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Contextual Attributes of the Family and Community that Encourage or Hinder the Practice of
Intimate Partner Violence in Nepal

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Abstract

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By Nwokolo Chidumebi

Background: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a public health issue overwhelmingly borne by women irrespective of social, economic, religious or cultural group. IPV in Nepal is underlined by the deeply rooted culture of male dominance and female subservience [1]. This thesis seeks to uncover characteristics of the family and community that affect gender equity and IPV in this context to harness the influences of these factors in violence prevention programming.

Methods: The study is set in three Nepali districts; Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu. Data includes focus group discussions with community leaders (N= 3 groups) and family members of participants (N=12 groups) conducted as part of the baseline data collection of the Change Starts at Home Project; a cluster randomized trial of a multicomponent intervention designed to prevent IPV among married women in Nepal. Discussions were conducted in Nepali; transcripts generated then analyzed with Grounded Theory.

Results: In this study context, the delineated roles of the male and female within the family and community have overarching effects on what opportunities are granted to them. The behavioral expectations of masculinity and femininity within the family and community operate symbiotically to protect the practice of intimate partner violence because they further the notions of male dignity, female tolerance, conditional acceptance of IPV and intervention being seen as interference. The experiences of a married woman within the home are affected by the dowry system and her relationship to the husband's family, specifically the mother-in-law. Alcohol emerged as an important factor in IPV occurrence.

Conclusions: A multi-level myriad of factors alter the risk of being a victim or perpetrator.

Recommendations for addressing IPV include targeting young children, female autonomy, wife as

property and alcohol abuse in IPV prevention strategies, addressing the cycle of abuse from daughter-in-law to mother-in-law and discussing the idea of 'interference'.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Context of Project

The term ‘Intimate Partner Violence’ refers to a range of behaviors that occur within the confines of an intimate relationship causing physical, reproductive, psychological, social or sexual harm as well as result in an increase in the likelihood of the victim developing negative health behaviors [2]. This definition includes violent behaviors by both current and former spouses and intimate partners. The behaviors involved in the perpetration of intimate partner violence encompass not only the widely recognized physical aggression but also psychological abuse, forced intercourse, sexual coercion and varying forms of manipulative behaviors including the sabotage of a victim’s birth control regimen. Although women have sometimes been found to be the aggressors in a case of intimate partner violence, the burden is overwhelmingly borne by women at the hands of men, especially in low-income countries [3]. It is an issue that outspreads international borders, a problem many women bear irrespective of social, economic, religious or cultural group. In fact, a global systematic review done by WHO on the prevalence of violence revealed that about 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence and when an event occurs at this level of frequency, it can be safely classified as a “global public health problem of epidemic proportions” [4].

The ramifications of this form of abuse include poorer health outcomes and negative health behaviors among the victims. Women who have been victims of intimate partner violence, in any capacity, report much higher rates of health complications and are almost twice as likely to suffer from depression [5]. According to a systematic review on the health impacts of IPV, these women are more likely to experience a broad range of physical and mental illnesses and symptoms including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, suicidal ideation, self-harm, insomnia, pain, respiratory conditions, musculoskeletal conditions, cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, and gastrointestinal symptoms [6]. Additionally, the

severity and frequency of violent episodes play a role in the severity of symptoms experienced by the victim. Other studies have also identified increased rates of eating disorders, substance dependence, antisocial personality disorders, and non-affective psychosis [7]. They are also more likely to have an abortion and in some cases, are 1-5 times more likely to acquire HIV than their counterparts who have not been victims of intimate partner violence. The dynamics of abuse and efforts at prevention are complicated due to the emotional and economic dependence most victims have on those who victimize them [8].

Problem Statement

A majority of what we understand about intimate partner violence are gleaned from Eurocentric studies, which do not necessarily provide information that is relevant to other contexts and worldviews [9]. More recently, there is a growing body of work relating to a more diverse selection of countries but it largely focuses on response rather than prevention [10]. The papers on prevention often focus on individual factors rather than community or societal factors that may affect the occurrence of intimate partner violence.

The burden of intimate partner violence is no different in Nepal, underlined by the deeply rooted culture of male dominance and female submission [1]. The societal prominence given to men and boys has translated into inequitable practices toward girls and women, with serious effects on their socio-economic status, health and development [11]. These characteristics foster the occurrence of intimate partner violence as an 'open secret' where the women, as lesser members of the society, are culturally expected to resign to episodes of intimate partner violence [12]. Although the country has made significant strides in addressing the issue of intimate partner violence, Nepal has a dearth of rigorous studies on intimate partner violence against women especially on contextual attributes and primary violence prevention strategies [13].

