

WOMEN, DISPLACEMENT AND VIOLENCE IN NEPAL

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study was to find out about the impact of internal displacement caused by environmental factors, on the occurrence of violence against women in Nepal, and support the policy and practitioner communities in responding to the welfare and empowerment needs of different groups of marginalised women, living in fragile contexts.

The study made use of an innovative mixed method approach, combining qualitative narrative methods with a quantitative survey in order to understand if, how, and why women's experiences of violence have changed post-displacement, and how they might best be addressed.

THE FIELD SITES

Our geographical focus in Nepal was Kathmandu (Middle Hill Area) and the Eastern Terai region. The displacement we looked at was the result of earthquake and flooding in the following parts of the country:

SHANKHARAPUR MUNICIPALITY IN KATHMANDU DISTRICT

Situated in the North Eastern part of the Kathmandu Valley, this area saw massive

displacement as a result of the earthquake of April 2015. The study focussed on two field site clusters: Nangle Village (taken as the displaced site) and Palubaari Village (taken as the controlled site). Both sites represented mixed settlements of Tamang, Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar and Dalit communities.

BIRATNAGAR METROPOLITAN CITY (BMC) AND KATAHARI RURAL MUNICIPALITY (KRM) IN MORANG DISTRICT

These sites are in Morang District, situated in the eastern Terai region of the country, about 377km from Kathmandu where the vast majority of households were displaced as a result of flooding from July-August 2017. In KRM, Kadam Gachhiya in KRM and Khap Tole in BMC were selected for the study. The main inhabitants of both sites were Musahar or Rishidev and Sataar (Dalit community) and other common castes such as Rajbanshi, Shah, Mandal, and Mahat.

KEY SURVEY RESPONSE DATA

880 respondents were surveyed (49% from Kathmandu and 51% from Morang).

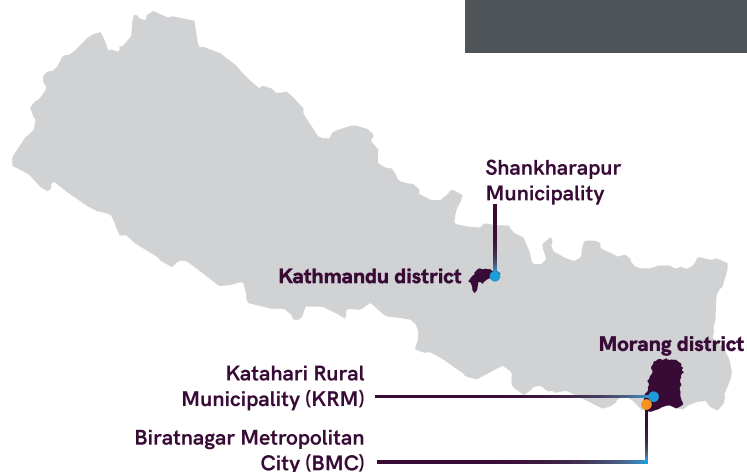
20 in-depth interviews were conducted in each site.

Additionally, 20 stakeholder interviews were conducted across both sites.

Respondents were between 18 and 49 a mix of caste, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

98% of respondents were married and mainly living with their spouse.

49% of the participants in the study were living in temporary accommodation following either the earthquake or flooding.





LEVELS AND TYPES OF VIOLENCE

LEVELS OF VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

57%

Percentage of IPV revealed by quantitative and qualitative data

71%

Respondents reported that IPV was the most common form of violence

8%

Respondents reported that the second most common perpetrators of violence were mothers in law

73%

Female respondents in Morang reported severe violence against them

Across both sites the majority of women (90%) understood the meaning of the term violence against women and could list examples of forms of violence. In Morang female respondents felt that violence was a serious daily issue impacting on their community, this view was less apparent in Kathmandu. Our findings document higher levels of violence against women in both Kathmandu and Morang in the 15-49 age bracket.

The surveys reveal stark differences in perceptions across genders. Male

respondents claimed instances of violence against women were low and denied that forced sexual intercourse perpetrated by the husband occurred, though 40% did accept that they had perpetrated violence against their wives. Husbands justified violence for many reasons such as burning food, arguing, neglecting children or refusing sex.

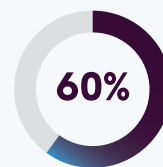
TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Higher levels of women from Morang compared to Kathmandu reported experiencing violence in the last 11 months, with 14% of women surveyed experiencing sexual violence. 40% of these respondents reported forced sexual intercourse in that period.

