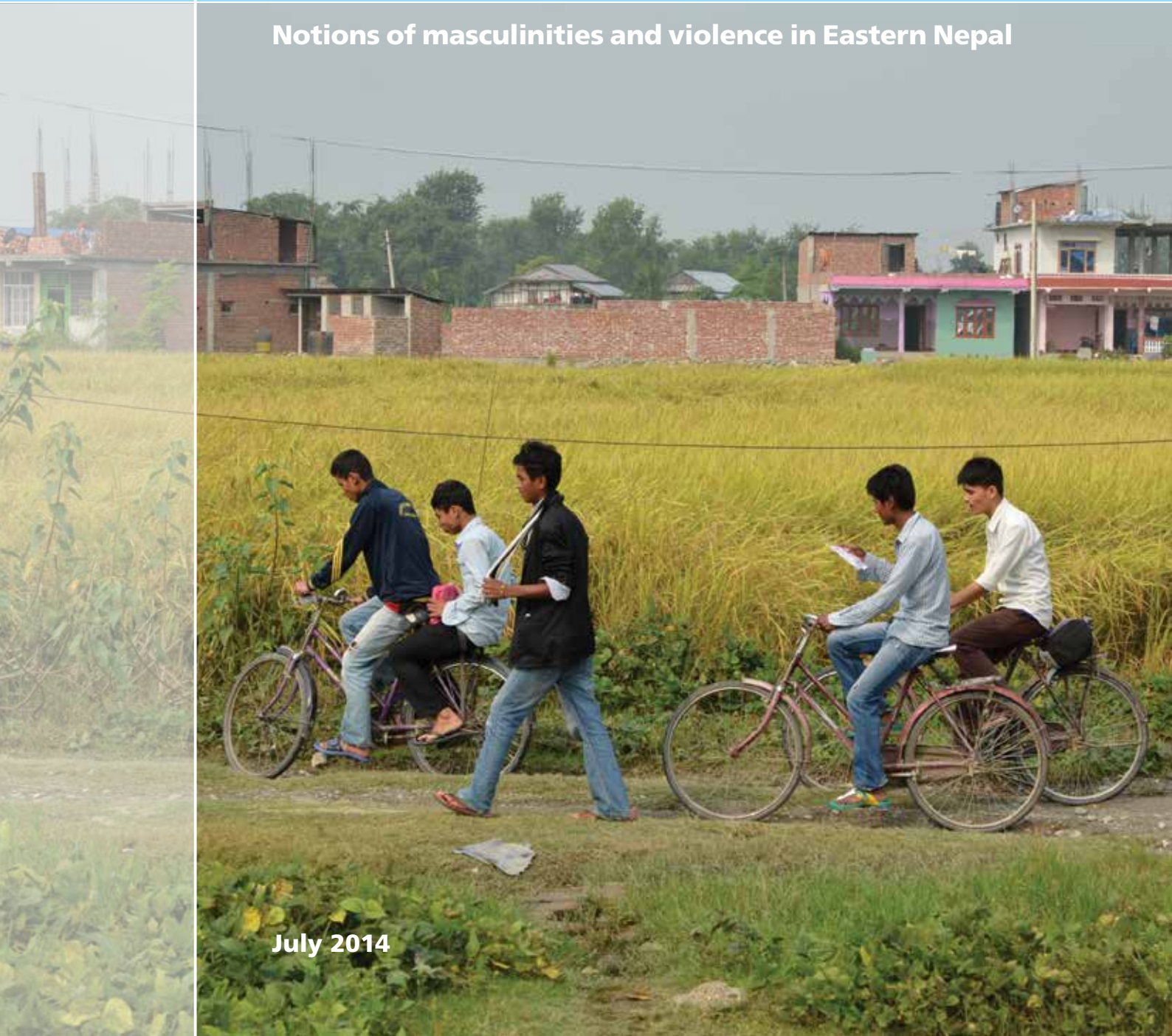
REPORT

SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

"How can you be a marda if you beat your wife?"

Notions of masculinities and violence in Eastern Nepal



July 2014

"How can you be a marda if you beat your wife?"

Notions of masculinities and violence in Eastern Nepal

SAFERWORLD

JULY 2014

Acknowledgements

This report is the result of participatory learning research undertaken by Saferworld between July 2013 and April 2014. The research was conducted by a team including Julie Brethfeld, Ramesh Shrestha, Ojaswi Shah, Prawin S. Limbu and Eshita Pandey. The Society Touch in Sankhuwasabha and Youth Development Centre in Sunsari district helped to coordinate the field research. Dr. Jeevan R. Sharma provided substantial inputs for the research methodology development and carried out the literature review.

The report was written by Dr. Matthew Maycock, Dr. Jeevan R. Sharma, Julie Brethfeld, Ojaswi Shah and Ramesh Shrestha. Jatinder Padda and Hannah Wright provided additional support. The report was copy-edited by John Newman and designed by Jane Stevenson. Hikmat Khadka helped with translation during the data collection in the districts and translated the report into Nepali.

The project was made possible thanks to the support of the Foundation to Promote Open Society.

We would like to thank Henri Myrtinnen for reviewing the report and providing valuable feedback. We would also like to thank the members of our Advisory Group – representatives from The Asia Foundation, Saathi, Youth Initiative, CWIN, Sunil B. Pant, Kyle Knight – as well as Dambar Chemjong, Danny Coyle and Ola Perczynska for their generous feedback on the research methodology, initial findings and recommendations. Equal Access provided additional support during the validation of the findings.

But most importantly we would like to thank the people of Sunsari and Sankhuwasabha for hosting us and contributing to this research. Particularly, our thanks go to the boys and young men participating in the participatory learning workshops who helped us to understand what it is like to be young men in Nepal, and who shared their thoughts and experiences on often sensitive issues.

When referencing this report please cite: Maycock M, Sharma J R, Brethfeld J, Shah O, Shrestha R (2014) *How can you be marda if you beat your wife? Notion of masculinities and violence in Eastern Nepal* (Kathmandu: Saferworld)

© Saferworld, July 2014. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without full attribution. Saferworld welcomes and encourages the utilisation and dissemination of the material included in this publication.

Updated 2nd edition, August 2014.

Contents

Map of Nepal study areas
Acronyms
Nepali glossary

Executive summary **i**
Key findings ii
Recommendations iv

1. Introduction **1**
Background and rationale 2
What are 'masculinities'? 3
SGBV in Nepal 4
Methodology 5
Research areas 6

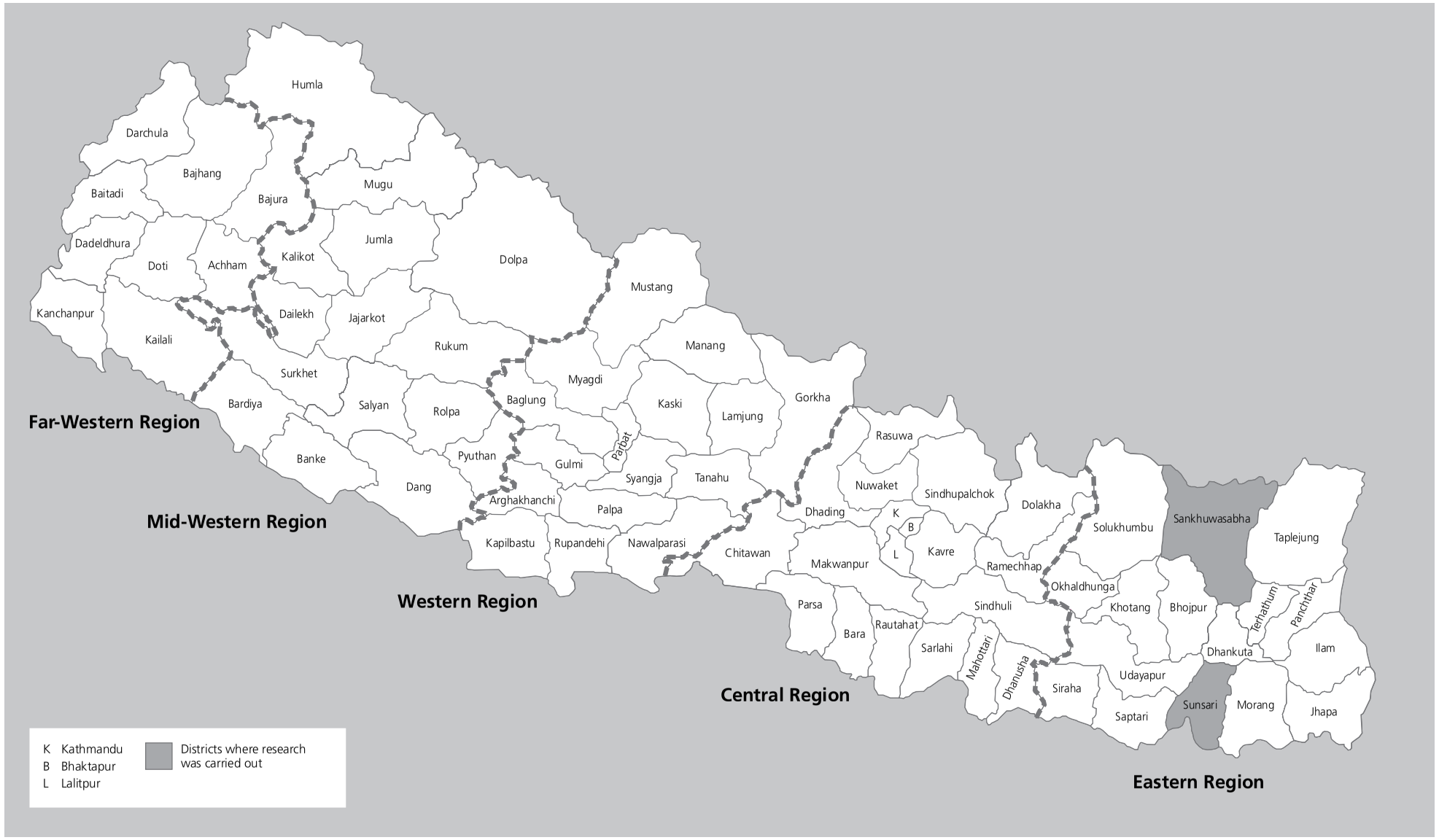
2. Masculinities in Eastern Nepal **8**
Physical appearance of men 8
Negotiating notions of masculinities 9
Family responsibilities and masculinities 13
Masculinities, education and work 17
Migration 20
Evolving gender roles 21
Masculinity and the 'others' in young men's lives 24

3. Masculinities and violence **30**
Non-physical violence 30
Physical violence 36

4. Conclusion **47**
Recommendations 49

ANNEX: Methodology 56
Bibliography 60

Nepal study areas



Acronyms

CIB	Criminal Investigation Bureau
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist Leninist
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESP	Enabling State Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IHRICON	Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Centre
KII	Key Informant Interview
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
NC	Nepal Congress
NP	Nepal Police
PLC	Para-Legal Committee
PLR	Participatory learning research
PWD	People With Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SGM	Sexual and Gender Minorities
TST	The Society Touch
VAW	Violence Against Women
VDC	Village development Committee
WCSC	Women and Children Service Centre
YDC	Youth Development Centre

Nepali glossary

Bahun the Nepali word for Brahmin

Beijjet ashamed

Bikas development

Chhakka not man enough; also used as derogatory term for transgender people

Ghumne wandering

Hutihara a man who has not been able to achieve anything in his life

Himmat courage or guts

Ijjat prestige or honour

Jimmewari responsibility

Jiskaune flirting

Katar coward

Khukuri a type of Nepali knife

Lafanga a useless man

Lahure a term originally used to talk about men who went to work in British and Indian Armies; more recently it is also sometimes used to talk about men who go abroad to work

Marda man, manly

Namarda a good for nothing man. This can be used in variety of contexts, including if a married man cannot have child or a man always follows decisions made by his wife or a man who does not show courage when needed etc.

Naramro kaam wrong things or work

Purush man

Rishibi personal grudges

Terai southern plain of Nepal

Executive summary

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) remains one of the biggest safety and security challenges in Nepal. News of SGBV – from sexual assault to accusations of witchcraft to trafficking of women and girls – has been appearing regularly over the last couple of decades. Many programmes and policies seeking to reduce and prevent SGBV focus on the needs and rights of girls and women. But at the same time there is very limited understanding regarding masculinities and whether and how they link to violence, and in particular SGBV. This report seeks to explore how people in two districts of Eastern Nepal perceived notions of masculinities; and to understand young men's experiences and attitudes towards violence, including SGBV.

Our findings show that young men feel huge pressures and frustrations negotiating their positions in society. The tension between expectation and what is achievable in the context gave rise to complicated responses in young men as they live lives in an uncertain and changing context. The research also shows that the association of violence, including SGBV, with masculinities needs to be approached with great care. Most respondents did not see violence, including SGBV, as a part of the masculinity they would aspire to. However, they did see various forms of violence as a consequence of certain situations, pressures and expectations from society, which are themselves in part created by ideas of masculinity. From this evidence base, the research recommends that key actors enable young men to build on positive characteristics associated with masculinity to contribute to a less violent society in which men, women and sexual and gender minorities (SGM) enjoy the same rights and opportunities, and in which there is space to address the fears and challenges young men are facing. Furthermore, social, political, and economic conditions need to be established that encourage non-violence and gender equality.

This report presents the findings of research carried out by Saferworld in collaboration with The Society Touch and Youth Development Centre. The qualitative research was carried out in Sunsari and Sankhuwasabha districts in Eastern Nepal, using a participatory learning approach involving young men and boys aged 16–25 years, complemented by conversations with other community members, including women and girls. This approach allowed for in-depth conversations and reflections on often sensitive issues with and between the young men, who at the end of the research started to question some of their attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls. The findings are context specific and cannot be generalised across Nepal.

Key findings

Young men constantly have to negotiate varied and often contradictory expectations by family members and society, and by young men themselves. In addition, expectations and aspirations the young men may have also often clash with what is realistically possible in the current context, with high levels of unemployment and few opportunities to earn sufficient money. This is something young men are struggling with, which often results in frustration.

Young men need to negotiate notions of masculinities in an ever-changing context in which gender roles transform as well. Many of them are in favour of gender equality, and appreciate emerging opportunities for women and girls; some even mention that they would be happy for their wife to contribute significantly to the family income, a traditionally male domain. However, they also struggle with translating concepts of gender equality into practice. They fear being ridiculed by society if they are seen as giving too much freedom and autonomy to their wives, sisters or girlfriends, and fear losing their own social status and prestige. There is a lack of modern-day role models – both male and female – in the communities, from which young men and boys can learn what equitable and non-violent gender relations can look like.

Showing bravery and courage is important for young men and boys. While this does not have to be linked to violent behaviour, it implies an ability and willingness to fight and defend oneself or others, and to take risk. At the same time, while not appearing brave will be seen as weakness, taking too much risk and being seen as careless or irresponsible, for example by being drunk or taking drugs, is equally inappropriate.

There are some fairly traditional expectations in men as sons, husbands and fathers that can be considered as key aspects of successful masculinity in the research sites. Men are expected to get married and have a wife; to carry on the family by having children (ideally at least one male child); to be the breadwinner and provide financially for the family; to be the carer for ageing parents; and to continue family traditions and carry out important family rituals. As long as a man can fulfil these responsibilities he enjoys a certain level of acceptance by society. However, this also means that the pressure on men is high to meet those expectations, and not all men succeed.

One factor that makes it so challenging for young men to meet expectations is the changing economic context with high levels of unemployment. Young men who do not find a job (or none that suits them) are often quite frustrated, and pass their time hanging around with their friends, often teasing women and girls passing by; or drinking alcohol. As they are not able to sustain a family, many of them postpone getting married, which often adds to their frustration. Many young men who cannot find a job feel useless and a burden to society.

One way out for many is to migrate to a city or abroad to find employment. Young men name migration as a step in their lives, similar to getting married or religious or cultural ceremonies and rites of passage. While migration can result in economic gains for some of the men migrating, it comes at a cost. Many family problems are linked to migration as men cannot fulfil the role of taking care of and managing the family while they are away. There is a lot of distrust in the wives who remain at home as they are suspected to have extra marital affairs; and respondents reported that domestic violence is often a consequence of these family tensions.

Traditional expectations towards men reinforce structural violence. Men are expected to protect family honour by protecting the reputation of the women in their family. This is often done by controlling women and limiting their freedom of movement and autonomy. This is particularly true for sisters and wives who are often tightly controlled. The views of young men on women who occupy other roles in a young man's life are quite different. Mothers are highly valued and respected, and they have a lot of influence on younger boys. Girlfriends are often seen as status symbol, and many young men feel that having a lot of girlfriends adds to their reputation among peers. However,

girlfriends are often objectified and passed on to other friends; and they are often not seen as suitable to be married.

Many young men in the research had either been exposed to violence as victims or witnesses or had perpetrated it themselves. While there is acceptance of certain forms and levels of violence, including physical violence, violence is not a precondition to being a man. In fact, there were several examples of non-violent masculinities, and cases where violence that was perceived as inappropriate was seen as not manly.

The forms of SGBV that are most common are verbal and gestural sexual harassment, often euphemistically referred to as 'eve-teasing'. While some of the eve-teasing starts as what can be considered harmless flirting, the line to harassment is often over-stepped, especially if boys or young men are in groups. Eve-teasing happens particularly frequently on market days or during festivals when women and girls from locations other than the young men's homes come to town. This form of sexual harassment is a major concern for women and girls as it not only makes them feel uncomfortable and can damage their reputation but also because it can turn into physical SGBV, including rape.

With the advance of information technology such as mobile phones and the Internet and social media sites such as Facebook, new spaces for sexual harassment have opened up. Young men use this technology to stalk women and girls by constantly sending them text messages or calling them, or by texting messages or videos with explicit sexual content. They also share intimate pictures or films of girls without their consent, which can have severe consequences for women and girls in a traditional society such as Nepal. Young men also use mobile phones to control their girlfriends and wives, or they check their girlfriend's or wife's phones for suspicious numbers or text messages.

Domestic violence and rape are the most common forms of physical SGBV reported by respondents. Domestic violence is often seen as legitimate by both men and women if the woman is perceived as not having fulfilled her responsibilities or if she is seen as challenging gender roles and undermining her husband's patriarchal authority. Suspicions of extra-marital affairs are also often leading to domestic violence. Participants in the research reported that rape happened frequently in the research locations. While it was not seen as acceptable, most people, both women and men, thought it was usually the woman's or girl's fault if she was raped. There was a notion that a 'good woman doesn't get raped', so someone who had been raped must by default have behaved indecently, or worn clothes that arouse men, thereby making her responsible for their actions. Female survivors of rape face social stigma that makes it difficult for them to report or talk about what happened to them; they are often victimised twice. In many cases, the perpetrators do not face consequences, neither from society nor from law enforcement agencies, resulting in a lack of deterrence.

Male violence against women is not the only form of SGBV: women can also perpetrate violence on the basis of gender, and men can also be victims/survivors. Furthermore, SGMs can be particularly vulnerable to violence on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Violence between women happens at different levels: for example, tensions between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law have been quoted as very common, potentially resulting in mental or physical violence. Women also reinforce gender stereotypes and structural violence, for example by educating their daughters to obey their husbands or encouraging their sons to 'manage their wife'. Women were also contributing to the stigmatisation of survivors of SGBV – even some women who were expected to be role models for female empowerment. Several cases were mentioned where women had turned violent against their husbands, especially if the husband was seen as not living up to the wife's expectations of what was supposed to be a 'good husband'.

Conflict between men often turns physical, whether on an inter-personal or group level. Group violence, involving gangs or youth groups aligned to political parties, is common; while it is officially condemned by society, young men feel that it is tolerated, if not encouraged by political parties.

Young men struggle with social and economic expectations and pressures, or with violence and discrimination they are facing. However, they often don't know how to deal with problems and anxieties. Young men mentioned various forms of self-inflicted violence as a response; and suicide among boys was described as fairly common.

Young men's knowledge of the situation of and issues facing SGMs is limited particularly in more remote places, but young men in the research expressed a level of acceptance towards them and did not display aggressive views. SGMs themselves, however, shared that they were facing high levels of harassment and violence, including rape, and that they were often treated inappropriately by institutions and service providers. They attributed lower levels of harassment in some locations to better awareness on the situation and needs of SGM. Thus, in spite of their legal recognition in Nepal, and while this may help to reduce discrimination, it remains very challenging for SGM to be accepted by society and receive appropriate services from institutions and service providers.

The purpose of this research is to understand young men's perceptions of the links between masculinities and violence: as such it cannot provide objective evidence of a causal link between the two. What the findings demonstrate is a clear disparity between expectations of masculinity held by young men and their communities on the one hand, and their lived realities on the other. Many of the young men who participated in the research felt that this struggle to achieve masculine ideals which are unattainable to the majority of men and boys may make them more likely to resort to violence. In particular, these may combine with patriarchal attitudes toward women, girls and SGMs to create and perpetuate SGBV. This suggests a need to re-examine prevalent notions of masculinities and promote masculine ideals which favour gender equality and non-violence, as well as addressing the social and economic conditions which make it difficult for both women and men to meet their basic needs.

Recommendations

The report comes up with a number of recommendations that point towards the implications of this research on policy and practice, including:

- **Young men should be involved in efforts to address gender inequality and SGBV, and effectiveness might increase by bringing men, women and SGM together.** Young men are part of the gender equation, and need to be involved in processes transforming gender relations. It is also useful to bring men, women and SGM together whenever possible to work jointly towards gender transformation, though this may be in addition to work with women-only, men-only or SGM-only groups. The Government of Nepal, donor agencies, NGOs and INGOs and other stakeholders should broaden target groups and involve young men and boys where appropriate. They should also provide additional funding and resources to programmes addressing men's specific needs.
- **Existing awareness-raising initiatives and efforts to reduce or prevent SGBV should be revised.** Many awareness-raising initiatives on gender equality and SGBV have been carried out in recent years. The report findings suggest that while awareness-raising activities are important and increase understanding on certain issues, they do not reach everyone, particularly in remote locations, and do not necessarily result in behaviour change. In the light of these findings, government stakeholders, donors, CSOs, including NGOs and INGOs should critically revise their awareness-raising strategies. It is important to get a better understanding of what works, how, and why; how geographically remote locations can be reached; and how the message brought across through awareness raising can result in behavioural change.

- **Further efforts to reduce social stigmatisation of survivors of sexual violence and to address their needs are required.** Women and girls are often blamed for inviting sexual violence upon themselves. Stigmatisation of survivors of SGBV is deeply engrained in people's thinking, and efforts need to be undertaken to change that. This might involve a coordinated long-term multi-stakeholder campaign or a sensitisation of government institutions to treat survivors of SGBV adequately and respectfully. Services supporting survivors of SGBV, such as counselling or safe houses, as well as more long-term support for survivors who flee abusive environments need to be in place.

- **Non-violent behaviour should be promoted from a young age.** To move away from violent behaviour and towards a non-violent solution to problems and tensions, it is important to work with children from a young age. Strategies and programmes should be strengthened that allow reflection and behaviour change, and non-violent behaviour should be promoted in kindergartens and at schools. Concepts of peace and non-violence should be included in the curriculum. Furthermore, leaders from civil society and political parties should strengthen dialogue to jointly renounce violence as a means of achieving social and political changes, and refrain from mobilising children and youth for political actions that could potentially turn violent.