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this thesis is to uncover the contextual attributes of the family and community that affect gender equity and intimate partner violence in this specific context to inform prevention intervention efforts that seek to harness the influence of these factors in violence prevention programming.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Violence against Women

According to Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, violence against women is defined as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’ [14]. The second article of that same document goes on to clarify that violence against women encompasses but is not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the family, perpetrated in institutions within the community or enacted and condoned by the state. The contents of that 1993 declaration, are especially important because they take into account the various avenues through which violence against women can be perpetrated and also acknowledge the fact that the abuse of women and the female child no matter how, when or where it occurs often stems in part from women's and girls' traditionally secondary status in society. This means that any efforts to reduce violence against women and the girl child must be framed in the context of gender equity and women empowerment.

Gender inequality, which has been identified as one of the foundational drivers of violence against women and young girls, is often powered by social norms and power structures that are fundamentally discriminatory to women. The patriarchal nature of most societal norms exist because these societies were formed from religious doctrine mandated by male authorities, hence, attitudes and systems that promoted

male dominance and female subsidiarity became the norm [15]. The global statistics of violence against women state that at least one in every three women is beaten, raped or otherwise abused during the course of her lifespan [3]. Violence against women differs from violence against men and general interpersonal violence in nature and pattern of occurrence. This is because while complete strangers mostly perpetrate interpersonal violence, violence against women is often carried out by people that they are emotionally involved with and women are far more likely to be victimized by close relatives than men are.

The general conceptual understanding of violence is an evidence based ecological framework, posited by the World Health Organization in 2002, that states that violence is not caused by a single factor but instead a multi-level interaction of various factors- individual level, personal relationship, community contexts and societal factors [16]. According to the report, the individual level encompasses factors such as age, education, societal factors and any biological and personal history factors that influence behavior and may alter the probability of being a victim or perpetrator of violence. The personal relationship level looks at close relationships and how those may alter the risk of experiencing violence as either a victim or a perpetrator. The community context level looks at the characteristics of social settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence and the societal factor level examines social and cultural norms that create a climate that either support or undermine violence as an acceptable manner of handling conflicts. The framework, as depicted in figure 1, is represented by overlapping rings to illustrate how factors in one level, affects factors in another level. Therefore, prevention efforts for violence often address multiple levels of this ecological framework to improve sustainability of results.

Intimate Partner Violence

The World Health Organization identifies intimate partner violence as one of the most common forms of violence against women and it includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as controlling behaviors by an intimate partner [17]. The global burden of this form of violence is overwhelmingly

borne by women and it occurs regardless of socioeconomic, religious and cultural groups [3]. In 2005, the World Health Organization carried out a study focusing on intimate partner violence that included over 24,000 women from 10 countries in order to obtain comparable data on different forms of violence against women in different cultural and economic contexts [18]. The researchers found that intimate partner violence was common throughout all the study sites although variation was found within and between countries.

Overall, between 15% and 71% of 'ever-partnered' women reported physical or sexual assault by an intimate partner and about half of these respondents reported that the violence was still ongoing. Between 1% and 28% of 'ever-pregnant' women reported being abused during one or more pregnancies, with the majority of sites falling between 4% and 12%. They also found that many of the women had not reported the experienced episodes of violence: between 20% and 66% of women, reporting violence in the study had never told anyone of their partner's violence prior to the study interview. Women who had experienced sexual or physical violence were consistently more likely to report a series of physical and mental health symptoms, including pain, difficulties with daily activities, emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal attempts.

One of the most important findings of this study was how much violence against women is still considered acceptable in many parts of the world. In about half of the sites, 50–90% of women agreed that it is conditionally acceptable for a man to beat his wife. Situations during which this form of violence was considered acceptable included refusing sexual advances, disobedience to the husband and not completing assigned housework. This finding is consistent with the idea of husband ownership of wife, which is found within many of the more traditional societies. Consequentially, inflicting physical beatings upon the wife is regarded as the fundamental right of the husband especially if the woman is found to have overstepped her traditional place in the home or shown disobedience and disrespect towards her spouse [19].

When looking at the determinants of IPV, secondary education, high socioeconomic status, and formal marriage offered protection, while alcohol abuse, cohabitation, young age, attitudes supportive of wife beating, having outside sexual partners, experiencing childhood abuse, growing up with domestic violence, and experiencing or perpetrating other forms of violence in adulthood increased risk. The strength of the association was greatest when both the woman and her partner had the risk factor [20].