REPORTING VIOLENCE

The situation in the study districts in relation to sexual violence in the past year is more serious than in the NDHS (2016) data and it should also be noted that reporting of sexual violence is notoriously under reported. A minority of women (8%) who were surveyed sought help at the time they experienced the violence, though the majority felt that additional support was essential especially when they were experiencing displacement. Those who sought help typically turned to family members or neighbours and members of the community. By comparison male respondents felt that going to the police was the best option.

TRIGGERS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



of all respondents stated that male alcohol consumption was the main trigger for violence against women

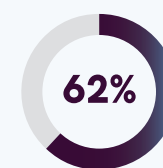
The main triggers of violence noted by respondents were male alcohol consumption (e.g. noted by 71% of respondents from Morang District), perceived poor performance of household chores, and jealousy of the husband. Interestingly low income was not seen as a trigger, and no relationship was noted in the survey between physical violence and insufficient food supply.

CASTE AS A FACTOR IN INCREASING VULNERABILITY

Female respondents of the Terai Dalit community were found to be the most affected by violence. 52% from Terai Dalit and 17% from the Terai Janajati community were found to be affected.

LITERACY LEVELS

Illiterate women were more vulnerable to physical violence.



of the 261 illiterate women interviewed reported violence

As per the NDHS (2016), the likelihood of experiencing physical violence declines



with the level of education. More than one in three women (34%) with no education have experienced physical violence, compared with 8% of women with SLC or higher education.

OTHER INTERSECTIONAL DIMENSIONS

Discrimination against single and disabled women is clear in both sites with both reporting that they feel more vulnerable post-earthquake. Women reported feeling vulnerable using public transport, which disproportionately affects lower caste women who are more dependent on cheap transport. Women also experienced stress through having their movement closely monitored. The NDHS (2016) study revealed that women who are divorced, separated or widowed are nearly twice as likely to have experienced IPV as currently married women.

DISPLACEMENT AS A TRIGGER



Qualitative data confirmed this more strongly perhaps because understanding the link takes some time to reflect upon especially given the already high

levels of violence. It is also hard to judge because of the length of time families have been living in temporary accommodation.



of the 261 women suffered from violence were living in temporary accommodations

The qualitative research in Kathmandu revealed that the vulnerability of women is widely considered to have increased as a result of the earthquake, but participants do not make a direct link between IPV increases and the earthquake. That said it is widely reported that the shared shelter conditions following the earthquake did increase tensions and a few reported that this tipped over into sexual IPV.

FINDINGS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Organisations already engaged in issues surrounding women's rights and gender acknowledged and spoke of a spike in violence against women post displacement. However organisations and individuals not focused on pursuing activities related to gender tended to report that violence did not increase post displacement but were clear it is always a problem.

"In my personal view, alcohol leads to violence and should be banned. Men consume alcohol after getting their salary and thus, are unable to provide food for their family which results in violence. Every woman wants to have a good life, wear good clothes but men spend all of their money on alcohol which results in violence. "

40, female, married Christian, 4 children, Pariyar caste, Kathmandu

"The women of the village are involved in trying to prevent such cases of violence from occurring. However, the police are not very supportive in such cases. If a woman complains about her husband's behaviour with the police, they tell her to ask her husband to limit the consumption of alcohol."

32, Dalit women, Morang



OPTIONS FOR SUPPORT

Many female respondents stated that there were no options for support and claimed a lack of local organisations as a key barrier. However, trust in local government figures to deal with instances of violence against women is high in Biratnagar. This may be down to the targeted recruitment of trusted social mobilisers into government there. 21% reported the presence of specialised organisations working with women to end violence and advocate, though 13% of respondents had no knowledge of any such organisations. NGOs have provided support with a focus on shelter and food provision etc. but not violence against women, and construction of shelters has been insensitive to gender. Government response post earthquake has been regarded as poor.

ROLE AND IMPACT OF LOCAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

Qualitative research made clear that when engagement with a women's organisation and/or network committed to ending violence has happened the benefits are always

recorded as positive in terms of confidence to challenge violence and also realisation that violence should not happen. There is also evidence that positive deviants have an impact at local level.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Violence needs to be mainstreamed in disaster response mechanisms.
- Local government needs to offer advocacy, legal and counselling support to women and work actively to challenge the normalisation of violence both in communities and amongst professionals (e.g. the judiciary).
- The work of local social mobilisers and organisations needs to be better resourced both at times of crisis but also into the long term.
- Measures to curb male alcohol consumption are necessary.
- Work with men specifically to challenge the normalisation of sexual violence in marriage is necessary.

"They can share their thoughts in peer groups and since these days organisations like us have come, they can directly share their thoughts with us. However, such problems have not arisen. If such problems arise, we first try to solve their problem within the family. If the problem is not solved in that way, we go to the ward office and again if it does not work, we finally go to the police station "

Women 25 married no children, Kathmandu Hindu



Local partners



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