- **All forms of SGBV need to be challenged, including 'eve-teasing' and sexual harassment through mobile phones and social media.** Measures should be taken to decrease acceptance of SGBV of any form, including practices such as eve-teasing. Actors such as local authorities, Nepal Police, schools, mothers' groups or youth clubs could be involved in initiatives to raise awareness that eve-teasing constitutes sexual harassment. Mobile phones and social media can be used to raise awareness on SGBV, but measures should be taken to discourage the use of these spaces for sexual harassment and to curb this type of crime, including by strengthening implementation of the Cybercrime Act (2004).

- **Security provision and implementation of legislation that prohibits sexual harassment and other forms of SGBV should be strengthened.** To increase deterrence regarding SGBV, mechanisms such as the Nepal Police's Women and Children service Centres (WCSCs) should be strengthened further, and more women police officers should be deployed. Police should have more presence in remote locations outside the district headquarters (including WCSCs), have gender balanced staff – if possible also including officers from SGMs – and include female senior-ranking officers with strong decision-making capacities to effectively deal with cases of SGBV. At the same time, working conditions for and social acceptance of women police officers need to be improved. Nepal Police should actively reach out to youth to reduce SGBV. It is important that legislation, such as the Domestic Violence Act or the Sexual Harassment in Workplace bill, is enacted and proactively implemented by the security providers and relevant authorities as a cross-organisational effort to reduce SGBV in all areas.

- **Measures to address issues facing SGMs need to be part of gender policy and programming.** Government stakeholders, donors NGOs, and INGOs should broaden their understanding of gender, and pay specific attention to SGMs whose voices are often not heard. Government institutions as well as the private sector need to be sensitised regarding the needs of SGMs, and services need to be provided in a professional and gender-sensitive way. Schools should talk about sexual orientation and gender identity to reduce ignorance and improve acceptance from a young age.

- **The link between migration and domestic violence needs to be understood and addressed.** There is strong evidence that migration (mainly of the husband) can lead to tensions at the family level, which many respondents believed contributed to increasing the likelihood of domestic violence. Further research is required to get a better understanding of social implications of migration in Nepal, including for SGBV, and of the scale of the problem.

- **Creating opportunity for men to earn livelihoods and perform positive masculinities is vital.** In addition to changing attitudes about gender, it is important to change the social and material circumstances which are creating considerable challenges and stress among young men. CSOs, including NGOs and INGOs, donor agencies or government stakeholders should invest in job creation and building young men's entrepreneurial skills so they can build livelihoods which meet their economic needs and provide a sense of dignity, responsibility and fulfilment.

1

Introduction

THIS REPORT PRESENTS FINDINGS of qualitative research conducted by Saferworld, in collaboration with The Society Touch (TST) and Youth Development Centre (YDC), exploring notions of masculinities among young men and boys, and asking how masculinities are linked to violence, including to the widespread practices of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in selected districts in Eastern Nepal. In recent years, publicised cases of SGBV, especially of rape and domestic violence against women and girls, have sparked off protests in South Asia including Nepal, with people demanding the government take stronger action against SGBV. A statement issued by the United Nations (UN) in January 2013 read, "The wide public attention that is now being generated has created momentum that we cannot allow to simply subside. It must be supported if real change is to occur in Nepal and globally."[1] The challenge, however, is what to do about it. This report is situated within this context of momentum, and it is hoped that it will contribute to and further strengthen efforts to reduce SGBV in Nepal.

Analysing the findings from field research in two sites in Eastern Nepal, Sunsari and Sankhuwasabha,[2] this report highlights boys' and young men's patterns of behaviour, perceptions and experiences of gender norms, masculinities and violence, including SGBV. Complementing the views of young men and boys themselves are the perspectives of other community members, including women and girls. This report uses the concept of masculinities to better understand connections between men, gender, power and violence. Overall, it aims to further understanding of different notions of masculinities in Nepal with a specific focus on its violent as well as non-violent forms and performances. Our research explores the implications of locally specific social change that is altering gender roles in both research sites, creating tensions between 'traditional' and 'modern' masculinities. Finally, recommendations to key actors outline how boys and men could be supported to reduce violence, and how non-violent behaviour could be strengthened to address the issue of SGBV in Nepal.

This report is composed of four chapters. After this introduction, chapter two provides an overview of the existing literature on masculinities and SGBV in Nepal. Chapter three presents the fieldwork findings exploring aspects of masculinity in our research sites, including various links and associations between masculinity and violence.

1 2013 'UN Nepal Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in Nepal (2013)' www.un.org.np/headlines/un-nepal-statement-violence-against-women-and-girls-nepal

2 Saferworld recently carried out an assessment on a similar topic in selected districts of the Mid- and Far West of Nepal. Some of the findings, especially concerning how young men see women and who they see carrying responsibility for sexual harassment and rape, showed remarkable similarities with the responses from the districts covered in this research, but also some interesting differences, such as that the notion of masculinity among young men in the Far West was based on the role of a man as a pacifist, someone who is educated and wise and deals with disputes in a non-violent manner. The way girlfriends were seen by the participants also varied, as the respondents from the Far and Mid-West of Nepal felt that the purpose of seeking a girlfriend was to search for a potential wife.

Finally chapter four concludes the report and makes recommendations based on research findings.

Background and rationale

SGBV, especially against women and girls, is a major social and security issue in Nepal. News of rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, accusations of witchcraft, trafficking of women and girls, and other practices such as *badi*,[3] child marriage, dowry, and son preference have been appearing regularly over the last couple of decades, particularly with the growth and expansion of media, civil society organisations (CSOs) including Nepali Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in the country. Although the systematic study on SGBV – violence targeted at individuals and groups on the basis of sex and/or gender – is relatively limited in Nepal, a number of studies have indicated that this is a major challenge (see below).

Sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is "violence that is perpetrated on the basis of gender, this often includes sexual violence and may be committed against women, men, boys, girls or 'third gender' people".[4]

Gender refers to the roles and relationships, attitudes, behaviours and values that society ascribes to men and women and to relationships between women and men.[5]

Gender also refers to "the cultural and social role and learned identity, which is linked to being a man, woman, boy or girl in a specific context."[6] The word gender in Nepali can often be quite tricky as usually *laingikta* refers to gender based on sexes, however, when referring to gender as a social construct, *samaajik laingikta*, is more appropriate in Nepali.

It is widely acknowledged among scholars, activists, CSOs including Nepali NGOs and INGOs and some government stakeholders, that SGBV is embedded in patriarchy and the domination by men it sanctions. Initiatives and interventions have mainly focused on empowerment of women and addressing SGBV through the better enforcement of law and order. Most initiatives and analysis on SGBV are guided by the idea that men are the perpetrators and women are the victims. While it is certainly true that men are often the perpetrators and women are often the victims or survivors, this binary understanding does not enable interventions to reflect the socially constructed nature of gender identities; nor does it take into consideration changes over time. Also, it does not tell us why some men are not involved in SGBV while others are. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that many women themselves accept and exercise power sanctioned by patriarchy, and are also sometimes directly or indirectly perpetrators of violence against men and other women as often evidenced in cases of power relations between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Likewise, there is SGBV between men. Finally, it ignores dimensions of gender that go beyond heterosexual women and men; sexual and gender minorities (SGM)[7] are frequently targeted for SGBV. Furthermore, an overwhelming focus within the debate on SGBV has been on the 'physical and sexual' act of violence without locating them in the context of 'normalised' everyday symbolic and structural violence shared by men, women, and SGM who sanction violence and domination in the first place.

3 The Badi are a Dalit subgroup who are often perceived to be engaged in sex work.

4 Adapted from Saferworld – Gender, Peace and Security Resource – May 2012

5 IHRICON/Saferworld (2011), *Training of Trainers Manual on Gender and Security for the Media and Civil Society in Nepal*.

6 Internal Saferworld report (2012), *Gender, Peace and Security Resource*.

7 SGM in Nepal refers to a very diverse group with a wide range of identities, going beyond the concept of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) often used in other contexts. Despite this diversity the young male participants within our research tended to talk about SGM in a quite reductive way, using the term 'third gender' to refer to different aspects of SGM. This is partly because in many parts of remote Nepal LGBTI are still seen negatively and people call them derogatory names such as *chhakka* and *hijada*, which are insulting, and use the term *tesro lingi* interchangeably for LGBTI or anyone who displays sexual anti-social behaviour that is not in line with traditional and social norms. Thus, if respondents refer to 'third gender' in quotes, what they usually mean are SGM in general.

Symbolic violence

This report links concepts of masculinity and violence, including SGBV, in order to provide a framework in which to situate the ways in which violence was experienced and discussed in both research sites. The notion of 'symbolic violence' enables us to talk about various modes of socio-cultural violence.[8] Symbolic violence is the unnoticed or naturalised domination that everyday social practice maintains over the conscious subject. One of the key features of the concept is that those who are subjected to symbolic violence are not passive recipients but take their subjugation as given and are actually complicit in their subjugation. For this reason, the dominated or the victims or survivors of SGBV internalise domination and do not question or resist it. This helps explain why SGBV often goes unnoticed and/or is justified as a normalised social practice except in extreme cases.

What are 'masculinities'?

The term 'masculinity' is used to refer to attitudes, behaviours and attributes which are associated with maleness in a particular culture. Ideas about masculinity define what it means to be a man or a boy in a particular time and place, and vary widely across different contexts and times. Masculinity is understood here as a social construct: that is, it is not something which is innate to men and boys, but something that is created by and for each society. As gender theorist R W Connell has put it, "Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action."[9] Masculinity is defined in relation to femininity, and in patriarchal societies, masculinity is usually valued more highly than femininity.

In all societies there are multiple ideas about what it means to be a man, which are often highly contested. For this reason it has become common to refer to 'masculinities' in the plural. In most contexts there are one or more forms of masculinity that are more valued than others, sometimes referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity'.[10] Hegemonic masculinities are the standards by which other masculinities are measured. As Sanjay Srivastava states, "Patriarchy 'makes' men superior, whereas masculinity is the process of producing superior men".[11] In many contexts, the vast majority of men do not conform to a hegemonic masculinity and some even actively resist it. The valorisation of masculinities over femininities, and of some forms of masculinity over others, serves to create and perpetuate social hierarchies. Whether, why and when violence features (or not) in reinforcing these hierarchies can help understanding of how masculinities relate to SGBV. Masculinities and femininities also interact with other forms of social identities and hierarchies, for example along the lines of race, ethnicity, class, caste and religion.

The anthropologists Caroline and Filippo Osella have interpreted the theory of hegemonic masculinity within South Asia in their work on masculinities, in Kerala, Southern India.[12] They identify the 'breadwinner' ideal as the dominant form of masculinity in South Asia, which is explored further in chapter three of this report. This incorporates aspects of providing, honour, migration and work. Research findings also indicate that this ideal puts a great deal of pressure and expectations on Nepali men, expectations that they are often unable to meet.

More recently, Partners for Prevention[13] has explored notions of masculinity and violence in the Asia Pacific region, seeking, at a regional level, to better understand the scale of male-perpetrated violence and factors that lead to violent behaviour.

8 Bourdieu P (2001), *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

9 Connell R W, Messerschmidt J W (2005), 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept' *Gender Society* 2005 **19** p 829.

10 Connell R W (2005), *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

11 Srivastava S (2014), 'The cultures of Twenty Century Masculinity' in Dasgupta R K, Gokulsing K M (eds) *Masculinity and Its Challenges in India: Essays on Changing Perceptions* (North Carolina: MacFarland and Company).

12 Osella F, Osella C, (2006), *Men and Masculinities in South India* (London: Anthem Press).

13 Fulu E, Warner X, Miedema S, Jewkes R, Roselli T, Lang J (2013), 'Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific' (Bangkok: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV).

SGBV in Nepal

The amount of systematic data on the prevalence of SGBV in Nepal is slowly growing. The existing literature does not provide a comprehensive or generalisable picture of SGBV in Nepal, but provides important insights in certain districts that give an overall sense of the situation. Mostly, the existing literature focuses on specific forms of SGBV such as sexual violence, domestic violence, and trafficking, among others, and a number of studies in recent years do offer insights on the nature, extent, and impact of SGBV in Nepal.

There is significant variability in the figures relating to SGBV in various reports. For example, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has completed one of the most comprehensive household surveys focusing on SGBV in Nepal.[14] This survey, which was undertaken in four districts of Nepal, indicates that 50 per cent of women have suffered from violence during their lifetime, while 30 per cent suffered from violence within the last year.[15]

Perhaps some of the most authoritative data on SGBV come from the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2011.[16] The 2011 NDHS found that among women aged 15–49, 22 per cent had experienced physical violence and 12 per cent had experienced sexual violence at least once since age 15. Among married women, one-third had experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence from their spouse in their marital relationship, and 17 per cent had experienced it within the last 12 months. The most common form of spousal violence, experienced by 20 per cent of women who had ever been married, is being slapped. Sixteen per cent of women who were ever married reported having been pushed, shaken, or having had something thrown at them; 14 per cent have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse by their husbands even when they did not want to; and 14 per cent report that their husbands have insulted them or made them feel bad about themselves. According to the 2011 NDHS, spousal violence in Nepal varies across age groups, employment status, number of living children, marital status and duration, ecological zone, education, and wealth status. For example, spousal violence was reported more in Terai than in hill and mountain zones and more among uneducated women and women in the lowest wealth quintile. Spousal violence was related to education. Fewer wives experienced spousal violence if their husbands were educated, but if both were uneducated the likelihood of violence was greatest. If the husband frequently consumes alcohol in high quantities, the chances of spousal violence were greater. The spousal violence increased linearly with the number of controlling behaviours displayed by the husband. NDHS found no difference in the experience of spousal violence according to women's participation in household decision making.

Finally, reports published by Saferworld and International Alert together with a consortium of local NGOs in 2013 and 2014 indicated that, while there is a general perception that security has improved in Nepal, women have a sense of declining security, particularly in relation to SGBV.[17] This was expressed as an issue across a range of settings and interlinked issues, including: the home, the community, the cultural acceptance of patriarchy, male economic migration, and declining public security resulting in restrictions in women's freedom of movement and ability to take independent decisions for their own lives, including related to economic opportunities or employment. These reports also explore attitudes towards women's honour and how this influences women's experiences of harassment, abuse and the reluctance to report such problems.

14 Centre for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities (CREPHA) and International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) (2012) *Baseline Survey on Advancing Justice Sector Reform to Address Discrimination and Violence against Women in Four Selected Districts of Nepal*

15 The study, which was carried out in Mahotteri, Siraha, Dhading and Bardiya districts, focused on different types of violence, including emotional, physical and sexual violence.

16 Ministry of Health and Population Nepal (2011) 'Nepal Demographic and Health Survey Report 2011' (Kathmandu: New ERA and ICF International).

17 Saferworld, International Alert, *et al* (2013) 'Snapshot of Local Security and Justice Perceptions in Selected Districts of Nepal District assessment findings' (Kathmandu: Saferworld *et al* (2014)) Women's Insecurities and the Workplace in Nepal (2014).

Overall, these reports indicate that various forms of physical, non-physical and structural SGBV are a major issue in Nepal. The existing data suggest that the incidents of SGBV is increasing although it is difficult to say whether this is because of increased reporting and recording of such incidents, or whether SGBV has been generally on the rise in Nepal. Most of the studies on SGBV are of a quantitative nature, to capture the prevalence, frequency, and the nature of the violence. The existing survey-based studies rely on authoritative categories such as 'domestic violence', 'sexual violence' or 'emotional violence' that do not really allow a deeper understanding of the nature, meanings and the gender dynamics involved in SGBV. Nonetheless, existing studies clearly indicate that gender dynamics are important to the understanding of SGBV given that perpetrators are often intimate partners (including husbands), and that power appears to play a central role in SGBV. Studies indicate that most forms of SGBV occur within the household and within marriage, highlighting the centrality of patriarchy and the masculine domination it permits. However, overall, there are almost no data on notions of masculinities and their relationship to gender-based violence.

Measures against SGBV in Nepal

Nepal has legislation in place to combat SGBV and violence against women and girls. Nepal's Interim Constitution guarantees the right to safety and equality for women. The Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2009 criminalises domestic violence. The first country in South Asia to do so, Nepal adopted a five-year National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, which discusses the need for legal and institutional reform and implementation to improve access to security and justice for women, encourages awareness raising against SGBV and promotes zero tolerance. The Nepal Police (NP) have established Women and Children Service Centres (WCSC) to cater specifically for the needs of vulnerable groups. They have also adopted a gender policy in 2012, aiming at a 20 per cent quota for women recruits. However, despite the adoption of these laws and mechanisms, implementation remains weak. Impunity is continually cited as a deterrent to effective and accountable security and justice provisions, often resulting from political interference bringing about the release of individuals held by the NP for charges related to SGBV. The number of female police officers is still insufficient (currently at six to seven per cent) and they face challenges themselves because of social prejudice against women police officers and working conditions that are often not gender-sensitive. The accurate reporting of crimes related to SGBV requires comprehensive documentation and clarity on and accessibility of reporting procedures. However, this often constitutes a challenge, as WCSC are located in the district headquarters only and it is difficult to reach them, particularly for women who live further away from police posts and might not be allowed by their family to travel there (especially if the perpetrator is another family member).

Methodology

The study used qualitative research methods to explore social meanings associated with masculinities and asks whether and how these may be related to men's violence, including SGBV. Primary data were collected using different participatory methods with young men as well as key informant interviews (KII) and group discussions with community members in two research sites in Eastern Nepal: Sankhuwasabha and Sunsari. While the majority participants were young men aged 16 to 25 years, at all stages of the research the views of girls, women, adult men and, to the extent possible,[18] SGM were also collected. Furthermore, while the research was carried out using a mixed methods approach, an attempt was made to carry out the field research with an ethnographic lens, with a specific attention to culturally grounded social meanings of masculinities, power, gender norms, and violence or SGBV. This approach has facilitated an analysis of the many layers of subtext in both research sites. There were five research phases:

18 While the research sought to explore views on and from SGM, it could only do this to a limited extent for a number of reasons; for example, while SGM are officially acknowledged in Nepal, they are still facing prejudice and rejection by society, and the research team did not want to put young SGM at risk by exposing them to the PLR. Especially in Sankhuwasabha, which is fairly conservative and traditional, the challenge was to identify SGM at all. Finally, the research team did want to keep the focus of discussions open and explore what respondents identify as masculine; so while the research team probed and asked about SGM, it did not put a big focus on SGM.

Phase One – Desk research: This stage collated and analysed existing literature on masculinities and SGBV in Nepal, which provided the context in which the later research stages are situated.

Phase Two – Participatory learning research 1 (PLR1): This was carried out with young men in the research locations (14 in Sankhuwasabha and 21 in Sunsari); complemented with key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with other community members.

Participatory learning research (PLR) is based on the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. Rather than only extracting information from respondents through interviews, questionnaires, etc., it seeks to engage with them in a participatory way to generate knowledge and learn from it (see detailed Methodology in annex).

Phase Three – Youth Research: The PLR participants carried out small-scale research on topics they were interested in related to masculinities and/or violence, using simple methods developed jointly with the research team.

Phase Four – Participatory learning research 2 (PLR2): In this phase, the research team attempted to gather more in-depth information and confirm some of the findings from phase 2, working mostly with the same young men as in PLR1, again complemented by KIIs with other community members.

Phase Five – Validation: A validation workshop was held in April 2014 bringing together PLR participants from both research sites. This provided an important opportunity to explore issues that emerged in the analysis of the material collected in the previous phases.

Fifty-six interviews, five PLR exercises (of two to four days each), one validation workshop, nine focus group discussions (FGD), and nine pieces of youth research were carried out throughout the four phases of fieldwork.

Research areas

In this research Saferworld opted to focus on non-urban locations with comparable demographic composition, and locations where the common caste and/or ethnic groups are not only Brahmin and Dalits, but include other ethnic and/or caste groups. Both research sites in the two districts had Brahmin, Chhettri, Newar, Rai and Limbu populations. Sankhuwasabha and Sunsari districts[19] were chosen to enable a focus on the social and cultural similarities in both research locations. Having two sites allows comparisons between one research site in the Terai (plain), and one in the hills. The choice of the fieldwork sites was not driven by an interest in empirical generalisation, which would be impossible in any qualitative research of this kind. Rather, it was guided by an interest in gathering themes, norms, and values in specific sites.

Sankhuwasabha

Sankhuwasabha district is in the Kosi Zone in Eastern Nepal. It is a hill district with a northern border with China. The district covers 3,480 square kilometres. According to 2011/12 census, the total population of the district is 158,742 of whom 75,225 are male and 83,517 are female. The majority of the population are Hindu (43%), Kirat (29%), Buddhist (27%) and others (1%).[20] The research site's composition of caste and ethnic groups includes; Brahmin, Chhetri, Rai, Gurung, Kami, Damai, Sanyasi, Magar, Sherpa, Newar, Tamang and Limbu. Saferworld collaborated with The Society Touch, Sankhuwasabha, which is a district level NGO. The research sites in Sankhuwasabha,

19 In each district the research team focused on environments that people live and move around in, rather than on administrative areas. Thus, both research locations included youth and other respondents from a number of adjoining wards and Village Development Committees (VDCs).

20 National census report, CBS, 2011

two village development committees (VDCs) approximately two hours' walk from Chainpur, are located in a remote area. Facilities are limited in the research site, with few schools, health posts, shops or hotels in the area. During the rainy season, the sites are often not accessible by car. The major source of livelihood is agriculture. The district is also very famous for cardamom farming.

Sunsari

Sunsari district is also located in the Kosi Zone, in the eastern Terai of Nepal, south from Sankhuwasabha district. The district covers 1,257 square kilometres[21] and is divided in northern and southern sections by the East-West highway. The population of Sunsari district is 625,633 of whom 315,530 are male and 310,103 are female.[22] The majority of people in Sunsari are Hindu (77.09%), with smaller populations of Muslims with smaller populations of Muslims (11.06%) and Kirat (6.73%). The composition of caste and ethnic groups in this location includes: Brahmin, Chhetri, Rai, Limbu, Musahar, Sarki, Damai, Newar, Gurung, Tamang, Tharu and Madheshi. During the field research, Saferworld partnered with the YDC. The research site in Sunsari, a VDC approximately 30 minutes' drive from Inaruwa, is relatively more urban and developed compared to Sankhuwasabha. It has better infrastructure and access to roads, electricity, schools and markets. The major source of revenue in Sunsari is agriculture. The main crops are rice, wheat, maize, sugar cane and jute.[23] An industrial corridor runs from Duhabi in the south of the district to Dharan in the north. The main industries here are jute, cooking oil, snack foods, soap, plastic, and construction materials.

Local marketplace in Sankhuwasabha district.
© Julie Brethfeld/Saferworld.

21 District Profile Sunsari 2062, Branch Statistic Office, Inaruwa, Sunsari.
22 *Ibid*
23 *Ibid*

2

Masculinities in Eastern Nepal

SAFERWORLD'S RESEARCH IN SANKHUWASABHA AND SUNSARI found a range of factors closely associated with masculinity. While physical attributes such as muscles, chest hair and moustache were mentioned as important markers of men, participants perceived that these did not automatically produce men. They felt that masculinity had to be achieved, practised and performed in various domains such as family, work, and sexuality, and in front of others including family, peer groups, workplace, and wider community. Themes that appeared recurrently when we spoke to men about perceptions of an ideal man (known as *marda*,[24] or sometimes with a more neutral connotation *purush*) revolved around continuous pressures to prove oneself as a man. Depending on the context and expectations, there are multiple and sometimes conflicting ideas about what it means to be a man. In both the study areas, notions of masculinities were infused not only with power, control and entitlement but also with honour, respect and nurturing. Balancing these various attributes seems important and at the same time challenging for men.