Intimate Partner Violence in Nepal

As with almost every part of the world, women in Nepal experience a great burden of intimate partner violence. A review of 70 population-based studies, found that women in developing countries experience a significantly greater burden of violence compared to those in developed countries. This difference was attributed to the greater access that women in industrialized countries have to support services and, hence, more opportunities to escape from violent relationships [21]. The 2011 Demographic and Health Survey reported that 22% of women aged 15-49 in Nepal have experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15 and 9% assented to having experienced physical violence at least 12 months prior to the survey. About 12% of women in this same demographic reported experiencing sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. One-third of women in Nepal who have ever been married reported either physical or sexual intimate partner violence in the past twelve months with 40% reporting physical injuries. This survey also included the husband's family of origin as perpetrators of physical violence and concluded that nearly 2 out of 3 women who have experienced violence never tell anyone about their experiences [22]. The younger women experience the brunt of this burden; one study conducted among young married women aged 15-24 in rural areas of Nepal found an even higher prevalence, 54 %, of physical and sexual violence in their lifetime [23]. In a study examining the linkages between gender identities and the use/tolerance of gender based violence, 93% of the respondents in the region of Terai, which is where our study population is located, said they had watched men in their locality beating or scolding women either frequently (27%) or sometimes (67%). Additionally, 57% of women said they had been victims of sexual violence compared to 26% among the men [24]. Intimate partner violence, is also a frequent occurrence

during pregnancy in Nepal. These altercations often result in abrasions, bruises, sprains and fractures from physical beatings and forced sexual intercourse as well as varying degrees of verbal abuse, neglect and deprivation resulting in deep emotional distress to the gravid victims [25].

Sociocultural Context of the Study Population

According to the United Nations Development Programme, Nepal's Gender Inequality Index (GII) rank for 2015 was 115; the higher the GII value the more disparities between females and males and the more loss to human development [26]. Politically, there is extensive discrimination against women and girls. As of 2009, Nepal still had 96 discriminatory provisions and 92 schedules in various acts and provisions, including the Constitution, that have discriminatory provisions which provides various rights and responsibilities only to men and indirectly boosts the familial preference of the male child [27]. Fundamental discrimination exists in a multitude of areas including property rights, sexual offence, and marriage and family relations.

Several steps have been taken by the Nepali government to address components of gender based discrimination especially violence against women. Nepal is a signatory to 23 treaties and International Human Rights instruments with the legal framework in Nepal largely supporting women's rights and equality [28]. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 provides protection for women's rights including equal right to property ownership, the right to reproductive health, the right against discrimination, right against physical, mental and other forms of violence including marital rape and a quota provision for the representation of women in constituent assemblies [29]. According to the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, '*no physical, mental or any other form of violence shall be inflicted to any woman and such an act shall be punishable by law*'. Despite the progressive laws in place, there is a huge disconnect between policies and practice. The sociocultural context of Nepal is one that still emphasizes male dominance and female subservience allowing a system that nurtures a public undercurrent of gender and caste based discrimination that systematically robs its female citizens of fundamental human rights. After years of

reinforcing a strict caste based system, the Constitution of 1990, established Nepal as a “multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and democratic” country. This constitution was supposed to grant equality to all citizens of Nepal regardless of religion, race, gender, caste, tribe or ideology but it fell short of allowing women the right to pass their citizenship to their children and changing the traditional practices that supported of gender and caste-based discrimination [30].

The tradition of gender inequality constitutes a major barrier to human development. Nepali practices such as *pardah* (seclusion of women), *chaupadi* (isolation during menstruation), early marriage, dowry practices and preference of the boy-child often results in negative consequences for the development of women and girls, their capabilities and their freedom of choice. When a boy child is born into a home, he is culturally referred to as *Budes kaal ko sahara* (economic support in old age) because he is expected to look after his parents in their old age while the girl child is referred to as *Paraya Sampatti* (someone else’s wealth) because the daughters move to their husband’s house after marriage along with a portion of her family’s wealth due to dowry practices [31]. The preference of the boy-child is a deeply rooted part of the Nepali culture and starts a trend of systematic marginalization of women from a young age evident in an infant mortality rate of 40.2% for the female child compared to 27.8% for their male equivalents. The girl child is seen as *Paraya Sampatti*; therefore, her education takes a back seat to their male counterparts and is not a priority for most families. This is because the daughters are needed at home to take care of their families, work in the fields and many of them end up married at an early age. Marriage at an early age has been identified as a risk factor for IPV as well as IPV during pregnancy because it put the young girls and women at a greater risk of emotional, psychological and physical manipulation from their husbands and his family [32]. Due to their young age, these women may still be battling with self-esteem issues, limited financial resources, developmental immaturity as well as poor negotiation skills. These attributes make them less capable of protecting themselves and more open to the effects of psychosocial challenges [33].

