	



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biting, pulling hair, punching, hitting											
Hitting while restrained or tie her up						3.7	3.7	7.4	13	3.7	1.9
Threatening with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid							1.9				
Burning or choking								3.7	7.4	3.7	
Threaten their life or that of a loved one	3.7	1.9	1.9			1.9		3.7	3.7		
Not allowed to leave house or locked in the house									1.9		
Not allowed to work or earn a living				3.7							
Not allowed to spend money or keep their income	1.9			1.9	1.9	3.7	1.9		1.9	3.7	
Does nothing		1.9	5.6		3.7	1.9		1.9	24.1	29.6	24.5
Other (Second marriage)											

### In terms of health and well-being:

The household survey also explored personal experiences regarding women's health and well-being. The respondents were asked if anyone has ever experienced the kinds of misbehaviors as presented in the following table in the last 12 months.

**Table: Percentage of women respondents experiencing different forms of behavior in the last 12 months in Rautahat district**

Forms of behaves	Yes	No
Yelled, cursed or insulted you	26.7	73.3
Slapped or spanked you	21.4	78.6
Thrown something at you , or pushed, shoved or grabbed and twisted your arm	10.7	89.3
Knocked you on the head, kicked, bitten , pulled your hair, or punched your	3.6	96.4
Threaten you with knife, gun or axe or throwing acid	0	100
Burned or choked	0	100
Forced you to have sex or sexual activity that you did not want	0	100
Threaten your life or that of a loved one	7.1	92.9
Not allowed you to leave the house or locked you in the house	7.1	92.9
Not allowed you to work or earn a living outside the home	7.1	92.9

Not allowed you to spend money or keep your income	25	75
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A total of 30 women participated in this survey. The findings show that almost one quarter of the respondents (26.7%) were yelled at, cursed or insulted in the last 12 months. About 21% of respondents experienced slapping or spanking. None of the respondents were, however, threatened with knife or other weapon, burned or choked, forced to have sex without their will, or faced threat for life of their own or that of their loved ones. It is interesting to know that 7.1% of respondents were not even allowed to work outside their home, and 25% of them were not allowed to spend money or keep their own income. A total of 12 cases of behaviors were reported by the respondents with their own husbands being the main perpetrator. A high proportion of respondents (87.5) reported that they were misbehaved by their husbands, followed by in-laws (25) and friends (37.5%). Two of the respondents were misbehaved both by their husbands and in-laws. This is indicative of the prevalence of VAWG in the district.

When asked if any of them sought support from anyone from the family, when they experienced such behaviors, only one respondent was found to have sought such support. However, the victims seek support from outside the family. Three cases of such misbehavior were reported to the police, who supported the victims properly and the respondents are satisfied with the role of the police.

## In terms of minimizing VAWG and CEFM:

The household survey also focused on the respondents' opinion regarding minimizing the GBV and FECM. All the respondents agreed that women should have equal access to higher education as the boys, and majority of the respondents think the minimum level of education sufficient for a girl is secondary education (10<sup>th</sup> standard). Just above a quarter of the respondents prefer college/university level education for girls.

Majority of the respondents (66%) agree that a woman should be allowed to earn a living and that some of the appropriate professions for a woman are formal job (69.6%), business (57.1%), vocational training for better employment opportunity (25%). Sixty percent of the respondents think that a woman has the right to spend her income the way she thinks is right.

Demonstrating their high level of awareness about the legal age of marriage for girls and boys (20 years), 84.9% of the respondents think that girls or boys should get married only after 20. However, 14.2% of respondents were not aware about the legal age of marriage for girls. Surprisingly, just over half of the respondents think that girls (52.8%) or boys (50.9%) do not have the right to choose when they should get married. But majority of the respondents believe that permission should be taken from both men/boys and women/girls prior to their marriage and it is a crime to force them to get married.

## Respondents' perception about marriage (% of households)

Boys or Girls Rights	Yes	No	Don't know
A girl has the right to choose when she should get married	43.4	52.8	3.8
A boy has the right to choose when he should get married	49.1	50.9	
It is important to take permission from the man/boy prior to their marriage	77.4	22.6	
It is important to take permission from the woman/girl prior to their marriage	71.7	28.3	
It is a crime to force a girl to get married	75.5	24.5	

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It is a crime to force a boy to get married	67.9	32.1	
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When asked under what circumstances girls get married before the age of 20, 75% of the respondents described poverty as the main reason followed by lack of awareness (53.6%), dowry problem (44.6%) and traditional social practice (32.2%). Other reasons include family tradition (19.6%) and fear of tarnishing family honour (24.6%). Circumstances that compel boys to get married before the age of 20 years are similar to those of girls. The respondents were aware that girls can complain and even take legal action if forced to marry against her will. About 43% of respondents think they can go to a help centre/NGO for help, seek support from relatives (35.7%), seek advice from lawyer (31.3%), and go to police/court (25%). However, interestingly 17.9% respondents think that girls should keep quiet and do nothing in this case. Still, it is surprising to know that 39.6% of respondents remained neutral when asked how common they think it is in their community for a girl to be married before the age of 18. Some of the respondents said it is quite uncommon (32.1%), not very common (17%), somewhat common (5.7%) and very common (3.8%).