Physical appearance of men

The physical aspects of masculinity are the most visual and obvious, and were consistently discussed throughout the research.[25] For example, in a number of discussions that took place about what young men's bodies should look like or be, ideas of strength, muscles or weight emerged. The young men in our study felt an expectation that their bodies should look a certain way in order to be viewed as attractive by peers or girls. There was a perception by some that while having a 'clean heart' was important "your friends will first look at your face, you need to be good-looking enough."[26] The following statement in a PLR in Sunsari illustrates these ideas of a desirable male body, a view that was shared widely:

Young men should be well built, strong, have good physiques, and should not be fat.[27]

24 In his fieldwork in the middle hills, anthropologist Jeevan Sharma ((2007), *Mobility, Pathology and Livelihoods: an ethnography of forms of mobility in/from Nepal* (PhD thesis. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh)) has looked at how different terms were used to talk about men, in relation to migration. For example, the term lahure was mainly used for those who went to work in a foreign army and also of the men who went to work in the Gulf and South East Asian countries in recent years.

25 Such insights are also explored by anthropologist Laura Ahearn ((2004), *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters and Social Change in Nepal* (New Delhi: Adarsh Books)) in her study of gender and social change in a hills village in Nepal. Among the hill ethnic groups, including Magars, Hindu high castes such as Bahuns were seen as physically weak and neither willing nor able to fight. The idea of physical strength and 'bravery' associated with the army was central to Magar idea of masculinity.

26 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

27 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

There was a consistent weight element to this, indicating that in some regards young men are increasingly having to respond to the same pressures to have bodies that look a certain way that women have been negotiating for some time.

Clothing was also a key way in which participants viewed being seen as 'cool' or 'fashionable' as opposed to 'backward'. There was a general trend in terms of wearing modern clothes, which was shaped by young men's consumption of television and the internet, or by what they saw when they went to the nearby towns, especially Dharan and Kathmandu. Young men liked wearing torn jeans, bangles and rings, as well as getting tattoos. It was a widespread practice to visit barbers' shops to have different types of hairstyle and hair colour.

Young men attempted to establish a masculine identity through their clothing and hairstyle. Often this was linked to the desire to be seen as 'important' or 'tough', being part of a certain group, or resembling a person's male role model. A young man in a group discussion in Sunsari commented:

When you wear a ring on your hand you look like a punk and society thinks that you are a Don.[28] *This makes the confidence of that youth stronger.*

Indeed, adults often associated certain types of fashion with specific characteristics; for example, boys with long hair or ear studs were often viewed as criminal. Fashion is linked to consumption and new forms of consumption are creating opportunities as well as tensions in relation to physical and appearance aspects of masculinity. To consume in certain ways was an important part of proving one's maleness, but it also shaped hierarchies between young men, as those who lack money could be visually distinguished from the others.

Negotiating notions of masculinities

Expectations of a man's characteristics, attitudes and behaviour were manifold. These include intelligence and education, honesty, kindness, friendliness, and readiness to help others. This is also shown in professions many of the young men aspired to, such as becoming a doctor, social worker or teacher. Another important quality in young men was respect towards older people. One of the participants in a PLR in Sunsari explains:

… to earn that respect, we have to do good things, respect older people, respect grandfather and grandmother.[29]

These aspects were emphasised both by the young men and by other community members, including mothers and girls who wanted their sons or husband to be respectful, well behaved and educated.

A critical attribute of a 'man' that was consistently discussed in our research was his bravery, courage and guts (*himmat*), which emerged throughout all aspects of the fieldwork. As a male participant in a PLR in Sankhuwasabha noted:

Bravery is extremely important. One needs bravery. One needs to be courageous to do any kind of work. If you're not courageous, it's not good enough.[30]

Guts, or courage, is a quality required of men in many situations. Participants often linked bravery to physical strength, as bodily capabilities are the means by which bravery or courage could be proven or illustrated. For example, during a PLR in Sankhuwasabha one participant responded to the question, "What are the qualities you like about men?" as follows:

28 Here 'Don' means a man of social and economic significance, perhaps due to illegal means.
29 Saferworld Interview, Sunsari, 29 October 2013.
30 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 4 September 2013.

Bravery, because if there is any problem then that has to be resolved. Men should be physically brave so they can deal with any difficult circumstance.[31]

Here we see being 'physically brave' as suggesting a willingness to use force (or violence) to solve problems. At the same time, another young male research subject highlighted the importance of keeping calm and helping others in some way:

Whenever a man faces any trouble, he should face them with strong guts (*courage*). *He should do that calmly. Also, if someone is in need, he should help them.*[32]

Similarly, the notion of bravery or courage discussed in the extract below illustrates for this male participant that courage not only relies on physical attributes but also on mental attributes and strength:

Women have less courage and they cannot perform physically difficult tasks. However, a man is strong mentally even if he has a physical disability. Men are physically and mentally strong. We made the model of Bhakti Thapa[33] *because he is popular. To fight, one should have courage. Men have more courage than women.*[34]

Therefore, bravery (and cowardice) can also be dependent on mental strength. Bravery then becomes detached from being simply manifested in physical attributes and becomes something broader, something that can be proven in a range of ways.

Participants in the PLRs often made connections between an 'ideal man' and historical figures such as Prithivi Narayan Shah[35] or Bhakti Thapa, highlighting their contribution to unifying or consolidating Nepal or protect one's territory from external threats. While asking to draw ideal men, participants spoke about Bhakti Thapa, who wears a crown and on his back a shield (*dhal*) to defend himself: he was a warrior and fought for the nation. Youth participants said that they had read about PN Shah when they were in school and were highly impressed by his personality. They believe that a man must be courageous like PN Shah, commenting:

He fought battles, conquered places, and unified Nepal. He has his sword and Khukuri (a type of Nepali knife). *His finger is saying, "I unified this nation", but it's also a symbol for his bravery and courage.*[36]

Another modern-day role model mentioned in Sunsari was football player Mesut Özil, who was admired for being handsome and for his qualities at leading a team.

While the participants did not directly speak about use of weapons or violence as an important attribute of masculinity, many of their examples of ideal men were people who were notorious for using violence, which was seen as justified for the protection of others. Youth opined that a man should have a *khukuri* but should not use it against other persons. However, if people came and tried to cause harm, then a man should be brave enough to fight against them. One male participant commented:

In a fight, the courageous one will always move forward to beat other boys.[37]

In the opinion of a female respondent, young men illustrated their bravery through fighting and violence:

They [*boys*] *fight to show their bravery. They don't have tolerance like girls have. If they were able to tolerate, then no fight would take place. They need to demonstrate their masculinity by being involved in wrong things.*[38]

31 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 4 September 2013.
32 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
33 Bhakti Thapa (1741–1815) is a senior military commander (*sardar*) who fought in the Anglo-Nepal War. He is considered a national hero in Nepal, due to winning various battles in which he displayed great bravery.
34 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
35 Prithvi Narayan Shah (1723–1775) was a member of the Shah dynasty of the Gorkha kingdom. He unified Nepal and became the first King of Nepal.
36 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12–15 September 2013.
37 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, October 28, 2013.
38 Saferworld Interview, Sankhuwasabha, 27 November 2013.

This illustrates the link between notions of bravery and violence or fighting, mostly in relation to violence between men. Despite these views that bravery could be proven through violence and aggression, it is important to note that there were contrasting views in our research. For some young men, it was possible to show one's courage through deciding not to be violent:

I went to my relatives' marriage [*wedding*]. *… Then, four or five boys came up to me. They were drunk. … They were continuously attacking me with harsh and foul words. I lost my temper but I kept calm. They were four guys so they could have beaten me badly. So, I thought that I should keep my patience. There is a saying: "If you act tough, you will have to face tough things. If you act small, you will be a hero."* (In Nepali: *thulo bhaye dhulo bhaencha, sano bhaye rano bhaencha*).[39]

Dialogue was seen as another means to resolve problems peacefully:

Resolving through dialogue is an act of courage, rather than fighting with fists or weapons.[40]

3D man: The 3D man exercise aims to explore key features and characteristics of what is considered an 'ideal man' – and what is not. The male participants were divided into small groups and play dough (colour clay) was distributed. They were asked to form their ideal man by using the clay. The model was supposed to depict physical features but could also show other traits, including what a man wears, does, etc. Young men were also expected to think about the attitude and behaviour such an ideal man would have. Once each group had formed their ideal man, they were asked to 'introduce' their man to the others and to explain why they had formed him in this way. In the discussion, physical or non-physical attributes and characteristics, his attitude and behaviour, including towards other men, women and sexual and gender minorities (SGM), could be explored. Participants were also asked about men who do not resemble this 'model man' – how they were seen and perceived.

Participants from Sunsari modelled their 'ideal' man on Mesut Özil (above left), a German football player. Participants from Sankhuwasabha chose Prithvi N. Shah as their 'ideal man'.

39 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.
40 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

Complementing this view, one male participant noted there were right and wrong ways to use bravery:

We should be brave but that should be within limits. If one is brave but gets involved in only wrong things, then that is not good. One should not do bad things. If one is brave and does wrong things, then he is called a spoiled man.[41]

Men were expected to take risks, and those who shy away from risks were ridiculed and perceived to be not manly enough or to be weak. Those who avoid or run away from direct confrontation or fights were labelled as *kathar* (coward) or *chhakka* ('not man enough', an adjective often used for transgender persons). The research showed that young men found it difficult to judge the appropriate level of risk. The balance between risk and *buddhi* (assessment of risk) was important for a man. Drinking within certain limits, for example for ritual purposes or for group solidarity, enhanced a man's reputation, while drinking too much or being known as a drunkard did not. Getting the balance right and taking the right level of risk seems to be quite difficult particularly for young men, not least as the gendered expectations against which such balances could be measured are constantly shifting.

At the same time, men emphasised that it was important to be 'wise' while taking risks and one who was involved in self-harm (for example, excessive use of alcohol or drugs) was not an ideal man. While substance abuse was common, and young men were involved in consumption of alcohol and drugs, excessive dependence on substance abuse was seen negatively by the young men in our study. For example, one male participant in Sunsari noted that the pressures to not go out at night were equal for both young men and women, as both are responsible for the families' prestige or honour:

Because, if you [*young men and women*] *go out during the night time, it is related to prestige. The night does not belong to us, it belongs to others. We have to be careful in case our prestige gets a bad reputation because of young boys and girls going out at night.*[42]

Boys playing carom board near the marketplace in Sankhuwasabha, one of their popular leisure activities.
© Julie Brethfeld/Saferworld.

41 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
42 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

Both male and female participants agreed that men had to impose self-discipline themselves and discipline their family to uphold familial and community values and respect. Educated men often were looked at favourably as having high levels of honour. Young men were expected to utilise their time properly, especially when they were young teenagers, as it was perceived that they could be vulnerable to peer pressure and thereby develop bad habits such as taking drugs and/or stealing. One male participant commented:

If you choose the right path then, your future is good. But if you are involved in drugs, then you will follow the wrong path. Other young children might not know what is right or wrong themselves, and therefore get on the wrong path, if they don't know the implications of what they are doing. It's that stage of life when you are a teenager.[43]

While many men frequently drank, smoked, got involved in teasing women and girls, took drugs, and spent time outside of their home at night and missed school, these attributes were not seen favourably by the broader community members and were condemned. Most participants also discussed crime negatively:

If someone is involved in looting and dacoit, the prestige of his family and society will go down. People will start to say that this village belongs to looters.[44]

Such behaviours could adversely affect a man and his family's honour, as being involved in crime was seen as having a clear negative impact on prestige.

Family responsibilities and masculinities

The family continues to play an important role in the lives of young men. A man's family is supposed to provide support, love and appreciation. At the same time, there are also expectations of men as sons, husbands and fathers, some of which seem to be aspects that are considered as crucial to be seen as a 'real man'.

Men are expected to get married and have a wife; to carry on the family by having children (ideally at least one male child); to be the breadwinner; to be the carer for ageing parents; and to continue family traditions and carry out important family rituals. These were seen as the biggest *jimmewari* (responsibility) for men, and can probably be considered as key aspects of successful masculinities in the research sites. With this responsibility also comes a degree of power or authority to make decisions for family members, especially women. At the same time, with a changing context and more opportunities coming up for women, men struggle to achieve those responsibilities.

Men as husbands

Marriage was discussed consistently in our research as a vital part of men's lives and as a marker of the transition to being considered a man and not a boy. Marriage is the process by which men become responsible and creates a context in which men are expected to provide. There was a perception that before marriage, young men could be carefree and indulge in any activities, and that getting married meant that a man had more responsibilities towards their family.

There was a general perception that marriage practices were changing with more young men and women getting involved in 'love marriages'[45] and choosing their partners (as opposed to having an arranged marriage). The extent and implications of the changes in marriage practice were discussed at some length by an older, married male respondent in Sunsari:

43 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 29 November 2013.

44 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

45 Conversations with participants indicate that what is referred to as 'love marriage' relates to choosing one's own partner instead of having the parents make the decision, rather than knowing each other well. Often, people who get married have not known each other very long (regardless of whether they have a 'love' or arranged marriage).

My marriage is an arranged marriage. My parents selected a bride for me and I was happy with their decision. This love marriage trend – it has been 19–20 years since it started: before we never heard of this. I think if people marry at a young age there is not much stability in their marriage. Nowadays, children who are 14–15 years old are eloping with their partner and getting married – this is not good. They get married in their teenage years and then separate after a few years or even months – they are not mature in their decisions and when they don't have adult supervision they do bad things and get into bad habits. Arranged marriage is about families selecting partners knowing what is best for you, and that is why there is less risk of a break-up. Also family pressure is there to make things work, which is why they don't get divorced easily and try to make it work.[46]

While these changes potentially enable young men and women to have more autonomy and take decisions for their own lives,[47] there was a perception that the process of moving away from arranged marriages comes along with less stable family structures and relationships, and that family break-ups and divorces have become more frequent. This threatens the position of men who are supposed to manage and have authority over their family, especially their wives.

Despite the cultural importance of marriage to masculinity, there were a number of problems that were discussed in our research. While marriage was an important goal, men were reluctant to get married without proper employment, property or land ownership as this jeopardised their role as providers, and their chances of finding a wife in the first place. Young men felt pressure to be 'someone' (*kehi banne*), that is, to complete their education and find employment before they could get married and eventually start a family. Men emphasised that it was important to find work before getting married. A number of participants in a PLR in Sunsari commented:

We have to earn, and only then should we marry. We should not give sorrow to others' daughter.[48]

Therefore, if men are unemployed and unable to earn, they are unable to marry and make this part of the transition towards adult masculinity. Marriage then becomes another source of pressure on young men to find employment and to earn a certain level of income.

Extra-marital affairs were also discussed frequently during our fieldwork. There was an assumption by the young men and other community members that women were likely to have affairs. This was often linked to migration and husbands being away, which created a situation in which affairs were seen as more likely:

Due to unemployment, youths are going abroad for work. People are earning money, which is a good thing. However, due to people migrating abroad for work, there are more cases of extra-marital affairs.[49]

This widespread suspicion against wives of migrants leads to a lot of mistrust within families, and often to a perception among migrating husbands that they need to tightly control their wives, or ask other family members to do so. While there was strong condemnation of women being suspected of having extra-marital affairs (see chapter 3), affairs emanating from the husband's side were not discussed in the same way: these sorts of relationships were viewed as less problematic and resulted in fewer negative comments.

If a husband sleeps with another woman and gets involved in an extra-marital affair, the society does not take that seriously. But, if the wife does the same, then that is bad.[50]

46 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 29 November 2013.

47 However, several cases have been mentioned during the research in which the women eloping with men to have a 'love marriage' were very young and sometimes in a relationship of dependency with the man they were to get married to (for example, they were underage pupils getting married to their teacher). Thus, to what extend the level of decision-making and independence is really increasing depends on the specific case.

48 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

49 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

50 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

This quote from a PLR in Sunsari indicates that this is an area in which there were quite different consequences for men and women for behaving in the same way.

It was through the role of providing and caring that men sought to gain respect not only from their family but also from the extended family and community, being able to sustain their family economically was key here. In addition to economic responsibilities, which will be elaborated on further below, men in our study have caring responsibilities, particularly in their households, and for many participants this responsibility as they understood it included an element of 'management', not only of financial resources but in some instances also of members of the household. For example, a male participant in a focus group in Sankhuwasabha mentioned:

But as a man, our main responsibility is managing our wife to maintain peace and harmony at home.[51]

Specific words such as *namarda* or *hutihara* or *lafanga*[52] are used to talk about men who cannot fulfil this responsibility, particularly in relation to not working. Both male and female participants spoke about men who did not display 'manly' qualities or behaviours, as a quote from a female participant illustrates:

[Namarda] *is good for nothing. He doesn't have good character, he drinks alcohol, and does no work at all. He is totally dependent on someone else to fulfil his basic needs… He is someone who the society does not look up to, and people talk badly about him and his behaviour.*[53]

Some participants drew distinctions between the responsibilities of men and women. For example, a female participant in Sankhuwasabha stated:

The men's responsibility is to look after his family and support them financially. The women's responsibility is to do household work and take care of children.[54]

However, such views were not always shared by other women and men, including related to whether women should work to contribute to family income (see below).

Men as fathers and sons

It should be noted that there were a range of responses and interpretations of the responsibilities that were specific to men, and by far not all of them are of an economic nature. A man is also expected to have children and to provide a (usually male) heir to continue the family. If a man is not able to have any children, this was seen quite negatively by a number of respondents. A male teacher in Sankhuwasabha gave the following example of a man he knew and the negative consequences for this man as he was unable to have children:

There is one man in our village [*who is seen as* namarda]. *He is a very good man but doesn't have any children. Everyone makes fun of him and satirises him. They try to dominate him.*[55]

A female respondent also commented on the views that people have of men who cannot have children:

That is a problem related to his health. But people don't understand it and blame him as namarda.[56]

51 Saferworld Focus Group, Sankhuwasabha, 3 September 2013.

52 The word '*namarda*' can be used in variety of contexts, including if a married man cannot have children, if he lets his wife make decisions, or for a man who does not show courage when needed etc. '*Hutihara*' means a man who has not been able to achieve anything in his life. '*Lafanga*' means a useless man, who roams around and does not bear any responsibility.

53 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

54 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

55 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 27 November 2013.

56 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 27 November 2013.

In a number of instances in our research it was clear that sons were preferred to daughters. This manifestation of structural violence helps to consolidate the patriarchal system and associated inequalities. Having more than one daughter and no son was not considered desirable:

In a family, if daughter is born, it is ok. If the second birth is also a girl, then the wife will face humiliation through taunts and personal jibes about her not being able to produce an [*male*] *heir.*[57]

One of the most important responsibilities was for sons to care for the parents when they get older, an expectation that many young men are willing to meet, rather than just accepting it grudgingly:

I want to live with my parents here and look after my family.[58]

This is a gendered expectation that has remained quite constant despite the many changes that have taken place in Nepal, and that is the main reason for both mothers and fathers preferring sons. While parents expected that their sons would look after them in their old age, they did not have the same expectation of their daughters who were anticipated to go to their husband's home after they marry, while sons would be expected to bring their wife into their family home. This was discussed in focus group discussions with middle-aged men and women in Sunsari:

The father says to his son that he is the person who has to look after the home after him as daughters should marry and go to another's home.[59]

People give birth to sons so that they have someone who will look after them when they're old. I wish my son would be my support in my old age.[60]

Furthermore, son preference is also associated with the cultural, religious and traditional practices in the Nepali society. For example, in Hindu tradition, only the son (usually the oldest son) can perform the final death ritual (*daagbatti diney*) of their parents.[61] This practice contributes both to men's position of superiority within Nepali society, and sons being preferred to daughters.

A male secondary school teacher in Sunsari stated:

The structural inequality or son preference can be explained by religious practices like 'Son is required to perform the final death ritual of his parents and it is the only way that leads to heaven'.[62]

The repercussions of son preference also led to more practical implications, with different educational opportunities for sons and daughters, the sons' education having the greater investment:

Parents [*also*] *give priority to sons over daughters. They send their son to a boarding school and their daughter to a government school*[63]*. Society gives priority and opportunities to sons rather than daughters.*[64]

However, a number of participants said that for them, it did not matter if they had a son or daughter as long as the child was healthy. This might indicate a change in gendered preference for boys, but social pressure will remain a strong factor.

57 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

58 In the Nepali context, it is the norm that the son takes care of his parents when they get old.

59 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 11 September 2013.

60 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 13 September 2013.

61 See for example http://trn.gorkhapatraonline.com/index.php/contact-us/69-life-style/6924-daughters-perform-mother-s-death-rituals.html; www.nepalnews.com/index.php/politics-archive/4887-nation-bids-farewell-to-gp-koirala-last-rites-performed-with-state-honour.

62 Saferworld, KII with a school teacher, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

63 Boarding schools are considered as providing better education than government schools, but fees are higher.

64 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

Masculinities, education and work

Education

The young men in our study had a strong sense of commitment to study, as it was assumed that education positively contributed to a man's future. Education of young men was highly valued, and educated men were seen as role models.[65]

Education was considered important as it helps people 'to be mature' and 'they are able to look after themselves', and it prevented them from following the 'wrong path'. One male respondent in Sunsari commented on the significance of education for choosing the 'right path':

If the parents are educated, their children will choose the right way. They cannot fall onto the wrong path.[66]

There seems to be pressure on sons from parents to get a certain level of education, which is assumed to lead to a certain type of job:

I want my son to be a good son; he studies something that I like, and after that he does some job or business.[67]

However, in opposition to parents' expectations, many young men felt that while education was valued, completing higher-level school education[68] did not grant them a good job. This is mainly because in their view, the quality of education is poor and does not prepare them sufficiently for the employment market, where more practical and vocational skills are required. Despite the importance of education, participants in a group discussion in Sunsari highlighted some of the structural constraints that prevent young men from going to study:

Nepal is an underdeveloped country; there are not enough jobs for everyone so people go to work as migrant workers. This means they can't get high-level education.[69]

One of the participants from Sankhuwasabha voiced his frustration with the Nepali education system:

Nepal's education policy is useless. It should be technical, such that if you have a degree you are guaranteed employment. It should be technical and practical. … it makes us angry. Sometimes we feel it's pointless studying. Rather than studying, get a passport when you are 17, go abroad and earn money.[70]

Young men were concerned about the difficulty of finding employment even after years of study and continuous effort to find work. A young man in Sankhuwasabha had strong views that it was not enough to get education to secure employment, but political connections were also important:

I feel that my education is useless. I should not have studied. In our country, every year, there are lakhs [*hundreds of thousands*] *of students who pass +2.*[71] *They can't get jobs. There are no opportunities. I feel very sad… You need power* [*political connections*] *to get a job. In my village, there is a government primary school. There was a vacancy for the primary-level teacher in that school. Altogether 16–17 teachers were contesting for the post. One of the teachers had a political relation and he passed the exam and got selected. He had just passed +2 with no teaching experience. But other teachers had 8–10 years teaching experience. In the end, the teacher with less experience passed the exam because he had political relations.*[72]

65 These exercises were composed of a group of men having some coloured clay and as a group making 3D figures of men who they felt were 'ideal'. For more on this method please see Nicola Johnston-Coeterier (2014) 'A gender sensitivity resource pack – Nepal' (Kathmandu: Saferworld and IHRICON).

66 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 15 September 2013.

67 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 7 September 2013.