In many Nepali districts, while the boys may have a choice of either formal education or *madrastas*, the girls have only *madrastas*; a cultural education that does not provide a degree recognized by the government, hence, many girls do not go on to acquire tertiary education. The mean years of schooling for women in Nepal, is 2.4 and only 17.9% of the female population, aged 25 and over, have at least some secondary school education [34]. This in turn provides a barrier for the development of women and they end up facing a disproportionate burden of poverty resulting from a reduced access to formal employment, human development opportunities outside a domestic role, excessive work burden and even access to food and nutrition [35]. Women make up 74.8% of the unpaid family labor force and only 15% of the workforce because women and girls are given the responsibility of taking care of housework while men and boys are discouraged from doing the same [36]. Female members of the family head about 19.7% of the households in Nepal. The women leading these households have little to no access to productive resources as well as other economic and political opportunities that the men in the community may be given. These female-headed households go on to experience a high dependency ratio, smaller land sizes, lower levels of literacy and lower access to information media. As a result, a larger percentage of female-headed households fall below the poverty line when compared to male-headed households [37].

The traditional family hierarchy of a Nepali home is one that places the man above the woman and lays emphasis on respect for the elder family members. Therefore, even within her home, the role and capabilities of a woman is often tethered to the decisions of her husband and his family. However, this position is considered far more favorable than being alone because single women in Nepal face a greater burden of discrimination, especially those who are widowed or once-married [38]. In a majority of the marriages in Nepal, after the women are married, she goes on to live with her husband and his family as opposed to living on their own. In these types of arrangements, the women, especially the daughter-in-law, often find themselves on the lower end of the family hierarchy. Most times, this leaves the women with little or no voice in the home and autonomous actions and disagreements often lead to violent

episodes. According to the National Demographic Health Survey, about one-third of married women in Nepal have experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence [22]. The most common perpetrator of these acts are their husbands although other members of the husband's family have often been implicated as culprits. A woman's place within the home is elevated only when she becomes a mother-in-law and is therefore able to make decisions that are more independent and enjoy more freedom than the other women in the home enjoy.

The function of this section is not to provide a blanket theory on how the entire population of Nepal operates or to say that the experience of the population of women in Nepal are homogenous. These women have a broad spectrum of experiences affected by several factors including age, social caste, religion, context, ethnic groups and socio-economic standing. However, understanding how women as a gender are seen in Nepal and what general or unique barriers they face as female citizens of this country can help to better understand the behaviors and norms relating to intimate partner violence that are presented in this paper from the qualitative analysis.

Chapter III. Methodology

The goal of the main study utilizes a concurrent mixed-methods design to evaluate the effectiveness of a multi-component social behavior change communication strategy (SBCC) involving a radio drama and community mobilization to change attitudes, norms and behaviors that support the practice of IPV in Nepal. The quantitative portion of the evaluation employs a cross-sectional, pair-matched, 2-armed, single blinded cluster trial (RCT: N=36 clusters, 1440 individuals) to compare the SBCC strategy to radio programming alone for its impact on physical and / or sexual intimate partner violence. This was conducted at baseline, 12 months' post-baseline and will be repeated 24 months' post baseline.

The qualitative portion of the evaluation comprises of several in-depth interviews with participants (N=18 couples), focus group discussions with community leaders (N= 3 groups), and focus group discussions with family members of participants (N=12 groups) to understand the impact of the intervention and to examine mechanisms of change. The effects of the SBCC strategy is estimated with generalized logistic mixed models to compare differences in primary outcome from baseline to 12-month follow-up, and baseline to 24-months follow-up in accordance with intention-to-treat principles.

This thesis concentrates on a subset of the qualitative portion of the study, specifically the baseline focus group discussions with the community leaders (N= 3 groups) and with the family members of participants (N=12 groups) to understand the contextual attributes of the family and community that encourage or hinder the practice of intimate partner violence in this context.

Study Context and Participants

Study Context

This study is set in the three districts of Nepal- Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu as seen in Figure 2. These districts were purposely selected because they are located in ‘*Terai*’- the region with the highest IPV prevalence [22]. They are also located in areas in which the local implementing partner, Vijaya Development Resource Centre (VDRC), has extensive contacts on the ground and a strong local reputation to facilitate a welcoming and safe atmosphere for the project activities. Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu are the southernmost districts in the Western Region while Chitwan is adjacent to Nawalparasi and is one of the southernmost districts of the Central Region. All three districts are over 80% Hindu and similar profiles in terms of ages at first marriage, levels of female ownership of land, and female literacy. Overall, a comparison of the three districts suggests that Chitwan has the highest and Kapilvastu has the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development [39].