Interestingly, 32.1% respondents still think that a husband has the right to force his wife to have sex if even against her will. Others said a wife can refuse to have sex only if she is menstruating (44.7%) or feeling unwell, has recently given birth (30.4%), and husband has STD or HIV/AIDS (35.7%) and/or he is cheating on the wife (14.3%). This shows the respondents' poor awareness about women's rights.

Although, majority of the respondents (32.1%) do not think a girl/woman from their community committed adultery, if she has been raped, quite surprisingly 28.3% of respondents think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by her. Still a large proportion of respondents (39.6%) are not sure about this. Similarly, 37.7% of the respondents do not blame a girl or woman, if she is raped, while 26.4% of them think the girl or woman is to blame for the rape. Again, 35.8% of the respondents have no clear idea about this. Although 24.5% of the respondents think that even sex workers can experience rape, 35.8% of respondents do not agree with this view. Considerable percentage of respondents (39.6%) does not have definite view on this issue.

SN	Statement	Yes	No	Don't know
1	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, she has actually committed adultery	28.3	32.1	39.6
2	If a woman or girl from your community has been raped, is it a woman or a girl/woman's fault	26.4	37.7	35.8
3	Sex workers can experience rape too	24.5	35.8	39.6

When asked to assess how they feel about themselves the women respondents' assessment came out as presented in the table below:

### Women's perception about themselves

SN	Statements	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that I am person of worth, at least on an equal place with others	25	46.4
2	I feel that I have number of good qualities	46.4	17.9
3	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	35.7	39.3

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4	I am equal to my peers (sisters, friends, neighbors etc.)	78.6	14.3
5	A woman can be a leader, just like a man	35.7	17.9
6	It is unacceptable for a man to verbally or physically abuse a woman no matter what	39.3	32.2
7	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence in their home	57.1	25
8	A woman or girl should be allowed to seek help if they experience violence outside their home	46.4	28.6
9	It is acceptable for a woman or girl experience rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help within their family	50	3.6
10	It is acceptable for a women or girl who experiences rape or other forms of sexual violence to seek help outside their family	32.1	28.5
11	It is acceptable for a woman to decline having intercourse with her husband if she does not want to	18.5	40.7
12	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek help as a result of violence	50	21.4
13	I am willing to support my sisters or friends or another woman in my community if they want to seek justice or legal action as a result of violence	42.8	25

SN	Ability of women to:	Yes	No
1	Be able to regularly attend community group meetings	48.1	51.9
2	Travel to markets or other spaces on your own without seeking prior permission	44.4	55.6
3	Make decision about your daughters' education	70.4	29.6
4	Make decision about your son's education	70.4	29.6
5	Make decision about when your daughter gets married	51.9	48.1
6	Make decision about household purchases	66.7	33.3
7	Please provide some information about what type of purchases are you able to make decision about:	Grocery and other household consumption items	

### Recommendations from the household survey

- Overall picture of boys' and girls' right to continue their education after their marriage looks encouraging. However, the difference in the number of people accepting this right of boys and girls indicates that there still is boy preference calling for continued effort to ensure equal rights of boys and girls to education.

- As the findings indicate that CEFM persists more in Rautahat and Banke, it is advisable to further intensify effort to raise awareness level of parents and key stakeholders, especially in Muslim and *Madhesi* communities in the two districts.
- Data indicates that girls and women are allowed to work and earn as long as they allow their families' control over their earning. It can be a topic of discussion in the CDC so that the members discuss and come up with arguments to convince the family members as to why women and girls need both access to and control over their earning.
- Although there is growing awareness among wives that they should be treated as equal partners and their feelings and emotions respected, they still are not in a position to have it fully materialized within household, especially when it comes to intimate relationship. Stronger focus on SRHR by way of discussion in CDCs, some episodes of radio programme focusing on this topic etc would be a good start.
- Although it is generally perceived that male domination and discrimination against women and girls is higher in Muslim and *Madhesi* communities and Rautahat and partly Banke fall in this category, several data present a better picture in Rautahat than in Banke. Banke also comes out with highest percentage of respondents who find harassment and physical assault on women and girls acceptable. Hence it calls for additional effort to find out why it is happening and revisit the programme approach and activities in the district.
- Over a quarter of respondents in three project districts think if a girl or women is raped, it is adultery committed by the victim. This is a quite serious problem, which has to be discussed among Oxfam, CDCs and partners including those at the central level. The discussion should focus on what made them think so. At the community level, it can be started with CDC members holding series of discussions designed to raise their own self-awareness about their own role, if any, in 'nurturing' a culture that not only allows but justifies sexual violence against women, and planning actions accordingly.
- As for the ability of women to seek support when they are assaulted or abused, based on the overall assessment a deduction can be made that the women have the ability to seek support but for reasons such as indifference and retribution (in family) and delayed justice in police office and courts, the women hesitate to seek such support. It is advisable to discuss this issue with the newly formed relevant structures such as judicial committees under the Municipalities to familiarize them with the gravity of the problem, and the perceived and actual reasons behind it and develop strategy to address the problem.

### Appendix III: Household Survey Data

*[Can be attached in excel format]*