68 In the Nepali context that means completing class 10.

69 A PLR participant in Sunsari shared the view in October 2013

70 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, October 2013.

71 +2 is the entry level required to do a Bachelor degree in Nepal, similar to A-levels.

72 A PLR participant in Sankhuwasabha shared this view in September 2013.

Often for economic reasons, young men's education is cut short by the need for them to provide financially for their families; often, but not always, these are young men from marginalised and disadvantaged groups, as this statement from a participant from the local Mushar community shows:

In the Mushar community, if the family is not able to send their children to school then the children will start working outside to earn money.[73]

Given that education was considered extremely important, dropping out of school was seen in negative terms, although many young men would have to drop out to go and find work to support their family. While government figures indicate there are more young men in formal education than girls, pressures on young men that result in them dropping out at higher levels than girls has resulted in more girls being in higher levels of formal education in our research location in Sankhuwasabha – a development that might have interesting implications for gender roles and dynamics in the future. A male teacher noted:

Girls will study as much as they can; they will continue their studies. They work in the house and go to school, but if they get married, in some cases education ends. There are other cases in which they continue going to school. In higher-level education there are more girls now than boys [*due to men going abroad for employment and dropping out of school*].[74]

This clearly indicates how the expectations for men are often thwarted by their reality. Young men are expected to be educated, but circumstances sometimes prevent them completing their studies. They are expected to be educated to get a good job, but the more urgent economic necessity of working prevents this. The trend of women becoming more educated may also have implications for men's opportunities in the job market and marriage.[75] The young men in our study are trying to navigate contradictory expectations and social and economic pressures, which mean that they are destined to fail in meeting at least one of these aspects of masculinity.

Local boys from Sankhuwasabha engaged in group activity.
© Julie Brethfeld/Saferworld.

73 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, October 2013.

74 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 3 September 2013.

75 A number of studies in Nepal illustrate the implications of women having higher education is equated with later marriage, greater influence in household decision making and large purchases cf. Furuta M, Sarah Salway S (2006), 'Women's position within the household as a determinant of maternal health care use in Nepal' *International Family Planning Perspectives* Volume 32, Number 1, March.

Money and employment

Earning and bringing money home, providing economically for dependents, and managing a household financially (*ghar chalaune*) were core preoccupations and responsibilities for men. This was the main reason to work as this generated income and financial security, which was an important focus of their sense of responsibility to their families. A man from Sankhuwasabha commented:

Whether you have too much or too little, you need to look after and manage your family. Managing your family income with your family priorities is what jimmewari *is about.*[76]

Money was a particular focus for many of the male participants. A young man commented in a group discussion in Sankhuwasabha:

If we do not have money, we cannot do anything. We should have money.[77]

The pressure to work and have money also comes from young women's expectations of young men, which in some regards relate to financial circumstances and material expectations. Young men talked about the expectations that girlfriends had of them as boyfriends – an example of the ways in which women contribute to ideas of what men should be like:[78]

If you do not have money and a bike [*motorbike*] *then your girlfriend will leave you.*[79]

Wanting to spend money on clothes, gadgets or going out with friends adds to the pressure of having money.

These are expectations that many young men struggle to meet. The current economic situation with high levels of unemployment throughout Nepal adds to the pressure towards young men to provide. Given that young men are the group with the highest levels on unemployment in Nepal,[80] one would expect the rates to significantly increase for this group over the coming years. The research also reveals frustrations emerging among young men who are educated but struggling to find jobs and careers.

Despite this difficult context, those who are unemployed are viewed quite negatively. Respondents link this frustration and fear of failing to increasing alcohol consumption, levels of aggression, SGBV and crime. Unemployment and delayed marriage has meant that men spend long hours together with their friends on street corners or in forests. Thus, there is a widespread perception that many unemployed men may get involved in 'eve-teasing' (see chapter 3) as a way of passing time.

Some participants felt that those who were unemployed passed the time by drinking, which increases the chance of violence:[81]

The husband drinks alcohol and beats his wife.[82]

This was a particular problem on market days when there was money available and often spent in bars. Unemployment and lack of money were even linked to crime:

Unemployment is a problem here, so boys roam around and get involved in wrong [*illegal*] *things.*[83]

76 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 29 November 2013.

77 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 4 September 2013.

78 This point does not negate the pressures that girls and young women are under but is made here more to explore the gender differences in expectations and pressures. Girls clearly have significant pressures and expectations of them as a consequence of changing notions of femininity in contemporary Nepal. However, there is not space to explore these here.

79 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

80 In 2008, the NLFS II indicated that the male unemployment rate was 2.2 per cent, while female unemployment was 2 per cent. Those aged 15–25 had a 3.5 per cent unemployment rate, the highest of any age group (Central Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008* (Kathmandu).

81 While the nexus unemployment-alcoholism-violence is frequently mentioned, it needs to be emphasised that there is no automatism: not all unemployed men get drunk, and not everyone who is drunk turns violent. Conversely, there are men who are in employment and do not drink, but are violent.

82 Saferworld PRL, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

83 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.

Over the coming years it will be important to monitor these frustrations and stresses that young men are facing in this regard, particularly as unemployment in Nepal is predicted to rise.[84]

Finding work was certainly important but it was not seen as sufficient: one was expected to find work of a certain kind that is either respected by society, and/or provides quick money. As a female participant in Sankhuwasabha put it:

The young boys don't like to work even if they get employment. They can also earn money from road construction but they feel embarrassed. If they see a young man carrying loads or ploughing fields then they start teasing him. But they don't feel embarrassed playing carom, cards, and drinking alcohol.[85]

Therefore, there is shame and perhaps stigma associated with certain types of work (mainly types that are very physical). This links to Sharma's description of *lahure* and the ways in which this links to physical work being stigmatised in some communities.[86] There is clear evidence that men's social recognition and their sense of masculinity suffer when they are unable to find work, or what is considered as the 'right kind of work'. There was a perception that women and other men would ridicule husbands or other men who were unable to provide financially for the family, and the young men were aware of this pressure. In response to a question about being jobless, a male respondent in Sankhuwasabha responded:

We are very worried, we would like to do certain things but we don't have the money; we are weak. Sometimes we feel that we are a burden to the whole earth.[87]

This illustrates the pressures the young men in our research felt to earn certain levels of money; these pressures in turn influence high levels of migration.

Migration

Migration in Nepal, especially emigration, is a strongly gendered process, with important links to aspects of violence. Due to limited employment opportunities in villages, men either migrate to cities or travel abroad for foreign employment. In 2008, the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS II) estimated that about 33 per cent of the surveyed population (all ages) had migrated to their current location either from another VDC or municipality in Nepal or from outside the country.[88] Migration is important not only as this offers an opportunity for men to earn money but also as it offers escape from having to be seen on an everyday basis as 'unsuccessful' by others in the family and community.

While many young men discontinue their education and migrate in the hope of earning quick money, they often realise later that education is required in order to find a well-paid job abroad. In fact, there are many cases where migrants return with more debts than they had before. However, migration also seems to be becoming more and more a rite of passage[89] for young men. When asked to draft a timeline of the life of a typical Nepali man, many participants included migrations aside important rituals or events such as the sacred thread ceremony (or *bratabandha*[90]) or the haircutting ceremony,[91] getting enrolled in school or getting married. That migration is something

84 ILO (2014), 'Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a jobless recovery?' (Geneva: ILO).

85 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.

86 Sharma J R (2007), *Mobility, Pathology and Livelihoods: an ethnography of forms of mobility in/from Nepal* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh).

87 Saferworld PLR3, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

88 Central Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008* (Kathmandu).

89 A rite of passage is a ritual that marks the transition from one status or stage of life to another.

90 In Hindu culture, mostly Brahmin and Chhetri boys are required to undergo this ceremony, which marks the official acceptance of their entry into their hierarchical caste system. The boy wears strands of cotton threads, which represents vows to respect knowledge, his parents and his society.

91 In many Nepali caste and ethnic groups, young boys receive a ritual haircut at a young age. While for Brahmins and Chettris, having the head shaved is part of the *bartabanda* ceremony, groups such as Limbu, Rai, Tamang and Sherpa believe that this ritual will bring health, success and prosperity.

many young men aspire to is also indicated by this statement from a youth participant in Sankhuwasabha:

After 20, boys will go abroad for employment. This is very common; it has become a fashion.[92]

Those who have migrated are seen as more cosmopolitan and knowledgeable: they have seen the world. Other young men from the village look up to them and want to follow in their footsteps.

Our research also indicated that not all young men want to migrate, and many research participants mentioned that they would prefer to stay with their families if they were able to find a job close to home. They were concerned about the negative implications they associated with migration, including on family life. For example, there has been a widespread perception that wives of migrants were likely to get involved in extra-marital affairs – an allegation that can easily result in domestic violence (see chapter 3):

After the husband goes for foreign employment, the wife starts to have extra-marital relations with other men.[93]

While this research did not specifically examine migrant men's perception of family and/or wife, it is evident that there is a narrative that ridicules migrant men's ability to protect the honour of their family when they are away. Therefore, migration puts pressure on families and on men who migrate. Men are migrating to meet their responsibilities for their families, but in terms of how they perceive notions of masculinity, migration can also be undermining of their status. Migration also creates a distance between migrating men and their wives and families, as a returnee male migrant in a group discussion in Sunsari commented:

When we went abroad we did not go to have fun but to help our families. We have to look at our family background. I met some friends who used to save money and send it home. But some friends used to smoke, drink alcohol and play cards day and night. Also, some said 'money comes and goes, so let's have fun'. They used to gamble 2000–3000 riyals in one night and not care about that. They would cut phone calls from home because the phone calls might bring messages about problems and suffering at home.[94]

A number of respondents indicated that migration was something that men did rather than women, due in part to the negative social assumptions made of women who might migrate:

No girl from here has gone for foreign employment. If girls go out and work then they are seen with negative eyes.[95]

This view resulted particularly from the fact that families and husbands of female migrants were unaware of and unable to control what the women were doing while abroad, who they were engaging with, and whether they might have relationships with other men.

Evolving gender roles

Many of the young men in our research made numerous statements indicating that they were in favour of gender equality and wanted men and women to be equal; some of them even highlighted gender inequalities as a form of social violence. However, particularly when talking about what gender equality would look like in practice at the household level or related to employment, views differed as to what would be accept-

92 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, October 2013.
93 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
94 Saferworld Focus Group, Sankhuwasabha, 3 September 2013.
95 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

A local man from Sankhuwasabha holding his baby, while chatting with his male friends.
© Julie Brethfeld/Saferworld.

able to them and society, and many participants struggled to clearly define their own position.

For example, there was a wide range of views on whether a man should do 'women's work', such as doing the laundry or cooking. While some participants articulated that men should participate in household activities and help women, some participants felt that men who contributed to household work were ridiculed as this was something that subverted 'traditional' ideas of men and women's work. This quote from a male participant encapsulates both the change and continuity in relation to young men doing work not conventionally seen as masculine:

One of my friends does all the household chores. I tease him, saying that this work is for women, but he says that you have to help the family.[96]

Local concepts such as *budi ko fariya ma basnu* (hiding behind wife's saree), which meant letting one's wife have control, were considered to be demeaning to men. Likewise, men who stayed at their wife's parental home (*ghar jawai*), or those who stayed close to the wife's parental home, or whose wife was richer or earned more money, were considered by others to be in compromising situations, and they were therefore seen as not manly enough. A young man remarked:

Friends will say 'Budi ko fariya ma basnu'*, and comment that you have no self-respect.*[97]

The word *joitingre* (submissive) was used to talk about men who were submissive to their wives, or even those who listened to their wives. In some cases *joitingre* were looked down upon as *namarda*. However, informants spoke of men working in the field, milking buffalo as well as cooking food and washing clothes, indicating there is clearly some flexibility in what is considered men's and women's work. The research team observed many young fathers proudly holding their children in their arms or watching over them while they were playing in the bazar, chatting with other community members and peers. While there might be ridicule for men who do women's work, some men in our study viewed this positively:

96 PLR participant in Sunsari October 2013.
97 PLR participant in Sunsari October 2013.

For me, it's very good to see a man doing all the household work. And he should help his family. A man might help his wife, but other family members don't see it from a positive perspective. They say that he is being a slave of his wife and he does whatever she tells him to do. He is also known as joitingre*. And other people try to dominate a man like this.*[98]

This quote indicates that the young men in our study are questioning the notion of clearly defined women's work or work in the domestic sphere as being homogenous. Young men are finding these negotiations of what is appropriate for them to do quite challenging.

This also raises the question about men's perceptions of women doing paid work in what might be traditionally considered as men's occupations outside of the household. Men were aware of this change happening, as this quote from a man in a FGD in Sunsari shows:

Before, women would work inside the house, whereas men would work outside the house. But now, women are also working outside. The system has been changing.[99]

Asked about what he thought about his girlfriend or wife working, a PLR participant in Sankhuwasabha opined:

I'm liberal; she can do whatever she wants. I don't want to impose anything on her; she can do whatever she likes.[100]

Others had more specific ideas about what would be acceptable, as this conversation with the same group shows:

PLR PARTICIPANT 1: *Some could be wage workers, work in organisations* [*NGOs*], *making economic gain. I want her to be attached to social services, like teachers, doctors, journalists, good jobs.*

PLR PARTICIPANT 2: *We don't want them to be prostitutes, models or actresses.*

RESEARCHER: Why not a model or actress?

PLR PARTICIPANT 2: *Models and actresses need to please a lot of people, they need to dance or show flesh, their work cannot be watched with my whole family or friends.*[101]

Interestingly, some men even felt comfortable with the idea of their wife taking on a job that is traditionally considered as typically masculine, such as becoming a police or army officer. Ultimately, some men in our study were comfortable with the notion that their wives (or future wives) worked and contributed economically to the household. However, similarly to the ridicule faced by men doing women's work, a man might be exposed to societal ridicule if his wife provides for the family,[102] or if her income is higher than his:

PLR PARTICIPANT 3: *We'd be happy if they earned more money than us. But it's also not right if I have to sit at home and do nothing or if we have to wash our wife's laundry at home.*

PLR PARTICIPANT 4: *If she's earning more, in my family's eyes that's not good. Her family will say, 'why are you married to that man?'*[103]

This is reinforced by a quote from a man in a focus group in Sunsari:

When my wife goes for foreign employment, she sends money to me and I sit here doing nothing; then people call me joitingre.[104]

98 PLR in Sunsari September 2013.

99 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 11 September 2013.

100 Saferworld, PLR Sankhuwasabha, 5 September.

101 Saferworld, PLR Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.

102 Research carried out by Saferworld *et al* indicates that a lack of support from the family (for example because the husband does not want his wife to go out for work) puts women who earn money by working outside their home at risk of domestic violence. For more detailed information on some of the issues women face in relation to working in Nepal please see Coyle D *et al* 2014) 'Women's insecurities and the workplace in Nepal. A study from Banke and Bara districts' (Kathmandu: Saferworld).

103 Saferworld, PLR Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.

104 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

Therefore, there are limits to the extent to which men are comfortable for women to provide for them economically. However, some of the youth respondents were very pragmatic, especially given the difficult economic situation in Nepal, and welcomed their wives earning more money than them:

I feel good [*about wives earning money*] *because I am unemployed.*[105]

There are important generational differences here, with younger men being influenced by prevailing masculinities in quite different ways to older men. Most of the young men quoted above who had more liberal views were unmarried and talked hypothetically about how they would feel and how they would be seen if their wife provided for them. In our research we did not encounter any men who were happy to discuss actually being in this situation.

Masculinity and the 'others' in young men's lives

This last part of the chapter considers how the young men in our study talked about people who were not male and heterosexual, or who otherwise did not fit into the more conventional patterns of masculinity – the 'other/s' in their lives. Through this section, masculinity is defined not only by claims about what it is but also by what it is not. Besides women and girls, the two groups that stood out most as being different from what was considered as 'typical men' were men with disabilities (PWD) and SGM people. Having conversations about how individuals from those groups were seen by the young men themselves and by society, and to what extent and in which cases they were accepted or not, provided important insights into what can be considered as key aspects that define masculinity.

Young men's views on women

Significant differences emerged in relation to young men's expectations of women in specific roles at different stages of their life. While such differences were heavily influenced by relationships with specific women, a number of themes emerge. For example, the aspect of controlling and having a certain extent of power over women was relevant for all categories except for the mother, while at the same time, all women were seen as also having some level of influence on the young men. Age was a formative influence on these varying expectations. This results in young men often being respectful and positive about their mothers and grandmothers, but less so of their female contemporaries.

Scrapbook exercise: The scrapbook exercise is useful to get to know participants and get an initial understanding of how they see themselves and others, and what is important to them. Participants are provided with sheets of paper and are asked to respond to a number of questions. The questions could be on their name, age, profession, a person they admire, their favourite actor or actress, hobbies, strengths and weakness, etc. Then the facilitator will select a few questions to discuss in greater depth with the participants.

When young men discussed their mothers there was relatively little ambiguity, and a broad range of positive comments. In a participatory exercise in Sunsari in which young men were asked who was their 'ideal person', four of the twelve participants stated that their mother was their 'ideal person'. One participant went on to say:

My ideal person is my mother because she has given birth to us and she is a hardworking person.[106]

Asked why he chose his mother as ideal person, another youth participant from Sankhuwasabha said:

105 Saferworld, PLR Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
106 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

She gave birth to me; she gave me the eyes to see this world[107]

Mothers were admired for their unconditional love and support, and for dedicating everything to their children without thinking about themselves. There were a number of reasons why mothers were thought of in such positive terms. For example, this in part relates to the continuity mothers gave to young men's lives, as in some families fathers had migrated abroad to find work:

Father goes to foreign employment whereas mother stays in home. We [*have not*] *seen father in five years.*[108]

Mothers were seen as a constant in young men's lives and were viewed as being dedicated to their children in selfless and self-sacrificing ways. Young men often talked with warmth and affection about the support and guidance their mothers gave them. The quote below, from a young man in Sunsari, illustrates how his mother responded to him being involved in a fight:

My mother is always protective about me. She does not want me to get into fights and brawls repeatedly. She cautioned and advised me not to repeat such acts.[109]

This indicates the influence that this young man's mother has on him. The influence that mothers had on sons was the most significant female influence that the young men in our study talked about, although this was quite time specific, with wives having a growing influence in later life. One youth participant from Sankhuwasabha felt that

The mother is the child's first teacher.[110]

Grandmothers were not mentioned much by young men during the fieldwork, which is surprising given the importance of these relationships. However, one of the participants in a PLR in Sunsari mentioned grandparents in relation to how important it was to respect older people.

It is interesting to note that respect here is earned through looking up to both grandmother and grandfather with no distinction made between the two. The importance of these relationships in influencing the ways men treat women was something that was mentioned by a middle-aged woman in Sunsari:

When they see [*how*] *their grandfather, father behaves with grandmother, mother, then they learn how they should behave with women.*[111]

Sisters were talked about quite differently to mothers. While their love and care was appreciated (and at the same time expected), especially by younger boys, there was less reverence and a stronger emphasis on the ways in which this group of female relatives shaped a brother's prestige, especially once he becomes adolescent:

[*Sisters should provide*] *love to the younger brothers, should not take bad decisions and get involved in activities that will damage the prestige of her brother. She should help the parents and always support and encourage me to do things.*[112]

As will be illustrated below, young men want freedom to spend time with their friends and girlfriends, but they do not seem to want their sisters to have the same level of autonomy and decision-making power as they do. The domestic responsibilities of sisters were mentioned in a number of discussions, with their position more located within the domestic sphere (as opposed to girlfriends, who were 'outside' of the house):

The sister would help in household chores… Sister should help mother.[113]

107 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 4 September 2013.
108 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
109 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 29 October 2013.
110 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, September 2013.
111 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 15 September 2013.
112 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
113 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

Interestingly, in a PLR in Sankhuwasabha wives were discussed similarly to sisters and in contrast to girlfriends:

Sister and wife are members of the family whereas a girlfriend is not. This is why sister and wife stay at home and do all the household chores, whereas my girlfriend is not expected to work for my family.[114]

This again marks an important distinction in the ways in which young men talked about girlfriends and female family members, which again emphasises the domestic location of sisters, wives, and mothers. Notions of *ijjat* or prestige (see chapter 3) are influential here in constraining both the freedom and expectations of family members.

Regarding wives, the research found a range of expectations, from more traditional values such as being supportive, respectful and a good mother, to more modern ones that are often related to physical appearance, as we can see from this exchange from Sankhuwasabha:

PLR PARTICIPANT 1: *She should be a nice wife, always supporting and giving suggestions when required, respecting the elders and providing love to the younger ones.*

PLR PARTICIPANT 2: *She should be sexy, slim, have good behaviour and look after my family. Importantly, she should be as tall as me.*

PLR PARTICIPANT 3: *She should support me during my good and bad times. She should be honest and be very patient.*[115]

It was quite clear in our research that having a girlfriend and being in a relationship was important for the young men. Girlfriends were discussed in less respectful terms than female family members, with an emphasis on them providing 'fun', love and being 'sexy':

She should obey my request and have fun with me.[116]

Young men wanted girlfriends to have the freedom to be able to interact and spend time with them, but did not want their sisters to have the same freedoms. However, participants were unable to see the contradiction of this position given that many sisters are likely to also be someone's girlfriend. Obeying was something that emerged in a number of discussions about girlfriends, but it was not always the girlfriend who was expected to obey:

If there are things that are positive, then we should obey [*our girlfriends*]. *But we should not obey all of her requests.*[117]

This participant indicates that in some instances he should listen to his girlfriend or do what she tells him, but this was within certain limits. Girlfriends were also discussed in relation to their promiscuity, which was to be restricted:

The girlfriend should have only one relation[*ship*]. *She should not have relations with other boys.*[118]

Conversely, young men were expected to have as many girlfriends as possible, and often exaggerated this. This was treated as a competition, and having a higher number of girlfriends was considered a status symbol. Girls were often objectified, and pictures or films of them (sometimes of intimate or even sexual nature) were shown around (see chapter 3). Participants stated that girlfriends who were no longer wanted or were seen as 'characterless', were passed on to other peers, or were left, as this statement from a young man in Sunsari illustrates:

If the girl is characterless, we will have the 'use and throw' option.[119]

114 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
115 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
116 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
117 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 5 September 2013.
118 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
119 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 13 September 2013.

Alongside these views on girlfriends a number of participants talked about the positive aspects of these relationships for them. The respondent below indicates the important source of support and the source of guidance that their girlfriends gave them:

My girlfriend supports me in good and bad times, and loves me.[120]

This section has illustrated a varied range of expectations of the women in men's lives. However, generally speaking, men were expected to control women and not let women control them. Exercising power over others (particularly women who were the men's contemporaries) was an important attribute of a man.

Views on men with disabilities

People with disabilities (PWD) were identified by the young men as one of the groups suffering from violence in the form of social discrimination. Exploring their situation was chosen as one of the topics for the small-scale youth research in Sankhuwasabha.[121] Young men were aware of and showed empathy towards the social challenges and discrimination men with disabilities were facing:

Of course they face challenges; they are not fit. Some would like to be vocal but can't speak, or they would like to hear but can't as they're deaf.

Though PWD cannot show their tears, they are crying inside.