Participants

The unit of randomization for participant selection is the VDC (Village Development Council). Eligibility criteria of VDCs included those that are at least 30 – 40 kilometers in distance from one another, have

separate major markets and major health centers, and are similar socially and economically (predominant caste, language, level of conservatism) to at least one other VDC in the sample as determined by the implementing partner. VDCs in which the implementing partner (VDRC) has existing relationships or the ability to develop relationships with community stakeholders and gatekeepers were prioritized for selection.

Family members are eligible to participate in the study if they are 1) at least 18 years of age, and 2) a family member of a participant in treatment group activities. Community leaders are eligible to participate in the study if they are 1) at least 18 years of age, and 2) considered to be in a position of authority or influence within the study communities per the recommendation of other community stakeholders. Across activities, participants are ineligible if they cannot communicate in Nepali, have plans to relocate in the coming 2 years, or have an easily detectable physical or cognitive impairment that would preclude their participation.

Data Collection

The data included in this research paper are the baseline focus group discussions with the community leaders (N= 3 groups) and with the family members of participants (N=12 groups). Two similar open-ended structured focus group discussion (FGD) guide informed by current literature in IPV was developed for the community leaders and family members of the participants. The guides are in Appendix A. The FGD guide for the baseline focus group discussions with the family members of participants contained questions related to family based norms on gender equity and intimate partner violence like *'How widespread is the belief in your family that husbands may use force to reprimand their wives because men should be in control of their families?'*. The guide for the community leaders contained questions on attitudes on gender equity and intimate partner violence, community norms on gender equity and intimate partner violence, as well as the contextual factors that are occurring within the community like *'In this community, how would most people respond if they saw or overhead a man hitting his wife?'*.

Collection of the qualitative data was accomplished with the services of a professional data collection firm, Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA). This firm was chosen from a formal bidding process. IDA was selected based on their prior experience collecting IPV and other sensitive data, their understanding of safety processes that were required, and their experience handling complex field operations. Enumerator training occurred over an 8-day period in VDRC's training facility in Gaidakot, Chitwan and a one-day refresher training day occurred in the same facility just prior to the qualitative interviewing. The training was designed to teach information related to violence against women, build proficiency in select research skills, build proficiency in the use of research technology, and provide opportunities to practice the skills and for trainers to examine if the participants had mastered the skills necessary to conduct research. The training was also designed to leverage the skills and experience of the interviewers, many of whom had already conducted qualitative or quantitative research in the districts of Nepal. The discussions were audio recorded with the consent of participants.

Data Analysis

The baseline focus group discussions with the community members and family members of participants were analyzed using the Grounded Theory method [40]. The Grounded Theory approach was chosen for this analysis because of its focus on the construction of theory rather than a description of application of theories that already exist [41]. The theories are generated from the dataset itself and not from the pre-existing theories of the researcher. The focus group discussions were conducted in Nepali; transcripts were then generated from the audio recordings in straight to English. The transcripts were read through multiple times to identify themes using analytic memos. Then a working codebook with a mixture of deductive and inductive codes was developed was generated by three team members who had read the community leader transcripts. The memos were then compared and discussed in collaboration with project team members in Nepal before the codebook was augmented and systematically applied to the data. The main codes were analyzed using thick descriptions; these descriptions were compared by

transcript type (community leader vs. family member), gender of participants and community of participants. From there, conceptual categories were formed which were eventually linked to create a working theory and eventually, a conceptual framework.

Data Validation Measures

During data collection, the quality control measures used in this study included the selection of interviewers that have prior experience collecting data on sensitive topics, with special emphasis on violence against women and girls. Standard Operating Procedures for recruitment, data collection, implementation of intervention activities, monitoring, and safety were documented in field manuals. At every step of the data analysis, coding strategies and data interpretation was systematically crosschecked by a group of team members in Nepal to help rule out possible misinterpretations of the data and personal biases of the researcher. There was no official method of gauging data saturation due a predetermined sample size but analysis of the data reveals that at a certain point, no new themes were being yielded but the transcripts produced supported already existing codes and categories. The analysis was carried out in a patient, iterative manner, and with the involvement of several other team members to ensure that the researcher was reflexive and that conceptual categories and theories were rooted in the data.

Chapter IV. Results

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 3 depicts the factors that were found, from the qualitative analysis, to encourage or hinder the practice of intimate partner violence within the study context by code categories that represent several levels of the WHO ecological framework for understanding violence (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). The individual level contains the themes and categories discussing the societal factors as well as the biological and personal history factors that influence the personal attributes of the husband and wife and may alter the probability of being a victim or perpetrator of violence. The personal relationship level looks at themes that discuss the close relationships formed within a joint and single

family home and how those may alter the risk of experiencing violence as either a victim or a perpetrator. The community context level looks at the thematic attributes of the community members and leaders that characterize the social settings associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Finally, the societal factor level contains the themes that examine social and cultural norms that eventually create a climate that either supports or undermines violence as an acceptable manner of handling conflicts within a relationship. The framework is represented by overlapping rings to illustrate how factors in one level, affects factors in another level. For example, the norms and beliefs affect how the community and family members as well as the husband and wife perceive and react to intimate partner violence. However, certain attributes of the community and family members as well as the husband and wife may have an effect on the norms and beliefs of the community at large. The conceptual connections depicted in the diagram are explained below in the emerging themes.

Themes

The qualitative analysis of the focus group discussions with family members and community leaders of couples provided several significant themes and insights. The emerging themes were compared by community, gender and participant type using thick descriptions but no substantial difference was found between them. However, subtle nuances will be pointed out with each theme.

The Responsibilities of a Married Woman

The main responsibility of a married woman lies within the home. Generally, the women are the first ones to wake up and the last ones to go to bed. After doing her *Pooja* (prayers) she begins her assigned tasks, which often include keeping the home clean, keeping the rest of the family members fed and taking care of livestock depending on the family's means of production. These chores are seen as her '*morality*', and as one of the men in the Nawalparasi FGD said, if she (the woman) does a good job taking care of the children, her days will '*go better*', if not her day '*would not pass properly*'. These men do not see a reason why women should venture beyond the boundaries of her home because her responsibilities lie within. There is mention of a form of hierarchy amongst the women in the home. All the women are in charge of

household duties and serving other family members but the daughter-in-laws serve the older women- the mother-in-laws. In this way, there is a nuance in the household responsibilities; if a daughter-in-law is present, the bulk of the responsibilities might fall to her. She is also charged with maintaining peace within her family and her in-laws.

'...in family here are different member so she has to manage all them and make bond with them throughout the family...' (Male, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

In addition to the household chores, some of the women are involved in producing income for their families. During the rainy season, the women in rural farming communities often work on a contract farm growing food for the property owner and their families. In some families, the women also go out to work for wages and some perform tasks like tailoring to earn supplementary income for their families. Some of the women are educated and are able to get employment outside the home but her employment is always secondary to her duties at home. In the mornings, she completes her chores, goes to work and returns to complete nightly chores. However, some of the women talked about not having time to do anything outside the home due to their household responsibilities especially in a joint family home. She might be educated and able to get a good job outside of the home but there is often so much work to do within the home that they are not able to do much else.

Due to the sheer magnitude of her responsibilities, many of the women realize that they are not always able to participate in community meetings or do things outside of their homes. There was some mention of feeling as they were being taken for granted, they felt that their work was not appreciated and they were often blamed if the home did not run smoothly e.g. if they were late for serving tea or unable to perform any household task. However, some women described being able to spend some leisure time with friends and community activities but this often occurred only after she is finished with the morning chores, sent the other family members out to school or work and before she has to prepare for dinner and other nightly chores. The women also noted that leisure time is a more acceptable practice for men than women.

Sometimes, some women in the home are excluded from the household chores but only for reasons like age (too old or too young) illness or disabilities. In those special instances, the men might offer assistance in household chores. As one of the men said during the Chitwan FGD, these (household chores) are the things 'a woman should do' because 'it is not possible that we (men) do those works'. Some men are able to perform these chores when the women are not available.

The Responsibilities of a Married Man

The chief responsibility of men is generation of income, a responsibility they often find burdensome especially when compared to what women do every day, which is seen as easy or relaxing. The female member of the household may be contributing to the income but the norm dictates that it is the primary responsibility of the man to provide for his family. If the man is educated, he is often able to find foreign employment and travel far to send money back to his family. Many of the men have to work several different jobs to put food on the table and a lot of them travel to distant places (Gulf Countries) in order to earn enough to put their children through school. The ones with no education often engage in odd jobs and agricultural work and trade to generate income for their families. The only men exempt from this responsibility are those that are either too old or with disabilities. In these communities (especially Nawalparasi), it was noted that jobs are hard to come by and a lot of the young men spend their time doing leisurely activities for example playing cards or drinking with friends. When asked to describe how a man spends his days, the men wake up have breakfast, go to their places of employment, some come back home for lunch and return to work and they come back home for dinner after work. They also seem to have time to meet with friends and socialize before and after work. Most men do not participate in household duties and the ones that do are often subject to criticism from other men and women in their neighborhood. The household chores are seen as the primary responsibility of the woman so that even if both the man and woman are employed outside the home, the women take care of the household chores before and after work mostly on their own. Some of the men (especially the young ones) assent to helping their wives with household chores but this is not common practice, his main responsibility is providing

for the family. Others talk about doing household chores only if the wife is sick, unavailable or unable to do said chore. After a hard day at work, some men imbibe and come home drunk to their families, which was noted to be a potential trigger for IPV. Although the men talked about the primary reason for employment- that is to provide for the family-they also talked about fulfilling a sense of social responsibility and passion through their work. They are able to participate fully in the community and attend community meetings.