Sometimes PWD give up because they are tired of asking for help.[122]

The level of acceptance or non-acceptance a man with disability was facing related to whether or not he was able to perform key responsibilities, particularly getting married and, linked to that, being able to provide for his family. This is expressed through statements made in Sankhuwasabha:

It's very difficult for someone with a disability to get married. Parents are worried about how he will be able to look after their daughter. But if he's rich he might not have those challenges.[123]

Asked whether a girl would agree to marry a man with disability, opinions were split, but there were concerns that a woman would only accept if the man could care for her:

A woman will care more about her future; she will need a basis to sustain herself.[124]

Being economically independent and able to care for oneself would allow a man with disability to be respected by society. A participant shared an example from his family:

My brother lacks two fingers and has a disability card, but he goes to school and is independent and he refuses to accept the disability allowance.[125]

Views on SGM

There has been significant change in post-conflict Nepal in relation to sexualities and gender identities.[126] In December 2007, the Supreme Court ordered the government to abolish all discriminatory laws and establish a third-gender category for people who neither identify themselves as men nor women.[127] However, in our research there was relatively limited discussion of alternative sexualities and identities, reflecting a broader lack of discussion about sexual matters (due in part to the sensitive nature of these issues). Terms such as SGM, transgender, third gender and LGBTI were used quite interchangeably by the respondents and seemingly without any knowledge of

120 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
121 Interestingly, they only talked to the families of PWD, not with PWD directly.
122 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
123 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
124 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
125 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
126 Boyce P, Coyle D (2013), *Development, discourse and law: transgender and same-sex sexualities in Nepal* (Sussex: Institute of Development Studies).
127 See also Kyle Knight, 'Dividing by Three: Nepal Recognizes a Third Gender', 27 February 2012, (www.huffingtonpost.com/kyle-knight/nepal-third-gender_b_1303562.html).

the meaning of each of these terms. There was quite a limited understanding by the participants in our research about SGM issues, particularly in the more remote areas in Sankhuwasabha.[128] During the discussions of such issues the term 'third gender' was used most frequently, and was used to discuss a wide spectrum of non-conventional sexual and gender orientation. A number of respondents in a focus group with middle-aged men in Sunsari thought that there were no third gender people in their rural location, and that third gender people could be found in urban areas such as Dharan:

They are in Dharan. I have heard that one third gender married a normal girl. The third gender was rich and the girl was poor. Her parents persuaded her to marry.[129]

The perception that there was a clear distinction between cities and villages , both in relation to the different experiences of SGM people in these two broadly defined locales was also discussed in a focus group with SGM participants:

It is different in village areas than in city areas. Village people don't understand us [*SGM*]. *They say third gender should not attend any social or cultural programmes. We are not allowed to enter their homes.*[130]

In one of the few examples of these issues being discussed, a male NGO worker in Sunsari commented on his experiences with the SGM community in Sunsari and some of the difficulties this community faces in this district:

In Sunsari, I see some LGBTI people, mostly in Chaudhary [*Tharu*] *community,*[131] *but I have not seen any in Bharaul.*[132] *These people still don't want to come out much because society is still not accepting them. Most work in NGO sector and they are quite open and articulate, and most of them are in Sunsari, but only a few of them are proud to be LGBTI and actively participate in many NGO activities. But even among them there are some who control resources and do the talking. There are some who are innocent and don't know much. They want to hide their real self.*[133]

Furthermore, a young woman in a focus group in Sunsari indicated some of the difficulties that she felt that SGM or third gender people faced:

Many people laugh seeing third gender. I don't like to laugh at them but I like to look at them.[134]

Within the context of the growing voice of the SGM community, as well as both change and some societal constraints on the expression of a diverse range of sexual identities, our study indicates that on a more personal level some of the young men we talked to were quite progressive in their views.[135] For example, some of the young men in our study indicated that they would not have a problem if one of their friends came out as gay:

If someone is third gender or gay, the society will say negative things about him. In that situation, we will support him. We say to society that although he is a gender minority, he has rights to live in this society. I am not going to end my friendship with him; I will stay loyal and will talk back to society.[136]

Therefore, there was some acceptance of a range of sexualities, particularly by younger participants in our study. At the same time, there were certain attitudes and behaviour the young men said they would find harder to cope with:

128 For this reason, most findings and quotes on SGM are from Sunsari.
129 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 11 September 2013.
130 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
131 The Tharu are an ethnic group in Nepal.
132 Bharaul is a VDC in Sunsari district.
133 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
134 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.
135 This resonates with Eric Anderson's ((2009), *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* (London: Taylor & Francis)) notion of inclusive masculinity, which explores the ways in which the masculinities he considers are becoming less homophobic.
136 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

I also had that kind of friend [*from SGM*] *in my college. He used to behave like a girl and his behaviour was irritating. He used to sit close to me. I had not even sat close to girls, so that kind of behaviour was irritating.*[137]

The young men in our research said that they would find it challenging if their brother wanted to behave like a girl or wear women's clothes:

If it happens in my family or if my brother acts like that, I will suggest to him to wear proper boys' clothes and I will not allow him to walk in the streets. He might think that he is like girl but the community does not feel good about that and they will tease him for acting like that, which I don't like. He might think that the community accepts it, but instead they will talk behind his back.[138]

This and similar statements from other respondents indicate that for an individual to change from a male to a female role is very challenging for society. Some SGM respondents also suggested that social acceptance of SGM also depends on whether the person coming out as SGM is, or was previously perceived as, male or female, and how the person expresses being SGM. It seems to be more acceptable if, for example, a lesbian woman takes on behaviour that is considered as more male, while a man displaying more feminine behaviour or wearing women's clothes is more difficult to accept. One SGM respondent shared her experience of such perceptions:

When we third gender females used to behave like men in society, they [*other community members*] *used to say we behaved like an army. But now they know our identity, they call us third gender. When we acted like male and played like men, parents used to say "my daughter is very brave". But third gender people like* [*name of another SGM respondent*] *have had problems since childhood. They are known as unlucky* (alakshini) *daughters.*[139]

This might be because femininity is less valued than masculinity, and so the value of a man decreases if he displays feminine qualities. However, this is based on anecdotal evidence, and further research is needed to explore these attitudes more fully. Likewise, there seems to be evidence that if an SGM family member is able to contribute to the family income, acceptance of this individual is likely to be higher. One SGM respondent shared his experience of family acceptance:

Initially they disowned me; I was not allowed to participate in any of my family functions. I was educated, so I could work and live on my own. Slowly I got a job here in Blue Diamond Society (*BDS*)[140] *and I was earning good money and I could actually provide well for my family. Then they accepted me.*[141]

In an all-male PLR in Sunsari the reason for some people being more accepting of SGM people was due to education, a view that was also reiterated by SGM respondents. However, the SGM community also felt that attitudinal and behavioural change has to come from the society, as education alone does not lead to positive attitudes towards the SGM:

Those who are educated and understand the feelings of transgender, they accept transgender. But [*those*] *who do not understand their feelings, they do not accept transgender.*[142]

These perspectives indicate that there is some change taking place in this area. While older participants tended to talk in quite negative terms about SGM people and communities, some younger men illustrated more progressive views about such issues. However, as the comments in the SGM focus group in Sunsari indicate, there are still multiple forms of discrimination and difficulty for those from a diverse range of sexualities and identities.

137 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 31 October 2013.
138 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 31 October 2013.
139 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 31 October 2013.
140 BDS is a Nepali NGO engaging for the rights of sexual minorities.
141 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 31 October 2013.
142 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

3

Masculinities and violence

OUR FIELD RESEARCH PROVIDED STRONG EVIDENCE that many of the young men had been exposed to different forms of violence – both non-physical and physical violence, including different aspects of SGBV – in different ways, whether as victims, perpetrators, witnesses or as someone who had heard of it. Our findings show that violence is both gendered and complex, as reflected in the subversion of the assumption that men are perpetrators and women are victims of violence.

Responses from the youth participants show that being violent is not considered a precondition of being male. There are a number of examples given in this chapter of young men in our research indicating that they prefer to resolve disputes through non-violent means. This illustrates that more positive masculinities may also be part of the solution for challenging and reducing men's violence.[143]

Non-physical violence

Responsibility to protect and control women and '*ijjat*'

Structural violence is a term coined by Galtung which refers to the notion that social structures or institutions harm certain people in ways that do not manifest themselves in physical violence[144]. For example, structural violence exists if certain gender, age, ethnic, caste or religious groups have less access to power and opportunities or to economic or natural resources because of provisions built into the social, political and economic system.

This first part of the chapter explores aspects of structural violence. Notions of *ijjat* or prestige constitute a considerable basis of structural violence against women. *Ijjat* has been translated to mean a range of things. For example, for Liechty, *ijjat* means 'dignity, respectability or honour',[145] while for Tamang *ijjat* means 'sexual reputation.'[146] *Ijjat* affects men and women quite differently. While men seem to be able to accumulate *ijjat* over time through achievements gaining social status, women's *ijjat* – and that also means the *ijjat* of their families – is closely linked to their sexuality and complying

143 This responds to one of the criticisms Victor Seidler develops of the theory of hegemonic masculinity (see Seidler, V J (2006), *Transforming Masculinities: Men, Culture, Bodies, Power, Sex and Love* (London: Routledge)). Seidler views Connell's theory as contributing to the notion that masculinities are the 'problem' in relation to violence. This leaves little room for considering masculinities as a potential solution for ending men's violence. Our findings indicate that Seidler's engagement with hegemonic masculinity is useful and that notions of masculinity can be part of the solution to reducing and challenging violence.

144 Galtung, J (1969), 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 167–191.

145 Liechty M (2003), *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), p 83.

146 Tamang S (2002), 'The Politics of "Developing" Nepali Women', in Kanak Mani Dixit and Sashtri Ramachandran (eds) *State of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Himal Books), pp 161–175, p 249.

with gender norms, and can easily be lost.[147] These gendered differences can be illustrated by this quote from Sunsari:

If the son does bad things, society does not care about that, but if the daughter or a girl does anything bad, then society will have major issues. Hence, the daughter should be careful because the prestige of the family depends upon her.[148]

Critically, men were seen as the guardians of *ijjat* or prestige upholding the moral character of their family and community.

This has a range of consequences for both men and women. For women this means that in one sense they are more protected, as they are valued within families due to their importance in relation to prestige:

If the daughter has to be sent to shop, then her brother goes along with her. Parents think that if their daughter does anything wrong, their prestige will go down.[149]

However, this also corresponds to a constraint on the freedom and autonomy of women. For men this meant that they had a responsibility to ensure the women in their families maintained the appropriate level of prestige. As the quote above illustrates, this might often manifest itself in control of women in their families and restrictions on female family members that male family members do not experience to the same extent. Men's control of women or their exercising power over women was thus largely seen as justified. Men saw the loss of family's *ijjat* as a subversion of their ability to protect it. At the same time, women who were the victims of rape or other forms of sexual harassment were seen as devalued and were ultimately blamed for being responsible for what had happened to them.

A number of important gendered differences in prestige were discussed during our research. A participant gave the example of a girl from Sankhuwasabha who had been raped, which illuminates important gender differences in how prestige functions and in the resulting consequences:

Women's prestige can be lost more than men's. For example: if a girl is raped, the girl will not be able to get married. The society does not accept that girl. However, the boy who had raped that girl will be able to get married eventually.[150]

Prestige was also linked to women and young girls behaving in a conservative way as per traditional gender norms. Failing to do so was seen as negative and was condemned by most people, often resulting in social isolation as punishment. For example, engaging in relationships involving proximity to boys and men resulted in assumptions that the woman or girl engages in sexual intercourse with the males she spends time with, causing people to question her character. The feeling is that a girl should not have close friends who are male, or be seen enjoying friendship and/or associating with boys. For example, in one research location the character of a particular girl was repeatedly questioned by older and younger men and women, who perceived her as 'characterless' and as someone ruining the reputation of her family and community by hanging out with boys and drinking alcohol with her male friends. The girl herself felt that it was natural for boys and girls to be friends, especially, if they belong to the same village and have gone to same school, and felt that the community's negative perception about the friendship was wrong and should change.[151]

Reflecting the need to protect women to ensure prestige was expressed at a range of levels. For example, in the narratives about the ideal man during one of the participatory exercises, the nation was imagined as a female body, and men saw their role as protecting female honour. The use of force or violence was perceived as justifiable

147 For a more detailed analysis of women's perceptions and experiences of honour, please see Coyle D, Shrestha R, Thapa C J (2014), 'Women's insecurities and the workplace in Nepal. A study from Banke and Bara districts', (Kathmandu: Saferworld).

148 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

149 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

150 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

151 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 28 November 2013.

when it came to protection of honour. This indicates a link not only between honour, nation, and masculinity but also between masculinity and violence, in so far as violence was justifiable in the defence of honour. There was a strong sentiment of upholding the family prestige among the young boys in our research location. They indicated that they would use violence if needed to protect the family prestige, or exact revenge on someone trying to destroy the *ijjat*. A PLR participant in Sankhuwasabha stated:

… if someone tries to rape or destroy the image of my sisters or other female family members, then I would not hesitate to use weapons or violence, without thinking of the consequences for a second.[152]

Another participant said:

If someone rapes my sisters or a woman of my family, it's unforgivable; I will cut that perpetrator into pieces.[153]

However, upholding prestige is not done solely through use of force or violence. For example, not responding to being provoked physically did not necessarily result in a loss of prestige, as a male respondent from Sankhuwasabha highlights:

It does not affect our prestige [*being pushed by another man*]. *However, if we are walking in groups with other friends and an outside person pushed one of us, then it is bad, and we would retaliate.*[154]

Women also had expectations of men in relation to prestige. The young women in our research expected men not to be engaged in socially undesirable behaviour, and thought men should respect others and contribute to the wider community and society.

'Eve-teasing' and sexual harassment

Non-physical sexual harassment including 'eve-teasing'[155] were the forms of non-physical violence young men were most engaged in. In Nepal, the word *jiskaune* can be defined and interpreted both as harmless, mutually enjoyed flirting and as unwanted harassment or 'eve-teasing', and a broad range interaction between young men and women was referred to as *jiskaune*. Harmless and mutually enjoyed flirting can turn into 'eve-teasing' and more serious forms of sexual harassment, and some of the young men participating in the research claimed that they were not always clear about when things went too far.

Eve-teasing took many forms, for example, men may whistle or sing a song when a girl or a group of girls passed by. Young men may make remarks with sexual connotations to girls. The research indicated that young men might make clucking noises using their tongue, wink, sing songs, and some use vulgar languages while eve-teasing. They do this to seek girl's attention. When a girl passes by, they make some noise so that the girl turns towards them. They then wink. Young women may respond to this by looking back, giggling, shouting back at the young men or ignoring it, which is considered the appropriate thing to do by many men and women. A young man outlines in some detail his thoughts on eve-teasing below:

Boys are lazy and do not work. They tease girls. Boys tease girls by looking at their appearance. If the girl is wearing a simple dress [*traditional*], *we whistle and we say "Look at that simpleton"* (pakhe jasto) *and say that they have to reveal their body a bit more* (halka dekhawonu paryo). *If the girl is modern* [*that is, if she is not wearing traditional clothes*], *we look at her and say, "It's better you show all rather than showing little." Teasing also depends upon the reaction of the girl. Girls smile when we tease and that is a sign of encouragement for us to do that time and again. We feel that the girl might like us,*

152 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, September 2013.

153 Saferworld interviewKII, Sankhuwasabha, 28 November, 2013.

154 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

155 'Eve-teasing' is a euphemism used in many parts of South Asia for sexual harassment and abuse of girls and women in public places. The research refers to 'eve-teasing' as this is what community members use themselves; however, Saferworld acknowledges that the term is problematic and that some people consider it offensive.

if she smiles. If they scold us, then we feel bad and guilty (atma glani). *We tease girls who are not from our locality, because girls from our locality are our relatives.*[156]

Such interactions had both positive and negative outcomes. For example, young men viewed *jiskaune* as a means to initiate relationships with women in the hope that this might lead to dates and getting a girlfriend. Young men were keen to induce a girl to flirt with them or at least to exchange glances, exchange texts, instant messages, or share photos – potentially going on a date to a temple or cinema together.

Young men seemed to find eve-teasing in all its forms more acceptable than did young women, who noted a range of negative implications, particularly in relation to their reputation, but also regarding the potential risk of physical violence resulting from it. Young men often engaged in flirting and eve-teasing with girls from a nearby village and not their own, as young women from their village were relatives or were friends of their sisters.

During the validation workshop in Dhankuta, young men from Sunsari shared their reasons for eve-teasing girls, specifically on why they pass lewd comments about the girls' appearance and clothing or try to touch them. The boys saw themselves as unable to control their behaviour, as a result of being encouraged by the girls' clothing and behaviour towards men:

When girls wear short dresses and reveal their bodies, then we get sexually aroused and pass comments about her dress and body. If she reacts by smiling or laughing then we try to brush our hand against her body. It is her fault that she is sexually arousing us; we are victims in that case.[157]

However, awareness about equal rights and freedom to choose clothing was also discussed by the boys. Some of the participants acknowledged that women and girls should be free to wear short skirts and tight clothing, as young men were free to walk bare-chested, and opined that it is was wrong to tease girls because of their clothing.

Girls can also wear skirts and tight jeans; it does not matter. Even boys wear vests and half-pants; we open our shirt buttons and walk. It is not right to tease anyone; it shows that you are not civil.[158]

The difference between sexual harassment and flirting was not always clear to participants in our research. Young men displayed a lack of clarity between what was considered as acceptable and what would be more broadly considered as harassment, stalking or potentially violent behaviour. This male respondent indicated that there was a group dimension to eve-teasing:

When we hang out with friends, we often tease girls.[159]

This refers to the more pernicious end of the eve-teasing spectrum, in which young men in groups sexually harass young women. There were instances in our research in which, when eve-teasing proved unsuccessful, it was evident that the use of force was accepted. For example, in a PLR in Sankhuwasabha one participant commented:

When the village girls come, sometimes the boys forcefully pull the girl away for chatting. Related to this, there was a rape case when some boys pulled a village girl away for chatting.[160]

This goes some way to illustrating the ways in which what some boys might perceive as relatively harmless *jiskyaune* can change into something more violent and aggressive. A young female participant in our study shared her perceptions of eve-teasing, which again illustrate that young men do this when they are in groups:

156 Saferworld, PLR, Sunsari, September 2013.
157 Saferworld validation workshop, Dhankuta, 8 April 2014.
158 Saferworld validation, Dhankuta, 8 April 2014.
159 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 12–15 September 2013.
160 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 28 November 2013.

They tease us verbally; sometimes they even sing a song. If they are with friends then they tease girls as if they are telling something to their own friends.[161]

Such interactions are illustrative of the power dynamics in street contexts, in which performances of masculinity such as this are directed at male friends as well as women.[162]

Eve-teasing is often quite intimidating for young women and can have negative consequences for a young woman's reputation and feelings. Despite often not wanting this attention or doing anything to encourage being eve-teased, young women expressed feelings of shame and guilt about this. A young woman in a focus group in Sunsari commented:

Sometimes our friends in school say the guy from our area teased them. We are ashamed at that time.[163]

Another female participant noted her discomfort about being eve-teased:

I don't like it. What kind of girl on earth would like to be teased? I scold them sometimes and they again start to tease me. They say they feel good when I scold them.[164]

SGM were also sexually harassed by young men, as a transgender participant in a focus group illustrates below:

Teenagers tease us [*SGM people*]. *I think they are not well educated or don't have ability to understand us.*[165]

The tone and mechanisms of eve-teasing and sexual harassment have changed due to the availability of certain technologies. In recent years mobile phones and social networking sites such as Facebook have become a key part of young men and women's lives. These have become spaces used for flirting, building friendships and relationships with the opposite sex. The following statement illustrates this:

It's been one year since they [*young men*] *started using mobile phones to tease girls. You don't see the other person if you're talking by phone. Before there used to be a landline phone but I don't know about people teasing from landline phones. Now they tease girls on Facebook too. Some people use it as a means to pass time and date girls through Facebook.*[166]

In the validation workshop in Dhankuta a number of male participants talked about sharing photos of girls they were linked to on Facebook. They used their profiles on social networking platforms to present themselves in a certain way, often exaggerating the number of girlfriends they had, indicating a lack of respect for young women's online privacy.

These varied accounts of eve-teasing go some way to illustrating the ways in which the young men objectified women (both in person and online). The young women's views presented above underline this perspective. Some of the comments in the validation workshop strengthen the view that young men objectify young women, particularly online through the sharing of photos of young women and the passing around of female contacts on websites such as Facebook. Furthermore, the use of pornography by young men in our study further illustrates the way that technology is facilitating new ways for men to 'consume' and objectify women. The validation workshop in Sunsari indicated that for some young men cybercafes are places in which to watch pornography. This was thought to be more prevalent within urban settings in which

161 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

162 Sociologist Radhika Chopra ((2004) 'Encountering Masculinity: An ethnographer's dilemma' in Chopra R, Osella C,Osella F (eds)) *South Asian masculinities: context of change, sites of continuity* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited an associate of Kali for Women) has discussed the 'street' as a masculine area of work and pleasure in her illuminating research in India.

163 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

164 Saferworld Focus Group, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.

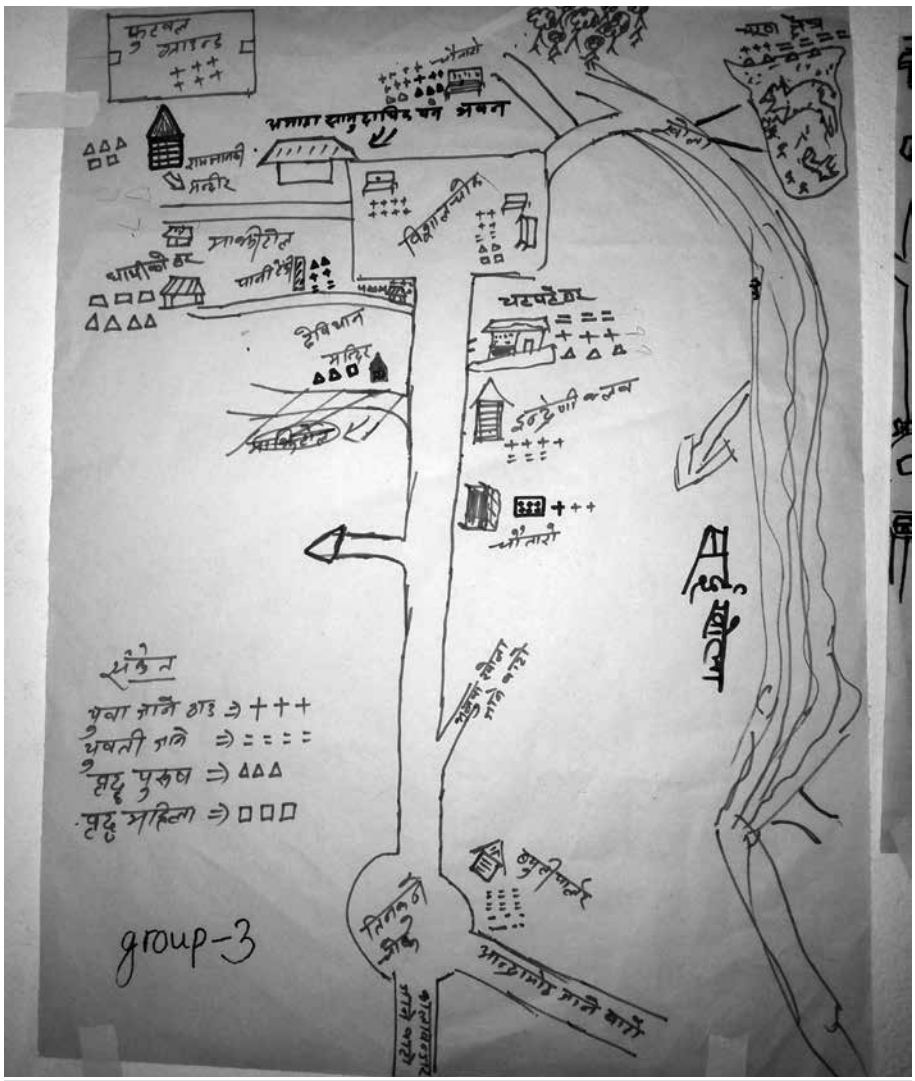
165 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

166 Saferworld, PLR, Sankhuwasabha, September 2013.

anonymity was more likely to be possible. During the workshop there was also some discussion regarding performing sex acts online either through Skype or recorded on mobile phones. The sharing of such images or footage (for example, through YouTube or Facebook) brought considerably more shame for the young women than the young men involved.