The man is also often responsible for heading the family, which often involves maintaining his personal dignity in the home, the reputation of his family and assigning duties in the home. The issue of male dignity is especially important because this is seen as the root of control over his family. Without this dignity and control, he is unable to properly provide guidance and direction to his family.

'...dignity remains if we listen to the eldest one and if not then there's no respect left. If they do not listen to what I am saying, then I am not respected...if not then my dignity is over. Look, if they work accordingly then my regard is there if not then my respect is offended...if my son and daughter in law do not attend to what I say then my stature is over...' (Male, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

This strong delineation of gender roles starts at an early age and in some homes, the male child is discouraged from participating in household chores.

'...Some men are in a habit of not doing household work since their childhood. Later in life, it is difficult for them to do these works and make a habit of it. They start slowly, by doing few things at a time...'
(Female, Kapilvastu, Community Leader)

They also learn by observing how the men in their homes keep the respect of their family members. Even after marriage, the generational transfer of values could continue through advice and modeling of behavior from his parents.

'...grandfather used to beat grandmother... father used to beat mother so that I have to beat my wife; this type of thinking is here in society...' (Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

However, if his family of origin promotes more roles that are non-traditional during his upbringing and after marriage, the man is more likely to see his wife less as a subordinate and more as a partner. There is less need to be in control and demonstrate a show of power.

The Role of the Family

The discussion of the role of family on the married couples mostly revolves around the husband's family of origin. This is because married couples most often move in with the husband's family of origin forming a joint family home instead of living on their own. The roles of family members become more important in these types of families especially that of the mother-in-law. The decision-making process and family headship now involves the opinions of the mother and father-in-law even concerning how the women in the family work or take care of their offspring. The family of the husband often model gender roles, which can result in transmission of negative or positive values. There is a higher pressure on the husband and wife to adhere to traditional norms in joint family situations out of respect for the mother and father-in-law. Most times, the mother-in-law has experienced and tolerated some form of violence and the expectation is passed unto the daughter-in-law to bear the same. The mother-in-law has a decision to uplift or suppress the daughter-in-law. Most of the time, how she decides to behave to the daughter-in-law can set the tone for how she is treated by others in the family.

'...we should forget our past. We should not treat our daughter in laws like how we had been treated. They are like our daughters. We must treat them like our own daughters. However much we have

suffered, we must treat them like our own daughters forgetting our past. If we give love, we'll get loved....' (Female, Kapilvastu, Family Member)

The women are pressured to carry out the household chores with less room for mistakes and the men are pressured to establish headship in the family through either violence or reluctance to assist in household chores. The role of the family begins before even marriage because gender roles are learned at an early age and men that have never had to participate in household chores while growing up are more reluctant to do so in their married homes. After marriage, the presence of the family in the home (as in a joint family home) can further enforce these stereotypes depending on the beliefs of the mother-in-law. The husband could begin to treat the woman in a better or worse manner depending on what he thinks is expected of him from his family.

'...while the in-laws are present, we do everything faster. Suppose we wash the dishes faster. So when the in-laws come to visit, there are some changes in the husband's behavior...'

(Female, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)

The family members have a voice in the home and can choose to be peacemakers (where they make only positive and constructive comments) or provocateurs (where they instigate conflict between couples). In a joint family situation, more people means more opinions, which can increase likelihood of conflict. If there is a misunderstanding between the couple, the presence of other family members might be helpful or detrimental to the situation depending on their agendas. This also applies to IPV episodes. The family members can help in resolving issues between the couple.

The dowry system is thought to be a source of hostility towards the wife and can further the notion that the wife is the property of the husband and his family.