Hierarchies between men

There were various examples in our research of men struggling to deal with aspects of the hierarchies with other men they encounter. The main distinctions between men that the young men in our study talked about were age, caste, ethnicity, rural vs. 'more urban', and whether or not you choose to be member of a political youth group or gang. Young men in Sankhuwasabha identified both caste-based discrimination and discrimination against those with disabilities as significant problems in their area. Therefore, the young men in our research were acutely aware of various overlapping forms of hierarchies and discrimination that shaped their position as men.



Spatial mapping: The spatial mapping exercise is very effective in understanding whether and how spaces are occupied and used in a gendered way, and how people from different genders interact with each other. Participants were divided into small groups based on the location they came from. They were asked to draw a map of their own community and to outline where men, women, young boys and girls spend their time. The discussion explored why certain gender groups can be found in one rather than the other place, what they do there, and what happens if someone from another gender groups enters that space.

The photo captures a spatial map drawn by participants from Sunsari district where they illustrated spaces where young men, women and older men and women hang out.

Young men in the villages often spend time socialising in small groups at village crossroads, on street corners, in local shops or bars, or under trees. These were spaces in which hierarchies between young men became most apparent. *Ghumne*, or wandering, is how hanging out is referred to where young men 'passed time' either chatting, playing cards, or other local equivalent games (such as ludo or carem board or football), teasing girls, or taking part in some social or community activities. Consider the following example from Sankhuwasabha:

There is a Pipal tree[167] *near to the house* (*where girls are usually found*) *where young boys gather to tease the girls. This happens during the evening time.*[168]

The spatial dimension is significant here, because these spaces are largely for young men and not for women. These spaces have both elements of group solidarity and gang association, sometimes cutting across caste and class, but there is also a hierarchy and associated conflict between young men. While these spaces for young men are important in relation to hanging out, these were spaces not accessible to all young men. For some young men friendships tend to be within caste groups, with only limited opportunities to participate in spaces, such as that described above, due to economic constraints. A member of the research team in Sunsari discusses a young male participant:

He said he has friends but most of them are from his community. But he cannot always hang out with them because of money constraints. His mother says he can't always hang out because the family does not have a father and so cannot enjoy such luxuries.

There seemed to be limited sensitivity to these sorts of difficulties that many young and poor men might face, in relation to socialising with other men. Despite this, friendships are an important part of life for young men. Though it did also have a negative aspect, camaraderie between young men and spending time together as a group was a major part of young men's lives, where they could get into fights or harass those who are not up to date or those who look unfashionable. Certain men were looked down upon and excluded from these spaces. Within these aspects of the social lives of young men, age is an important form of stratification, as a member of the research team noted in Sunsari:

They are trying to see what other PLR boys are doing but being shooed away by the youths inside the room. I have observed that local young kids usually obey the older youths here.

The young men in our research viewed being respectful particularly of older men as being important for them. While they did not always listen or do what elderly relatives or youth told them what to do, older men in particular could have a strong influence on younger men. Therefore, while being young and male are important identities in the homosocial groupings that correspond to this time in these men's lives, there is nuance and hierarchy in these groupings. Some young men do not find a place within these spaces and groupings, and can sometimes be the focus of ridicule for wearing what is considered unfashionable clothing. For those towards the bottom of the hierarchies between young men, such forms of exclusion were often upsetting. As a consequence of there being so many poor and unemployed young men in Nepal, it is expected that these feelings of exclusion are widely felt.

Physical violence

There was a general lack of clarity among participants in the two research sites about what actually constituted violence, what might be illegal, and what would be the implications of violence. For example, many young men in our research, especially those from more rural and remote locations, were unclear whether a woman who had

167 This is a type of sacred tree that has significance in both Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal.
168 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, September 2013.

consented to have sex with a man could later reject it and whether it would then be considered as rape if the man forced her to have sex, or whether marital rape is acceptable, or illegal.[169] This was something that had become clearer for some participants in our research as a direct consequence of having taking part in the PLRs:

In our first PLR, you [*Saferworld*] *mentioned that in between the husband and wife, both should have understanding before having sex. If the husband forcefully has sex against the desire of the wife, then that is a rape. We have learnt this.*[170]

Physical violence by men against women and girls

One of the key findings from the study is that violence was accepted in certain situations, but that violence was not considered as a core part of being a man.

Although physical violence was not always condoned, there was a general consensus that violence was an appropriate way of responding to certain perceived transgressions by women and girls. For example, wife beating, verbal or emotional abuse was justified by both men and women when men were 'provoked', or when men's authority was undermined. It was also accepted if wives or women did not live up to familial or marital norms such as by disrespecting in-laws, not looking after children or the home responsibly, or when they 'crossed the limit', that is, if they failed to perform their duty. Men did not want to be seen by others as being less manly if their sexuality or *ijjat* was questioned.

Men might use force when they felt that their patriarchal authority was challenged, for example when a wife questions her husband about his conduct or accuses him of extra-marital affairs. Men felt humiliated when their wives questioned them openly or prevailed in decision making, as they didn't want to be seen by others as being *joitingre* or one who is 'hiding behind his wife's saree'. Respondents in a group discussion in Sunsari stated:

If our wife does something wrong, we have to give her one or two slaps. They should not act pampered (in Nepali: *tauko ma chadnu hudaina*). *If she does that, then we should give her a lesson.*[171]

Violence was perceived to be justified in the case of real or assumed cases of adultery. This is significant as there were widespread rumours of extra-marital affairs among the wives of migrants. Consequently, there is evidence that when a man has migrated, or returns home from abroad, there is an increased likelihood of domestic violence. In such cases, it is frequently the husband who turns violent against his wife because he suspects her of extra-marital affairs. However, women are often also suffering at the hands of family members during the husband's absence, either because the family mistrusts and tries to control the woman, or when male family members, such as brothers-in-law, take advantage of the temporary absence of the husband to abuse the woman sexually.

Violence in these contexts was a means by which men control and exert power over certain, but not all, of the women in their lives. For example, in our research there were no instances of men talking about being violent to their mothers or suggesting that this might be acceptable in any context.

A sense of shame and isolation came through from an account by a male teacher about the difficult experiences of domestic violence and the consequential sense of isolation for women:

Most of the women don't tell others that their husband beats them. They are worried because others might make fun of them, or it might be because of illiteracy.[172, 173]

169 Marital rape was made illegal in Nepal in 2006.
170 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
171 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, September 2013.
172 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 27 November 2013.
173 Here illiteracy means an inability to report the case to the police.

The research found that the use of violence against women in the family and/or domestic sphere is not straightforward; it could be seen as showing strength or weakness. Participants talked about husband-wife quarrels (*logne-swasni ko jhagada*) and wife beating. Disputes and fights between husband and wife were thought to be common, and such fights were labelled as a 'fire in straw' that would not last long, as indicated in a popular Nepali proverb (*buda budi ko jhagada paral ko aago*[174]). What often led to such disputes were the allegations of each not fulfilling obligations and duty.

Importantly, not all men viewed wife beating as acceptable, as one participant expressed:

… how can you be a marda [*manly*] *if you beat your wife. It qualifies as* namarda*; it is a matter of shame if someone beats a woman.*[175]

Non-violent approaches to disputes and fighting were also discussed by young men in a PLR in Sunsari:

Disputes should be solved peacefully. There should be win-win situation.[176]

While in a later comment in the same discussion, one male participant noted that non-violent approaches to conflict are dependent on the nature of the issue:

It depends upon the nature of the fighting. If there's dispute in the family, it can be solved by discussion. But, if there is a big fight, which has affected the society, that should be solved legally.[177]

Such views were also held by some of the participants in Sankhuwasabha, as expressed in the PLR below. For this participant, violence was a last resort for people who were not wise:

Someone who is wise, they do not harbour personal grudges. Only foolish people resort to violence.[178]

Critically, these quotes indicate that it is possible for young men to resolve disputes without being violent in a range of contexts. However, this was not a consistently-held view in the fieldwork areas, with the opposite quite often reported as the case. However, the use of violence against women can be a sign of weakness if such justifications did not exist. Given that men are also expected to protect women from violence, committing violence against women is a violation of that duty by men. Herein lies a tension between the use of violence and ideas of masculinities that rely on being able to protect. These contrasting views illustrate perspectives at both field sites about whether is it appropriate to use physical violence against women.

Rape was a type of SGBV that occurred frequently in the target locations. Young men both in Sunsari and Sankhuwasabha knew of cases and were able to share stories. Gang rape was mentioned frequently, as was rape of children, which was perceived as more shocking and socially unacceptable than rape of adolescents or adults.[179] Participants from Sunsari remembered cases of gang rape such as this:

The boy pretended to love the girl and he called the girl to a quiet place. By the time she arrived, he had called his other friends, and they raped her.[180]

While raping a woman or girl was not seen as acceptable, most people in our research, including the young men, but also many female community members, thought it was usually the woman's or girl's fault if she was raped. There was a widespread perception, from both men and women, that women's dress, behaviour and where she chose to be were to be blamed for sexual harassment and rape. A woman in Sunsari commented:

174 This means that a quarrel between husband and wife is like a fire in the hay, which can quickly lead to more family members being involved and the quarrel turning into a serious dispute but it can also be resolved just as quickly.

175 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, September 2013.

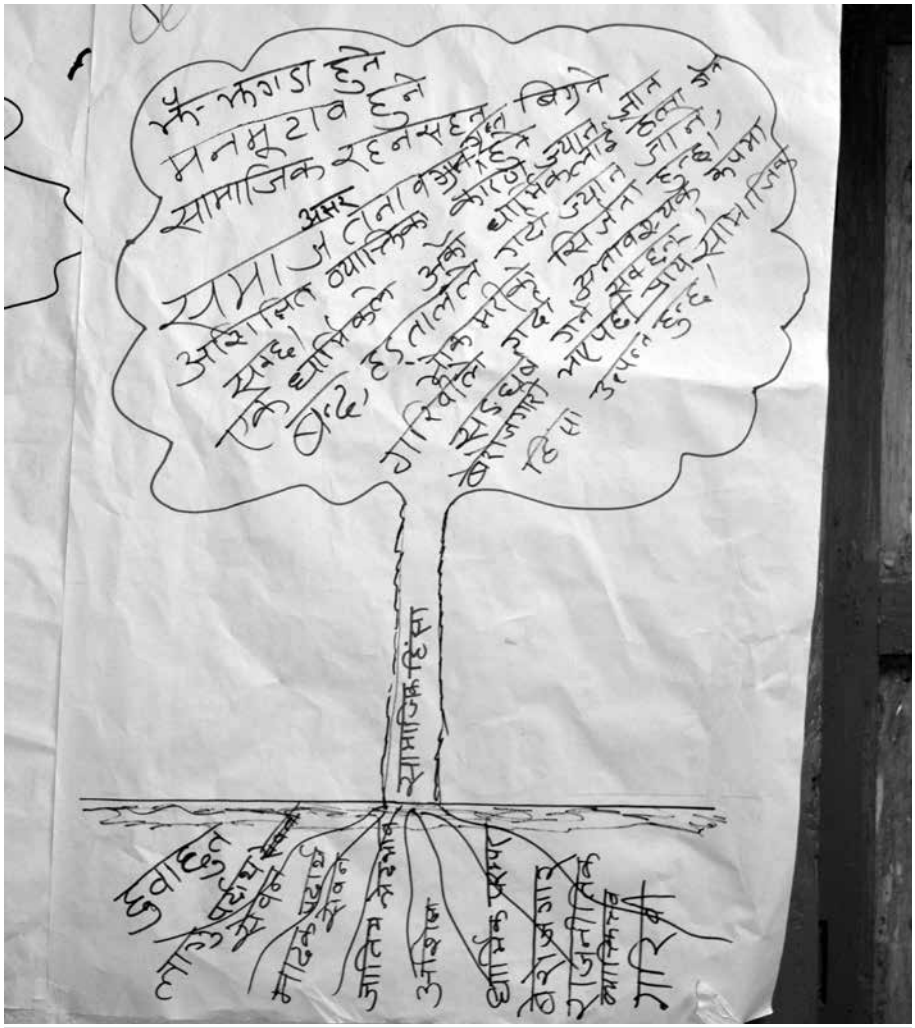
176 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

177 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

178 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.

179 Most of the victims in the rape cases mentioned were women or girls; however, SGM respondents pointed out that rape cases of SGM occurred.

180 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 14 September 2013.



Conflict tree: The conflict tree exercise allows a better understanding of the concept of violence, its causes and consequences, and its acceptance among the community. The participants were divided into small groups and were asked to draw a tree with reference to a specific type of conflict or violence they were aware of that happened in their VDC or district. The facilitator explained that the type of violence they had selected was the trunk, and that they should now think about what caused this type of violence (the roots), and what the violence led to (the branches). The completed trees were then discussed to get a more in-depth understanding of the issues.

The photo shows a conflict tree exploring social violence which illustrated social stigmatisation as an effect of the violence and was prepared by participants from Sankhuwasabha district.

Here is a girl who was wearing a tight shirt and leggings. That was so tight that anyone could easily make out the shape and size of her lady parts below. When you show your intimate parts, men see it with their vulture eyes and some of them might rape you. I told her that men will speculate about her intimate parts, so wear better clothes. She didn't say anything; she just laughed and walked away. You see, if girls have this attitude, then they will get physically attacked by men.[181]

There was a belief that if men became sexually aroused because women wore certain clothes, they could not control themselves. Therefore, it was seen as women's responsibility to not arouse men. A female participant in Sankhuwasabha reflected on this:

…if a girl is beautiful and she speaks or walks with a man then she is charged with being a slut. All these things come under violence.[182]

181 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.
182 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 7 September 2013.

A distinction was made between 'good girls' and 'bad girls', that is, girls who were perceived as behaving socially appropriately and those who did not. Asked about what a youth leader would do if he learnt that one of his group members had raped a girl, a participant from the Sunsari PLR group shared that if the girl had a good reputation, he would be angry; but if she had a bad reputation, he would not care. When discussing an instance in which a young girl was raped and murdered by her boyfriend, a young male participant in a PLR in Sunsari commented:

If the girl was good, why she had gone there? [*to the young man's house*].[183]

In the discussion that took place about this rape and murder case there was little condemnation of the young male perpetrator, but more a focus on the ways in which the young female victim in the case was responsible for what happened.

The longer-term implications of rape were discussed later on during the same PLR. The stigma associated with the female survivors of rape and harassment consistently emerged, while the perpetrators of such crimes were not the focus of stigma in the same ways. In this discussion it became quite clear that the implications of men raping women did not define their lives in the long term. A male participant in Sankhuwasabha linked this back to women's prestige:

Women's prestige can be lost more than men's. For example, if a girl is raped, the girl could not get married. The society does not accept that girl. However, the boy who had raped that girl, will be able to get married.[184]

This highlights the ways in which the implications of sexual violence and rape are strongly gendered, with young women being stigmatised in these contexts, despite being the victims of these crimes.

The young men also talked about the perpetrators of rape and how they were seen by society. This statement by a participant from Sunsari indicates that the lack of condemnation of rape by society result in a lack of deterrence:

If men are involved in rape cases and jailed, this will not affect them. People think that they will come out one day. People think it is normal. Men are 'mard' *and they go to jail. Jails are made for men. For example, one girl was gang raped. The police caught three or four men but later their families supported them* [*lobbied for them to be released*] *and they were released.*[185]

The quote also shows that even if perpetrators of rape are arrested, many of them are released after a short time, often because of pressure from influential community members.

While Nepal has legislation in place to combat domestic and sexual violence, and the NP has established WCSCs, which make it easier for women to report cases of SGBV, women still feel reluctant to approach the police with such sensitive cases. While police respondents in Sankhuwasabha stated that community members approach them for smaller quarrels between spouses or neighbours, they hardly ever receive reports related to SGBV.

Asked how they would behave towards a man who had raped someone, most of them hesitated and said that while they might not like talking and interacting with him, they would still do so. In the course of the research, participants started to reflect on why survivors of violence were stigmatised while the perpetrators were facing no or limited consequences, and they began questioning those practices.

183 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.
184 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 26 November 2013.
185 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

Women's experience and perceptions of SGBV[186]

In a series of interviews and focus group discussions, women made a range of comments about violence against women, with some sharing personal experiences of this. This provides an important context to the discussion in the previous section, giving greater detail as to the ways in which SGBV is experienced and viewed by a range of young women in the two locations. An educated woman discussed quite a wide range of issues as contributory factors to SGBV:

I have seen husbands kicking their wife. Wives are forced to tolerate everything because they have no access to property and nowhere to go… . Women are victims everywhere. If he just comes home drunk and his wife complains to him that she has so much work to do, the man shouts at her, saying that he brought her there to do all that work. This is also a form of domestic violence. Many women have unsafe delivery [*childbirth*]*. Some women are unable to provide sexual satisfaction to their husband, and the husband goes somewhere else. This is also domestic violence.*[187]

A woman in Sunsari shared her experience of being harassed when she and two of her friends had gone to collect firewood in a nearby forest. A group of six young men began to follow them and started using 'vulgar' words in their attempt to flirt with the girls. She said that they were really scared but tried not to react as they thought the young men might rape them:

…the boys repeatedly asked what we were hiding behind our shawls, referring to our breasts. We tried to come out of that jungle as soon as possible. Another man said, "You have a matchbox and I have a matchstick. Can I put my matchstick inside your matchbox?" We were unable to do anything at that time. We were so scared, and because the men outnumbered us we could not do or say anything apart from just praying that they would leave us alone, and walking as quickly as we could. From that day onwards I never walked in small groups in the forest or even went through it frequently. I didn't even tell anyone at home out of fear and shame of what they might say. They were not men from our village.[188]

This powerful account of this young woman's experience indicates the implications of this for her. While clearly she had done nothing wrong and had done nothing to provoke the men who mistreated her, she felt a sense of shame and isolation. Furthermore, she also changed her behaviour in order to reduce the risk of similar things happening to her on subsequent occasions.

Violence between and against men

As well as violence against women, participants also discussed cases of violence between and against men, which is challenging the notion of men as perpetrator and women as victim of violence. The most frequently experienced forms of physical violence included examples of individual provocation, or resulting from tensions between rival youth groups or gangs. But the participants also talked about more subtle violence, such as discrimination and the exclusion of specific groups or individuals.

Participants in our study indicated that fights between men occasionally broke out when there were personal grudges (*rishibi*) or disagreements between individuals or families, and sometimes within families.[189] Outside of their family, young men spend time together with their friends in youth groups or small 'gangs' and roam around in the village, or go to nearby market areas. Segregated from girls and socialising in all-male gangs, this is a key part of 'teenage culture' that young men experience. While some of those groups seem to be fairly unstructured groups of friends or peers, others seem to be more organised, often with adult leaders who make use of the gangs for

186 A study commissioned by the Enabling State Programme (ESP) found a very high level of sexual violence against adolescent girls in Nepal (2012, 'Sexual Violence Assessment in Seven Districts in Nepal' (Kathmandu).

187 Saferworld interview, Sankhuwasabha, 27 November 2013.

188 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

189 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the young men were not aware of, or did not want to discuss, cases where boys or young men had become victims of sexual violence. This could indicate that SGBV against boys and men is still a significant taboo in Nepal.

specific political or economic purposes. Occasionally, gangs get involved in fights. An informant in Sunsari gave an example of how a fight broke out between young men dancing at a wedding party:

I went to my aunt's (fupu) *marriage. There was a dance competition. One group was dancing well and they were about to win the competition. At that moment, youths from other group threw a bottle at another group. However, that bottle hit one of their own friends. Then there were fights within the group.*[190]

There was a sense that gang fights were a constant element of many young men's lives. Politically-motivated gang fights emerged quite consistently in our research as something that was important to young men. While in some ways young men are manipulated by the leaders of political parties, the young male participants in the validation workshop indicated that that there were important economic reasons for being aligned with political parties, as this enabled young men to earn money from these activities. Through membership in a gang or by being close to a political party, relationships could be established that could be useful in the future and potentially open doors to employment opportunities. These issues were particularly evident as the fieldwork for this report took place in the months around the November 2013 Constituent Assembly elections. A number of participants discussed fights between supporters (all male) of the political parties Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML)[191] during the run up to the elections in 2013. This fairly serious fight involved kicking, hitting and use of weapons such as knives (*khukuri*), iron rods or sticks. A participant discussed the fighting in some detail:

Those who don't understand our cause will misjudge us. Also, our families will advise us to get on the right path. People were not born to do wrong things. People were not born to steal. It depends upon the situation. We had not gone to [*location*] *to fight. The situation became like that. We move to do our own work, but the situation becomes different. So, we have to use* khukuri *and iron rods. It is situational.*[192]

This quote indicates that while violence was not the original intention, these young men were prepared to be violent as they had various weapons with them. It is important to note that political leaders are encouraging youth to use violence. The participants in the validation workshop mentioned that:

Local school teachers, elites and community leaders are the mediators who connect political parties with the local youths. It would have been difficult to have engagement with political parties without support from these community leaders. In other words, they bridge the gaps between youth and political leaders.[193]

This means that boys and young men learn that violence is a legitimate means to compete politically and strengthen one's position. Alongside these politically motivated gang fights between young men, other instances of gang violence were discussed in our research, which related to rivalries between other groups and associations with various groups of young men. The example below does not have a political dimension, and indicates the high risks and seriousness associated with gang violence:

We were going to Ilam from [*location*] *by motorcycle. When we reached the main road of* [*location*]*, other gangs shot us with pistol. They were also on motorcycles. After that we also fired at them. One of the boys from the other gang ran away and hid in a house.*[194]

Throughout the discussions of gang violence, there was a sense that gangs were important to young men for a number of interlinked reasons. For example, gangs gave young men a feeling and reality of security and support. In times of trouble or times when revenge was required, gangs were on hand to provide support in order to beat

190 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.
191 Nepali Congress and UML are political parties in Nepal.
192 Saferworld, individual interview with PLR participant, November 2013.
193 Saferworld validation workshop in Dhankuta, April 2014.
194 Saferworld, individual interview with PLR participant, November 2013.

up opposing young men. This is illustrated in the quote below from a young male participant in Sunsari:

Boys come to parties to take revenge, so fights happen. If someone is alone, boys call their gangs and they beat him… . If the person has links [*to a gang*]*, then he starts to fight. But if he does not have links, he walks away.*[195]

Being a member of a gang also seemed to provide a sense status and power; one young man proudly shared how he was beaten up in the nearby town by a rival gang. Critically, throughout all of these discussions, there were no examples of young women being members of these gangs or being involved in associated instances of violence. However, young women were often viewed as the motivation for starting a fight between gangs of young men, due to competition over their affections. It was suggested that girls who became the girlfriend of a member of a gang were more protected against violence than others, and that some girls might thus choose their boyfriend accordingly as a risk reduction strategy.

Other examples of violence young men had experienced included parental violence and violence at school. Being slapped by parents seemed to be a fairly normal experience, and it was largely accepted as long as it happened within certain limits. Likewise, being beaten by teachers in cases of misbehaviour was seen as normal. Teachers were highly respected and seen as role models; using violence against their students was not questioned. This also included a fairly high number of cases in which male teachers started relationships with underage female students, who then eloped with the teacher. While this was not seen in a positive light by the community members, there seemed to be lack of awareness that this constituted SGBV and was against the law; as long as the teacher then married the girl, social norms were not violated.

These examples indicate that violence between men was quite frequent and fairly accepted, and took diverse forms. Using violence against other young men was often seen as a sign of courage, to prove oneself as a man. Gangs are an important part of young men's lives, but there is a sense that the violence associated with these groups of young men might be declining (unless an election happens to be taking place).

Alongside physical violence between men, non-physical violence and stresses were highlighted by the young men. These included social and economic pressures and expectations that young men cannot meet, or discrimination and exclusion.[196] A small but growing part of modern masculinities relates to showing feelings and emotions more clearly, and some men in our research got distressed and emotional when discussing family problems. Many young men are struggling to cope with such challenges as they fear being seen as weak. As a response, various forms of self-inflicted violence were mentioned in our research. Likewise, suicide was quite often mentioned in the interviews and focus groups, and research participants shared that suicide among boys and men was fairly common where they lived. Participants discussed a number of examples of suicide, reflecting the global trend that young men in particular are at risk of suicide:[197]

Once a boy from that woman's village got beaten. Then he felt like he lost his prestige. He got drunk and then he hanged himself … A small boy committed suicide because of his stepmother. He was 13–14 years old. It is also said that his stepmother hanged him. Girls also commit suicide, but here mostly boys commit suicide.[198]

195 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

196 There are only a few mechanisms in place in Nepal that provide psychosocial support to boys and young men, although projects such as the telephone helpline set up by CWIN show that more boys and young men call the helpline than girls and young women (CWIN, Child Helpline Nepal – 1098. Quarterly Report January–March 2014).

197 Several studies have shown that suicide is a significant problem in Nepal. Unlike many other countries, in which the rates are higher for young men, in Nepal rates of suicide seem quite equal between young men and women, or higher for women (cf. Chakrabarti K, Devkota K (2004) 'Retrospective study of suicide cases admitted in Nepal Medical College Teaching Hospital', *Nepal Medical College Journal*, **6** pp 116–18).

198 Saferworld interview, Sunsari, 30 October 2013.

Masculinities influence men's seeking help,[199] particularly around mental health problems, which has an important influence on men's self-inflicted violence and suicide. However, to date there seems to be little support for young men in such challenging emotional situations.

Participants' illustration of violent behaviour and non-violent solution.
© Julie Brethfeld/Saferworld.

Violence against SGMs

In spite of the fairly progressive views voiced by the young participants regarding SGMs (see chapter 2), the SGM focus group highlighted that they suffered high levels of violence. Experiences of violence ranged from pressure to conform with social and gender norms to harassment and physical violence. One participant mentioned the following in the focus group:

We suffer from different types of violence. Male rapes male. (…) *Third gender male, third gender female are victims of sexual violence and mental violence. Some transgender involve themselves in sex work because of their poor economic condition. If we go to school to study, then they say, "You are a boy so wear a boy's uniform, cut your hair and come". Because of this, most of us quit school. So we are not well educated. Some third gender work as domestic workers and they suffer domestic violence.*[200]

The groups also highlighted that accessing legal and official support was challenging:

When we go and try to file a case, the police don't believe us and our case is not registered.[201]

Despite these problems, it was clear in these discussions that things were changing for this diverse group:

199 Please see Oliffe J L, Phillips M J (2008), 'Men, depression and masculinities: A review and recommendations', *Journal of Men's Health*, September, **5** (3) pp 194–202, for more on masculinities and help seeking.

200 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

201 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.

We are biologically female but we grow with male hormone. Family and society don't accept us easily. Before, I needed to hide my identity. I was not happy with my unknown identity. Now I am happy because I have my own identity.[202]

This is illustrative of a growing voice and public articulation of a range of sexual and gender identities in Nepal. This focus group explored some important issues and interesting differences in the experiences of a range of transgender people. For example, the difficulties experienced by transgender women are outlined below:

Transgender women[203] *are forced to get married and run their family. They don't have feelings for women but are forced to live with them, so some of them commit suicide. They are forced to behave like men and cut their hair. Some of them keep boyfriend or girlfriend though they are married.*[204]

The participant contrasted this with transgender men's[205] experiences and problems, as it was young men who were expected to marry, have children, and provide for the family. Young women were not subject to the same pressures which means they were not always forced into the situations outlined above. More research is required in this area to better understand the ways in which prevailing ideas of masculinity influence the experiences and perceptions of SGBV in the SGM community in Nepal.

The role of women in violence

On a number of occasions during our fieldwork, both men and women discussed the notion of violent women.

Many respondents pointed out that domestic violence against men happened as well, as this example from a PLR in Sankhuwasabha shows:

This [*violence*] *can happen to husbands as well. If the husband does not want to have sex, the wife might use force. Like, there can be equal violence against men also. Not all men are strong.*[206]

One of the participants in a PLR in Sunsari mentioned a person he knew who was the victim of violence from both his wife and daughter:

The husband usually drinks alcohol. Even he does not do anything wrong, his wife beats him. His daughter also beats him.[207]

It seems that if a man is seen as failing in fulfilling his responsibilities, whether economic or as father and husband, or if he gets involved in 'wrong things' (*naramro kaam*), then he too might be beaten (although this appeared to be a far less likely consequence for men than for women). When a wife beats a husband, this made the man feel ashamed (*beijjet*). Men spoke of getting angry when their wives would verbally abuse them in public, and commented, "my prestige will go down" (*shir jhuki halcha ni*).[208] Such gendered distinctions illustrate the ways in which men and women experience domestic violence and aggression differently, but that both male and female victims felt ashamed.

Within a context of systematic gender inequality, the research confirmed that women play a crucial role in violence against women. They often reinforce structural violence against women by promoting and living gender roles and norms that contribute to inequality and make women vulnerable to SGBV. Many women reinforce gender roles

202 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
203 Transgender women are individuals that have been assigned male at birth but identify themselves as women. This quote reflects the participant's confusion between gender identity and sexuality, having assumed that transgender women are heterosexual.
204 Saferworld Sexual and Gender Minority Focus Group, Sunsari, 12 September 2013.
205 Transgender men are individuals that have been assigned female at birth but identify themselves as men.
206 Saferworld PLR, Sankhuwasabha, 7 September 2013.
207 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.
208 Saferworld PLR, Sunsari, 28 October 2013.

and hierarchies by teaching their daughters to be 'good wives', expecting their daughters or daughters-in-law to be obedient and to endure mistreatment to ensure family harmony. For example, female respondents stated that they brought up their daughters not to be a 'home breaker', meaning that she should not do anything that would be against what pleases her husband or his family;[209] and taught their sons to 'manage their wives'. Likewise, mothers expected their daughters-in-law to obey them, and to obey their husbands. In fact, tensions between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law were mentioned frequently, and expectations mothers-in-law had were often enforced by violence, as this exchange between two unmarried young women in a focus group in Sankhuwasabha shows:

If a daughter-in-law doesn't work then her mother-in-law scolds her.

Sometimes a mother-in-law beats her daughter-in-law.[210]

Women were also found to play a strong role in victimising other women or girls who had become victims of SGBV by claiming that what had happened to them was their own fault, and that 'good women don't get raped'. The research team found a number of women in authoritative positions voicing such views, such as members of PLC or female voluntary health workers. This leads to high levels of social stigmatisation of female survivors of SGBV and discourages these women from reporting SGBV. As a result, cases of SGBV are not addressed and prosecuted as effectively as they could be, and an understanding remains that perpetrating SGBV is acceptable.

This shows that much more work needs to be carried out with women, not only building on existing efforts around equality and empowerment but also to change their own attitudes and behaviour. With mothers having such a big influence on their children in their formative years, it is important that they teach their children how to treat each other in a non-violent way that promotes gender equality, and to be an example for the same. Fathers also have an important role to play in this regard. It should also be highlighted that many boys and men said that because of the existence of bodies such as the PLCs or women's groups, 'you cannot beat girls anymore'. Although in practice violence against women and girls does of course still happen, this indicates that bodies promoting women's empowerment and justice can have a positive impact on deterring SGBV against women and girls.

209 Saferworld Focus Group, Sankhuwasabha, 3 September 2013
210 Saferworld Focus Group, Sankhuwasabha, 4 September 2013.

4

Conclusion

LOOKING AT TWO LOCATIONS IN EASTERN NEPAL, the research sought to explore what it means to be a young man today, how young men experience, accept and use violence, including SGBV, and to get a better understanding of whether and how notions and perceptions of masculinities link to violence, including SGBV. As one can expect from the topic and scale of the research, findings are not generalisable, and there is no one causal link between notions of masculinities and violence, including SGBV; rather, there are many different factors that need to be taken into consideration, many of which require more in-depth studies. However, the research did confirm that structural violence and physical or non-physical manifestations of violence – which are interlinked, with structural violence often leading to physical or non-physical violence – are equally important when talking about masculinities and violence, including SGBV.

Traditional gender norms in Eastern Nepal are being challenged by new social and economic opportunities and pressures. Young men increasingly have to deal with how those changes interlink with notions and expectations of masculinity. While the research found no clear idea of one hegemonic masculinity in the research locations, there are factors – most of them still linked to traditional values – that remain important for a young man to be considered a 'real man' by society: such as providing for and managing the family, producing an heir, taking care of the parents and performing important rituals. At the same time, there are many different options and sometimes contrasting possibilities of being a man and defining your position and relationship towards others, including women, many of them resulting from new opportunities linked to social and economic development, modern technologies and globalisation.

One finding of this research is that this disjuncture between social expectations; new opportunities and young men's dreams; and the realities in the context of unemployment and pressure to provide and consume in certain ways, is fraught with tensions and difficulty. The vast majority of men participating in this research do not and cannot perform and live up to their own dreams and expectations, or to those that society has of them. For the small group of men who can, their efforts are tied up with constantly maintaining this position. Conversely, for the vast majority of men, efforts to meet the gendered expectations they experience are most likely to result in failure and frustration.

One of the most important conclusions from this study is that violence is not seen to be simply an attribute of masculinity among young Nepali men in the research locations. A significant proportion of young men advocate peaceful solutions to disagreements and conflict, and a number of young male participants stated that violence might actually be a sign of weakness and not strength, and that violence, especially against those considered as weaker, such as women, can be an attribute of namarda [a good-for-nothing man]. There was also no indication of a perception of young men that

using violence or force in interactions or relationships of a sexual nature or related to a person's gender was expected for them to demonstrate their maleness.

At the same time, concepts such as courage, bravery, risk-taking and honour are important aspects of masculinities in the research locations. While these need not be linked to violent or aggressive behaviour, a certain level of willingness and ability to defend one's honour or show one's bravery, if necessary through violent means, was assumed. Thus, certain forms of violence, including physical violence, were not only practiced but also seen as generally accepted (albeit not necessarily appreciated) as typical behaviour of many young men, both by the young men themselves and by society.

Likewise, SGBV – in its structural, physical and non-physical manifestations – is part of young men's life experiences, whether as witnesses, perpetrators or victims. This study confirms that not only is SGBV mainly a reflection of existing inequalities, but that it is also a means to maintain the hegemony over subordinates. For example, structural violence has been shown to take forms that have a range of negative consequences for both young men and women, but particularly for young women. Through these forms of gender-based violence, young women experience restrictions of their independence and are controlled by various men (and some women) in their lives, in ways that young men do not experience. Young men were not aware that – often because of certain gendered expectations and roles – they were contributing to limiting women's freedom and autonomy, for example when controlling their sisters or wives to protect the family's *ijjat*.

An example of non-physical SGBV where power dynamics and the notion of male supremacy play a role is 'eve-teasing', where young men often went to the limit of what they thought a girl might find acceptable – although girls unanimously stated that they did not enjoy any form of eve-teasing – and often crossed that line, especially when in groups. The objectification of girls and girlfriends who (or whose photos) were passed on to peers if 'no longer needed' also links to this notion of male power and supremacy. In some instances, young men saw the use of physical violence, including SGBV, as a justified reaction to women challenging men, whether through behaviour or verbal statements, through their failure to live up to their role as a woman, or through their appearance, including the way they dress. This includes the use of (limited) domestic violence against wives who were seen as undermining their husbands' authority; and while rape was condemned, it was in the end the survivors of rape who were stigmatised by the community rather than the perpetrators, as men were not seen as being in control of their own sexual desires. However, it is important to emphasise that the young men in our research echoed what other community members, including women, stated, and that in the course of the learning research they started to question whether these attitudes were fair.

In the framework of this research, the clash of traditional notions of masculinities, the changing context, and the link to violence including SGBV was probably most visible in the connection between migration and domestic violence. Due to the expectation of and by men that they will provide economically for their families, many men migrate and leave their families behind, resulting in them failing another expectation, namely being able to care for and control their families, especially their wives. Respondents report that this often leads to family tensions with allegations of wives having extra-marital affairs, and research findings indicate that domestic violence by the husband or other family members against the wife is not uncommon.

The research has confirmed that while men are the most frequent perpetrators of violence, including SGBV, it is important to note that men are also survivors of violence perpetrated by other men or women. Furthermore, women as well as men play a significant role in reinforcing gender stereotypes and stigmatising women who are perceived as violating gender norms. Men who are struggling emotionally with existing pressures or who have become victims of violence face challenges to get support and

understanding, partly because of what are considered as gender-appropriate attitudes and behaviour for a man.

There appears to be little constructive guidance for young men in this regard, not least as previous generations were not subject to similar diversity of pressures and expectations that are now the consequence of locally-specific social change, influenced by regional and global changes. Young men often follow what they see in society. More often than not, this means that some of them repeat attitudes and behaviour that reinforce gender stereotypes, which in turn contributes to, or at least does not condemn, violent behaviour and SGBV. Thus, perpetrators of SGBV rarely have to face social consequences such as being ostracised as a result of their acts. The fact that, in spite of important efforts and progress by the Nepal Police, the enforcement of laws to curb SGBV is in many cases still insufficient, and the weak political will to take a strong stand against SGBV means that there is little deterrent, not only from society but also from the executive.

While this report recounts difficult experiences, there is also optimism throughout. There are young men whose views on masculinities, relationships, gender equality, and violence are positive and progressive. Many of them want women to enjoy the same opportunities as men, and said that they support the idea of women taking up employment to contribute to the family income, and that they value sons and daughters equally. Participants expressed sympathy towards people with disabilities, and tolerance towards SGM. Many disapproved of caste-based discrimination, which they perceived as violence. Furthermore, given opportunities for reflection throughout this research, many have started to question attitudes and behaviour they are exposed to and used to that promote a form of masculinity that valorises domination and violence and undermines gender equality. While they do not always know how to translate these positive attitudes into action, particularly against a background of social pressure, it is these voices that must be strengthened in order to challenge violence and gender inequalities wherever they are evident. Young men need to be enabled to use characteristics of masculinities they value in a positive way in order to contribute to a less violent society in which men, women and SGM enjoy the same rights and opportunities, and in which there is space to address the fears and challenges they are facing. Furthermore, social, political and economic conditions need to be established that encourage non-violence and gender equality and take a strong stance against violence, including SGBV in all its forms.

The research shows that the association of violence, including SGBV, with masculinity needs to be approached with great care. Violence, including SGBV, is not simply an attribute of masculinity per se, but more a consequence of certain situations, pressures and expectations from society, which are in part created by ideas of masculinity.

Recommendations

This report illustrates the potential for incorporating local understandings of masculinity into efforts to better understand and prevent SGBV in Eastern Nepal. Our research has identified a number of recommendations that point towards the implications of this research for policy and practice.

1. Young men can and should be effectively involved in efforts to address gender inequality and SGBV

To work in a context where gender ideologies are going through rapid changes and to transform gender notions and roles effectively it is important to work not only with women and girls but also men and boys. The participatory learning and reflection research process has shown that that young men struggle to understand and deal with expectations towards their gender, and receive little or contradictory guidance from

others in society. They also find it difficult to understand relationships and identify appropriate behaviour towards others, such as women and girls or SGM. Yet many of them were open towards a more modern and progressive understanding of gender norms and relations where women and SGM would have more autonomy and equality. Furthermore, our findings suggest that young men have the potential to be advocates against violence.

- In terms of men and violence, masculinities should not be understood only in relation to violence against others. Men, including young men and boys, have their own problems and needs, and would benefit from specific support addressing those. This includes issues related to SGBV against men and boys, which is still a taboo in Nepal; but also how to define new and accepted roles for men that go beyond traditional gender roles, and that reduce fears of and stresses related to 'failing' among men. Men and boys face pressures by society that are often linked to their ability to provide for the family as income earners and to competition among their peers as to who is bringing in the bigger income. Additionally, boys are being mobilised by political parties and their youth wings for political purposes, including for violent activities.
- When designing or implementing programmes to address challenges to gender equality, actors such as CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, donor agencies or government stakeholders such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) or Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MOWCSW) should continue to broaden their target groups and include men, boys, and SGM, rather than focusing only on women and girls. It can be effective for men or boys to talk to peers about gender equality, and this could be utilised positively at the local level. There is growing evidence that efforts to encourage critical self-reflection in young men around their masculinities can lead to positive changes in attitudes and behaviours.[211] Public campaigns, such as the Occupy Baluwatar protests in Kathmandu or the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence in which a lot of young, mainly educated urban men engaged as 'social activists', illustrate the positive contribution that men can make to reduce violence against women and girls and among men.
- Young men do not necessarily resort to violence as a means to assert their role as a man if other avenues are available. CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, donor agencies or government stakeholders should consider providing more space to young men to engage in those fields which allows them to participate in the discourses on 'responsibility' and 'duty' by serving the community or nation, and also make some money. Another obvious way to usefully engage young men in is employment creation or building their entrepreneurial skills so they can engage themselves in small trade and businesses.
- To address men's needs, CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, donor agencies or government stakeholders should consider designing men's programmes as part of their gender portfolio. This also means that rather than diverting funding and attention from programmes targeted at women and girls, funding for gender programmes needs to be increased. Psychosocial support and counselling can be provided by a range of organisations in cooperation with expert health services.

2. Bringing men, women and SGM together can be more effective than working with one gender group in isolation

Linked to the recommendation above, in addition to engaging boys/men, girls/women and SGM to address gender inequality separately, it is useful to bring those groups together to work jointly towards gender transformation. While having 'women/men/SGM-only' events might be necessary to start conversations about gender or talk about specifically sensitive issues, or to engage with groups that have more conservative

211 An evaluation of different models of engagement with men and boys to reduce SGBV, as well as on other issues such as fatherhood, HIV prevention and maternal and child health, is set out in Barker G, Ricardo C, Nascimento M (2007), *Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions* (World Health Organisation and Instituto Promundo).

gender hierarchies and might be reluctant to interact with other genders immediately, bringing the different groups together at some point is important as it encourages two-way conversations and exchanges in which men, women and SGM can all learn about each other's views and concerns. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that changing the role and norms related to one gender has implications for the other gender(s) as well. For example, if it becomes acceptable for women to take on employment and earn money, that has implications for the traditional role of and expectation towards men as breadwinners; likewise, if ideas about masculinity are changed, this will have implications for women. If those changes and the implications they have for different genders are not thought through and negotiated jointly, tensions may result.

Government stakeholders, donors, and CSOs should critically re-visit their existing strategies and programmes on gender equality, women's empowerment and SGBV to ensure that the projects constructively engage with men and boys, as well as women and girls and SGM and that they apply a gender transformative approach.

3. Revisiting existing awareness-raising initiatives and efforts to reduce or prevent SGBV

In recent years, many initiatives carried out by government stakeholders, CSOs, NGOs and INGOs have focused on or included elements of awareness raising to reduce gender inequalities and SGBV in its different forms. The findings of this research have shown that: 1) especially in locations that are more remote, more difficult to access and less densely populated, awareness on gender equality and SGBV is still very low; 2) where awareness exists, it has not necessarily led to a change in behaviour and attitudes, including among women who should be role models, such as PLC members; 3) statements from SGM indicate that they face less harassment in places where awareness on SGM is fairly high.

In the light of these findings, government stakeholders, donors, CSOs, NGOs and INGOs should critically revise their awareness-raising strategies. It is important to get a better understanding of what works, how and why; how geographically more remote locations can be reached effectively as well; and how the message brought across through awareness raising can result in behavioural change. While awareness raising is important, messages need to be designed in a way that is context- and target group-specific. Change in behaviour and attitudes takes a long time, so one-off awareness-raising events are unlikely to yield the expected results. Furthermore, participatory and interactive approaches to awareness raising might be more effective as they provide people with the opportunity to reflect upon the new information and the changes required, and to discuss what implications such changes would have (and also to consider whether they would be ready to take the risk that is always associated with change). Ideally, the awareness raising would be complemented by a component through which the improved awareness can be put into action. This all needs to be done in a conflict-sensitive way so it does not put people at risk, and sufficient time needs to be allocated to have a realistic chance of effecting change.

4. Further efforts to reduce social stigmatisation of survivors of sexual violence and to address their needs are required

Women and girls are often blamed for inviting sexual violence upon themselves, as the findings of this report show. Patriarchal values and the concept of *ijjat* guide social norms that encourage communities to ostracise women and girls who are survivors of SGBV.

- Efforts need to be undertaken to reduce the stigmatisation of survivors of violence, including SGBV. Stigma is a major challenge to reducing SGBV and changing gender norms. The fact that this kind of stigmatisation is deeply engrained in people's thinking, and is practiced by both men and women, makes it even more challenging to change.

A coordinated long-term multi-stakeholder campaign involving government stakeholders (especially key ministries and their line agencies at the district and VDC level), CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, and the media could contribute to changing the attitudes of people and institutions who blame survivors for what happened to them. Actors and organisations already working with stakeholders that should or could potentially be role models for gender equality, such as PLCs, mothers' groups, Female Community Health Volunteers, Community Mediation Centres, should jointly with those groups reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour and how they could contribute to further reducing stigmatisation of survivors of SGBV. Ministries and departments, especially from the education and health service, should ensure that their staff are supportive to survivors of SGBV. Government initiatives, such as the Nepal Police WCSCs, One Stop Crisis Centres for victims of sexual violence, and free legal service and safe house for SGBV victims within Women and Children Offices (WCOs), need to accommodate the needs and concerns of female victims, to ensure that further stigmatisation does not take place. Much less is known about the scale of SGBV against men and boys or SGM; however, similar services should be put in place and/or strengthened for male or SGM survivors of SGBV.

- At the same time, services supporting survivors of SGBV, such as counselling or safe houses, need to be rolled out more widely so they are known to and accessible to people. Provisions need to be in place to provide women, men or SGM who have become victims of SGBV with longer-term psychosocial and economic opportunities that will allow them to start an independent life away from their families if the risk of stigmatisation or recurring violence is too high.
- CSOs, NGOs, and INGOs that work to prevent SGBV need to ensure that their approach is gender-sensitive and contextually appropriate and need to proactively counter the stigmatisation. An approach that does not take into consideration the needs and concerns of a survivor leaving an abusive situation can incite further tensions within communities, particularly when a female survivor is economically dependent upon her male family members and has no other alternative means to support herself. It is necessary to take a survivor-centred approach that enables the survivor to make an informed decision about what steps to take.

5. Non-violent behaviour should be promoted from a young age

Certain forms and levels of (not always physical) violence are sometimes accepted in Nepal as a means to get one's demands met, whether in politics or at home. For example, this research has shown that using violence to control one's wife is in many cases seen as legitimate, by both men and women. To move away from violent behaviour and towards a non-violent solution to problems and tensions, it is important to work with children from a young age.

- Government stakeholders, CSOs, NGOs, and INGOs working in the education sector should further strengthen strategies and programmes that promote non-violent behaviour. In our research several groups of young men were encouraged to reflect on their own masculinities and how this might contribute to violence (against other men, women, and SGM). Such reflection needs to happen from young ages, at home and within schools – not only targeting boys but also girls. Non-violent role models need to be visible in local contexts in which violence is a particular problem. There were important examples of young men in our research who advocated non-violence; such voices need to be supported and strengthened. These efforts need to be complemented with broader outreach to the community level as parents, teachers, and local authorities should be encouraged to support their children on rejecting violence.
- Furthermore, school curricula often highlight historic events or figures that are related to aggression and violence rather than peace and tolerance. For example, wars and leaders fighting battles are given more attention than events or figures contributing to

peace and non-violent behaviour. The Ministry of Education should review the school curriculum to ensure that concepts of peace and non-violent behaviour are promoted. Furthermore, leaders from civil society and political parties, with support from key government stakeholders, should strengthen dialogue to jointly renounce violence as a means to achieving social and political changes. This includes rethinking how children from a young age, often still at primary school, are recruited and used by political groups to advance their own political agenda. Political parties should not only refrain from mobilising children and youth for political actions that could potentially turn violent, but renounce violence in general.

6. All forms of SGBV need to be challenged, including 'eve-teasing' and sexual harassment through mobile phones and social media

Our report has illustrated that there are a number of contexts in which SGBV, and particularly violence against women (both structural and physical), is seen as acceptable. This must be challenged by men, women and government institutions.

- Practices such as eve-teasing remain widespread and contribute significantly to fear, and can potentially lead to more serious, including physical, forms of SGBV. Measures should be taken to decrease acceptance of such practices and raise awareness that eve-teasing constitutes sexual harassment. Actors such as local authorities, Nepal Police schools, mothers' groups or youth clubs could be involved in such initiatives.
- The report has shown sexual harassment is increasingly taking place on the internet, particularly on social media, and mobile phones. Legislation to counter harassment in cyberspace, the Cybercrime Act (2004), has been enacted by the government. However, not many people are aware of the Act, particularly in remote locations, and the implementation of the Act is insufficient. Government stakeholders should raise awareness and implement the law. Donors, CSOs, NGOs, and INGOs can effectively use the internet as a platform for raising awareness of sexual harassment and other SGBV. At the same time, it is necessary to engage with young people, men, and women to prevent them from carrying out SGBV using the internet and mobile phones. The police have already initiated efforts to reduce cybercrimes through their Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB); however, the existing efforts should be strengthened and should transcend the organisation, across Nepal. For example, further investment in capacity building of the police to tackle the increasing number of cybercrimes is essential. Also, training on cybercrime should be included at the basic level to all new recruits because the evolving context demands it, and police will now naturally have to deal with more such transgressions.
- Many respondents in our research knew of cases in which male teachers had started relationships with their underage female students. While this was not appreciated by the community, it was also not condemned as long as the teacher in the end married the girl. It appears that little is done to prevent this from happening. Institutions need to be sensitive to these scenarios and clearly communicate to staff that violent behaviour, including SGBV, is not tolerated, and take measures against such practices if they occur.

7. Security providers need to reach out to target SGBV

The research has shown that not only was there little guidance for young men in terms of what constitutes SGBV but also that there were hardly any mechanisms in place that highlighted SGBV as a crime and ensured that perpetrators of SGBV have to face the consequences. Likewise, survivors of SGBV often find it challenging to report what happened to them. However, security providers, especially the Nepal Police, can play a very effective role in reducing SGBV.

- Mechanisms such as the Nepal Police's WCSCs, which cater for the needs of women, girls, and young boys, should be strengthened further. They should have more presence in remote locations outside the district headquarters, and the officers posted within the WCSCs should possess sound knowledge on laws and provisions related to SGBV. Additionally, there should be a gender balance among officers working in WCSCs, ideally including SGM, and senior ranking officers with strong decision-making capacities should be deployed within the WCSCs to effectively deal with cases of SGBV.
- Women often find it easier to talk to a female police officer if they have faced SGBV. Thus, the Nepal Police should continue to strive to increase the number of women police officers within their ranks who have the skills and capacity to address SGBV in a gender-sensitive and effective way. Mixed teams of police should be deployed more widely, including in remote locations, and have the means to proactively reach out to the communities. To ensure that women police officers can perform their services in an effective and professional way, working conditions need to be improved to ensure that appropriate infrastructure – such as separate toilets and changing facilities – is available and that policies, training and disciplinary measures are in place to prevent the harassment of women police officers by colleagues or members of the public.
- Capacity of security providers should be strengthened to provide security to SGM in a gender-sensitive way. This will require sensitising police officers to the specific situation and needs of SGM and ensuring that services are provided in a professional and non-discriminatory manner.
- Nepal Police should actively reach out to youth to reduce SGBV. For example, police officers could visit schools and talk to students about what constitutes SGBV, the consequences of carrying out SGBV, and what people who have become victims of SGBV can do. Police officers should interact in a constructive and non-threatening way with (especially male) youth to promote non-violent behaviour and discourage practices such as 'eve-teasing' and the inappropriate use of mobile technology. Furthermore, there should be a stronger presence and proactive approach against SGBV during festivals and market days and in locations where SGBV, including eve-teasing, is happening more frequently.

8. Strengthening implementation of legislation that prohibits sexual harassment and other forms of SGBV

While there are laws and mechanisms in place to reduce and prevent SGBV, implementation of the existing legislation is insufficient. The research findings show that communities and youths are either unaware about legal provisions against SGBV or that the patriarchal norms that encourage SGBV lead to resistance to attitudinal change. It is important that legislation, such as the Domestic Violence Act or the Sexual Harassment in Workplace bill, is enacted and proactively implemented by the security providers and relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, MOWCSW, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, and the Ministry of Education as a cross-organisational effort to reduce SGBV in all areas. Donors and CSOs should support government efforts to reduce SGBV by coordinating with their mechanisms and legislation and also contributing to policy and programming revisions.

9. Aspects related to SGMs need to be part of gender policy and programming

SGM respondents mentioned that in many respects, they enjoy more freedom in Nepal compared to many countries elsewhere as they are formally recognised by the state. However, often they are ridiculed and the social acceptance of their gender is challenging. Most gender-related discussion or programming does not take the needs and concerns of SGMs into consideration. Government stakeholders, donors NGOs, and INGOs should broaden their understanding of gender and pay specific attention to SGM, whose voices are often not heard. Government institutions as well as the

private sector need to be sensitised regarding the needs of SGMs, and services need to be provided in a professional and gender-sensitive way. Schools should talk about sexual orientation and gender identity to reduce ignorance and improve acceptance from a young age.

10. Areas for further research

Our research highlights several important areas for future research that have not been explored in this report in significant detail:

- **The link between migration and domestic violence:** There is strong evidence that migration (mainly by the husband) leads to tensions at the family level, which can increase the likelihood domestic violence, mainly because of mistrust between the husband and wife, with accusations of extra-marital affairs against the wife while the husband is away. There have also been suggestions that there is a link between migration and increased alcohol consumption by men, which again increases the risk of domestic violence. Further research is required to get a better understanding of social implications of migration in Nepal, including for SGBV, and of the scale of the problem.
- **Young men and their sexual relationships:** This was an area that was touched on in this research, although not to any significant extent. Conversations about sexuality and sexual relationships are challenging, but future research exploring these issues would give important insights both into masculinity and aspects of SGBV.
- **The significance of caste and ethnic identities in shaping masculinity:** Given the exploratory nature of this research project, the significance of caste and ethnicity in shaping local patterns of masculinity has not been explored in detail. Further research in this area would enrich and deepen the analysis of masculinity within and between different caste and ethnic groups.
- **Young men and their online lives:** The online lives of the young men in our research were extremely important to them; they spend significant time on various social media platforms. Online spaces are creating new ways for young men to engage with young women, including negatively in the form of online eve-teasing. The online performances of masculinity in these spaces requires additional research in order to understand better the ways in which online performances of masculinity are influencing offline performances and SGBV.

Annex: Methodology

The purpose of the research project was two-fold: first, to increase understanding on notions of masculinities and whether and how they link to violence, including SGBV; and second, to enable the participating young men to reflect on their own perceptions, attitudes and behaviour towards men, women and SGM, and their views and experiences of violence. Thus, the research applied a participatory learning approach that is based on the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. Some important recent work on methodologies and masculinity has influenced the development of this research project in a number of ways. Pini and Pease outline the importance of undertaking reflective research on men and masculinities, with a careful consideration of the implications of the gender of the researcher doing the research.[212] This perspective helped to shape our approach in engaging young men in sometimes difficult discussions about violence. The research and tools used were inspired by Care's Young Men Initiative, Instituto Promundo's Project H, and similar work done by a number of organisations, including members of the MenEngage network.

There were five research phases:

Phase One – Desk research: This stage involved collating and analysing existing literature on masculinities and SGBV in Nepal, which provided the context in which the later research stages are situated. During this phase, the methodology was developed in consultation with an Advisory Group including organisations and individuals with expertise on gender, youth and/or violence; research sites were selected; and the capacity of partners TST and YDC on gender and research was built.

Phase Two – Participatory learning research 1 (PLR1): This was carried out with young men in the research locations (14 in Sankhuwasabha and 21 in Sunsari). This phase focused on exploring what it means to be a man, on the important stages and events in a boy's or man's life, on perceptions towards women and girls or other groups, including people with disabilities (PWD) and SGM. Young men also shared experiences and views on violence. Participatory tools that were used in this phase included: drawing spatial maps; forming 3D-figures of 'ideal men'; developing timelines showing important stages, events and rites of passage in a man's life; mapping experiences of violence; and developing conflict trees exploring some of those experiences further. This phase also included a learning component in which the research team explained to the young men what constitutes SGBV and shared some legal provisions related to SGBV. The PLR 1 with young men was complemented by key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with other community members, including women and girls as well as representatives from government institutions.

Phase Three – Youth research: The PLR participants carried out small-scale research on topics they were interested in related to masculinities and/or violence. Topics selected by the young men included: the situation of PWDs; caste-based discrimination; young men's fashion; the daily life of young men; and local traditions related to men and masculinities. The young men used simple methods developed jointly with the research team during PLR1, such as taking pictures or using questionnaires.

Phase Four – Participatory learning research 2 (PLR2): In this phase, the research team attempted to gather more in-depth information and confirm some of the findings from phase 2, working mostly with the same young men as in PLR1. Key concepts and words that were used by the young men in PLR1 to talk about men and masculinity, masculine behaviour, women and girls, interaction between people, and violence were unpacked during this phase to understand better what the young men meant when referring to those concepts. This research phase also focused more on what change

212 Pini B, Pease B (eds) (2013), *Men, Masculinities and Methodologies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

young men would like to see in gender relationships and in relation to violent behaviour, and what could be done to achieve this change. The interaction with the young men was again complemented by KIIs with other community members.

Phase Five – Validation: A validation workshop was held in April 2014 bringing together PLR participants from both research sites. This provided an important opportunity to further explore and validate issues that emerged in the analysis of the material collected in the previous phases.

Following the validation workshop, participants discussed what could be done to reach out to other community members and share research findings and, more importantly, to advocate for a change of attitudes and behaviour contributing to SGBV. Activities were designed that were then implemented by the youth with support from YDC and TST, such as school campaigns or advocacy meetings with district stakeholders. Supporting these efforts, Equal Access developed radio programmes broaching issues such as SGBV, LGBTI and sexual harassment through the use of social media, organised inter-generational dialogues, and bus campaigns in the two districts.

In total, fifty-six interviews, five PLR exercises (of two to four days each), one validation workshop, nine focus group discussions (FGD), and nine pieces of youth research were carried out throughout the four phases of fieldwork.

Outcomes to date: Eight months after phase PLR2, Saferworld met with some of the partners and young men to understand whether and how the reflection process influenced young men's thinking and behaviour. While it is too early to draw any conclusions about larger-scale and sustainable changes, it was encouraging to hear young men talk about taking more responsibility in the household, or challenging friends who were eve-teasing girls. Many of them felt that as a result of them reaching out to other community members through advocacy activities, community members who previously perceived them as 'useless' saw them in a more positive light. Partners also shared how individual boys who had been known as 'troublemakers' had changed their behaviour and engaged more constructively in the community. Finally, one partner organisation highlighted that because of the engagement with men during the research, men are now more willing to be actively involved in gender programming.

Site selection and selection of participants

A couple of criteria guided the selection of the research locations. Saferworld opted to focus on non-urban locations with comparable demographic composition, and locations where the common caste and/or ethnic groups are not only Brahmin and Dalits, but include other ethnic and/or caste groups. Both research sites in the two districts had Brahmin, Chhettri, Newar, Rai and Limbu populations. Sankhuwasabha and Sunsari districts[213], both located in the same region, were chosen to enable a focus on the social and cultural similarities in both research locations. Having two sites allows comparisons between one research site in the Terai (plain), and one in the hills. The choice of the fieldwork sites was not driven by an interest in empirical generalisation, which would be impossible in any qualitative research of this kind, especially given its small scale. Rather, it was guided by an interest in gathering themes, norms, and values in specific sites.

The selection of youth participants for the PLR reflected the different ethnic and caste groups living in the research locations. The research team decided initially to work mainly with two groups of boys and young men aged 16–25, one in each district. However, in Sunsari, the research team decided in the PLR2 phase to involve some additional boys and young men in a separate group as the groups selected for PLR1 turned out to be more homogeneous than previously expected as they were all members from the same youth club. Thus, while we worked with 14 participants in Sankhuwasabha, the number increased to 21 in Sunsari.

213 In each district the research focused on environments that people live and move around in, rather than on administrative areas. Thus, both research locations included youth and other respondents from a number of adjoining wards and VDCs.

To get a balanced representation of boys and young men in different life situations, the team sought to get participants:

- from different identity groups (ethnic, caste, religious, etc.);
- married and not married;
- with higher and lower education, or with none;
- from wealthy families and with poorer backgrounds;
- employed, unemployed, and still in education .

As much as possible, participants were not close friends or relatives and emphasis was put on getting a considerable number of people who had not previously participated in other NGO activities, especially gender-related activities. Finally, we successfully engaged boys and/or young men who had a reputation for being in challenging situations.

Research questions

This study was guided by a number of research questions. While these questions directly guided the field research, it is to be acknowledged that these are big questions for which only a partial answer could be offered, and any findings from this study must be treated as exploratory.

Masculinities

What are the local ideas associated with men?

What characteristics are associated with the notion of an ideal man?

What is the nature of masculinity, male norms and power relations, and how are they changing?

How are men who do not conform to the ideal male model perceived?

Men's views of the 'others' in their lives

How do men talk about the women in their lives?

What are young men and women's views, attitudes and expectations towards each other?

Are men comfortable with women entering the workplace?

How do men feel about changing male roles?

How are the ideas associated with sexuality and relationships changing?

Young men and violence

How do young men perceive violence? What are their experiences and exposure to violence?

What is the local understanding of SGBV? How do young men talk about SGBV? How do women perceive SGBV?

How is violent or aggressive behaviour linked to ideas of masculinities?

How is SGBV perceived locally? How is it defined and justified?

How attitudes and behaviour related to SGBV are perceived as male, why, and how this is expressed?

Research ethics and limitations

Ethical considerations were applied throughout the research process. Efforts were made to ensure that participants were able to share their thoughts and views in a safe and non-judgemental environment. Subsequently, throughout this report details identifying particular individuals have been removed in order to further protect the identities of research subjects. The research team did also not encourage the participants to disclose if they had committed a serious act of sexual violence.

The research design and challenging nature of the subject imposed the following limitations:

- The research applied a participatory learning approach. The research team acknowledges that providing information on gender or SGBV and reflecting on those issues jointly might influence responses of research participants in the further course of the research.
- The age bracket of young men selected for the research (16–25 years) was too large. During PLR1, younger participants were shy to speak openly. Thus, the research team decided to split participants in smaller age-specific groups and do more group work than initially planned.
- While this report provides a clear sense of the complexity of modern masculinities in Nepal, the reference against which this is compared did not emerge so clearly. 'Traditional' masculinities are mentioned on a number of occasions. However, as the focus of the research was on boys and younger men, neither the time nor the resources were sufficient to allow a fuller understanding of generational changes in masculinity through more in-depth discussions with fathers and grandfathers.
- The participants in Sunsari in particular were quite used to interacting with NGOs and in research, which might have influenced their responses during the fieldwork in telling us what we wanted to hear.
- The findings cannot be generalised into conclusions about the whole of Nepal, given the small sample, choice of research methods and location of both sites in Eastern Nepal.
- Discussions around sex, sexuality and relationships were not as full as might have been expected and hoped, mainly because these topics were difficult to discuss in a short time frame.
- While we looked at aspects of SGMs experience in relation to violence and masculinity in this research, we did not specifically ask SGMs to participate in the PLR as this would have put them potentially at risk. We did discuss views and attitudes towards SGM in the PLR, but did not insist on focusing on it if it did not emerge as an issue for the participants. In Sankhuwasabha, which is a fairly remote district, knowledge about SGM was very limited and initially people said that there were no SGM living in their district or VDC. There was a FGD held with a Sexual and Gender Minority group in Sunsari (due to a relatively more 'open' environment in Sunsari), but not in Sankhuwasabha. This meant that discussions about diverse sexual identities and experiences were quite limited.
- Translation of the research materials always poses a range of issues, with some words (such as marda which can only roughly be translated as 'maleness') not finding a direct and easy translation in English.

Bibliography

Ahearn L M (2004), *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters and Social Change in Nepal* (New Delhi: Adarsh Books).

Anderson E (2009), *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* (London: Taylor & Francis).

Bourdieu P (2001), *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Boyce P, Coyle D (2013), *Development, discourse and law: transgender and same-sex sexualities in Nepal* (Sussex: Institute of Development Studies).

Butler, J (1990), *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge).

Central Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008* (Kathmandu).

Centre for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities (CREPHA) and International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) (2012) *Baseline Survey on Advancing Justice Sector Reform to Address Discrimination and Violence against Women in Four Selected Districts of Nepal*

Chakrabarti K, Devkota K (2004), 'Retrospective study of suicide cases admitted in Nepal Medical College Teaching Hospital', *Nepal Medical College Journal*; **6** pp 116–18.

Chopra R, (2004), 'Encountering Masculinity: An ethnographer's dilemma' in Chopra R, Osella C, Osella F (eds) *South Asian masculinities: context of change, sites of continuity* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited an associate of Kali for Women).

Connell R W (2005), *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Connell R W, Messerschmidt J W (2005), 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept' *Gender Society* 2005, **19** p 829.

Coyle D, Shrestha R, Thapa C J (2014), 'Women's insecurities and the workplace in Nepal, A study from Banke and Bara districts' (Kathmandu: Saferworld).

ESP HimRights/PPCC (2012), 'Sexual Violence Assessment in Seven Districts in Nepal' (Kathmandu).

Furuta M, Sarah Salway S (2006), 'Women's position within the household as a determinant of maternal health care use in Nepal' *International Family Planning Perspectives* **32** (1) March.

Galtung J (1969), 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research' *Journal of Peace Research* **6** (3), pp 167–191.

ILO (2014), 'Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a jobless recovery?' (Geneva, ILO).

Johnston-Coeterier N (2014) 'A gender sensitivity resource pack – Nepal' (Kathmandu: Saferworld and IHRICON).

Liechty M (2003), *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

Ministry of Health and Population Nepal (2011), 'Nepal Demographic and Health Survey Report 2012' (Kathmandu: New ERA and ICF International).

Nanda P, Gautam A, Verma R, Hong K T, Puri M, Linh T G, Tamang J, Lamichhane P (2012). *Study on Gender, Masculinity and Son Preference in Nepal and Vietnam* (New Delhi: International Center for Research on Women).

Oliffe, J L, Phillips, M J (2008), 'Men, depression and masculinities: A review and recommendations' *Journal of Men's Health*, September, **5** (3), pp 194–202.

Osella F, Osella C (2006), *Men and Masculinities in South India* (London: Anthem Press).

Pini B, Pease B (eds) (2013), *Men, Masculinities and Methodologies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Saferworld (2013) 'Snapshot of Local Security and Justice Perceptions in Selected Districts of Nepal District assessment findings' (Kathmandu).

Seidler V J (2006), *Transforming Masculinities: Men, Culture, Bodies, Power, Sex and Love* (London: Routledge).

Sharma J R (2007), *Mobility, Pathology and Livelihoods: an ethnography of forms of mobility in/ from Nepal* (PhD thesis. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh).

Srivastava S (2014), 'The cultures of Twenty Century Masculinity', in Dasgupta R K, Gokulsing K M (eds) *Masculinity and Its Challenges in India: Essays on Changing Perceptions* (North Carolina: MacFarland and Company).

Tamang S (2002), 'The Politics of "Developing" Nepali Women', in Kanak Mani Dixit, Sashtri Ramachandran (eds) *State of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Himal Books) pp 161–175.

UN (2013), "UN Nepal Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in Nepal (2013)" (www.un.org.np/headlines/un-nepal-statement-violence-against-women-and-girls-nepal).

World Bank/DFID (2006), *Unequal Citizen: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal* (Kathmandu: World Bank and DFID).

The Society Touch (TST) is an organisation that aims to improve rural livelihoods in Sankhuwasava District, Nepal. Established in 1998 it works to provide social services, reduce and eradicate social malpractices, promote education, economic empowerment, social justice and health awareness. TST works to develop and implement programs to increase access to basic needs of the rural poor and those discriminated against and enhance and develop the livelihoods of woman, dalits, and marginalised ethnic groups. TST is associated with the social welfare council and NGO federation of Nepal.

The Youth Development Center is a social enterprise that was established in 2007 at Itahari, Sunsari, where it currently has its main office. The aims of the Youth Development Center are to enhance the personalities of youths by developing youth entrepreneurship, empowering youth-led organizations, and serving society. It works in collaboration with other like-minded organizations.

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict.

COVER PHOTO: Local boys in Sunsari bicycling from school. © JULIE BRETHFELD/SAFERWORLD

The Society Touch
Chainpur-10
Sankhuwasabha
Phone: 029-570039
Email: thesocietytouch@yahoo.com

Youth Development Center
Itahari-7
Sunsari
Phone: 025-581323
Email: youthdevcenter@gmail.com
Web: www.youthdevcenter.com.np

Saferworld
UK OFFICE
The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Square
London N1 6HT, UK
Phone: +44 (0)20 7324 4646
Fax: +44 (0)20 7324 4647
Email: general@saferworld.org.uk
Web: www.saferworld.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1043843
A company limited by guarantee no. 3015948

NEPAL OFFICE
Jhamsikhel-3, Lalitpur
P.O. Box No. 13576, Nepal
Phone: +977 5522491/+977 5013594

ISBN 978–1–909390–20–1