'...there are cases like when female get married then member of husband's family will not say anything but when she came home after marriage then start to give her torture for not bringing dowry. Beating her and sometime trying to murder too...' (Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

As a result, the daughter-in-law is traditionally seen as an outsider and is often viewed with distrust by other members of the family. Due to this sentiment, the husband is often faced with the task of balancing attention between his wife and his parents (especially his mother-in-law); the pressure is heightened in a joint family home. This competition for the husband's affection often leads to conflicts and can inspire episodes of violence from the mother-in-law as well. After an IPV episode has occurred, this dynamic can lead to an unequal show of support to the husband and disbelief of the wife's claims. In these cases, the woman might feel less support within the home and is left more vulnerable to episodes of intimate partner violence. Within the family, the concept of preserving dignity is especially important. Therefore, after IPV episodes, the instinct of the families involved is often to shield their shortcomings from the outside world instead of addressing the problem. However, if the woman feels accepted by the family, she is able to build support and more likely to get help from within the family during IPV episodes. The presence of other family members in the home could reduce the likelihood of victim isolation and the family members become a buffer in especially calamitous episodes of intimate partner violence.

In a joint family, due to the traditional precedence of male over female and old over young, the woman and sometimes her husband might find themselves on a lower level of the family hierarchy. The mother and father in law are often the head of the home; they assign duties, provide guidance and make sure everyone is doing their share. In a joint family, the mother and father-in-law can transmit values by modelling behaviors or giving advice on certain issues. Every day, the couple is exposed to how the husband's parents interact with each other and this might have a positive or negative effect on how the couple themselves interact with each other. Peace is maintained in the household when every member cooperates and takes care of their assigned responsibilities.

In a single family home, the man and his wife do not live with his family and instead live on their own. If the husband is a perpetrator of intimate partner violence, the single family home could be disadvantageous for the victim because she will have no one within the home to step in and deescalate the situation or protect her from her attacker. Prolonged episodes of intimate partner violence can also lead to victim isolation in a single family home. In some cases of intimate partner violence, some men physically restrain their wives in addition to assault. If the man and woman live alone, there is a lower chance of someone finding out what is happening to her.

'...a husband hit his wife. For three days he locked the door from inside and hit her, and if he had to go out, he locked her inside and went...' (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Additionally, the dynamics in a single family are less complicated. The family hierarchy is more straightforward because the adult members of the home are the husband and the wife; even if the husband is the head of the home, the opinions of the woman are not far behind. The presence of fewer opinions in the execution of family decisions often result in fewer opportunities for conflict. The absence of other family members, especially his parents could mean less pressure for adherence to traditional norms involving family headship.

Norms

The participants discussed several norms that are prevalent in the communities, the reasoning behind each of the norms as well as how open people are to changes in the traditional norms.

Balancing Act between Husband and Son role

When discussing listening to wife over parents (and vice versa), there was a lot of conversation about the husband trying to equally show love and affection to the wife and the parents. There is a lot of pressure on the husband to maintain a balancing act between listening to his parents and wife because listening is highly equated to showing love and care. On one hand, there is the fear that the wife will get upset and leave if she does not feel valued and on the other hand, there is fear that the parents will be hurt,

disrespected, unloved and perceive that the son is ungrateful. Even if the man respects his wife's opinion, there has to be some consideration of his parent's opinions out of respect. It is the responsibility of the couple to show love and respect to their parents and take care of them in their old age. Therefore, from the parent's point of view, when the son listens more to his wife's opinion, there is fear that he will slowly separate from them and eventually abandon them. This is because of the belief that the wife is an outsider, may not care for the well-being of the parents, and might influence the son to do the same. Therefore, when a son listens to his wife over his parents, it is equated with parental neglect and the wife is seen as the main reason behind it. His parents can feel distrust towards him

'If he only listens his wife that how can I trust him' (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

As one of the male family member participants from Chitwan said *'if a banana knot is untied, the rope becomes straight'* referring to how the family unravels when they do not trust each other.

The effects of this struggle show up not only in division of labor but in division of earnings. Traditionally, before marriage, the man gives his earnings to his parents. If he starts giving his earnings to his wife after marriage, there is a fear that the parents will feel unloved. Some men end up secretly giving money to their parents to avoid conflict, which can upset the wife and lead to a bigger conflict when it is found out. This struggle also comes into play during disagreements between a mother-in-law and wife. If the husband sides with his wife, the mother feels distrusted. Therefore, when these sorts of disagreements are brought to the son, he often opts to scold his wife and side with his mother, which is seen as a more favorable choice regardless of who is at fault. The mother feels that her opinions should take precedence because she has been with the son from birth and the wife is a new member of the family.

'If he doesn't respect then we obviously get hurt. I gave him education, I raised him, I slept where he peed and kept him in my lap...So, if the son whom they have raised with such love and care only listens to his wife and doesn't listen to mother...then it is bad...There are sons who say-my everything is my wife.'

(Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

It is ultimately the responsibility of the man to decide who is right at any given time-sometimes he listens to his wife, sometimes his mother and sometimes neither. The education level of the mother or wife is mentioned as one of the factors in the husband making this decision. This means that the husband is more likely to take advice from whoever is more educated. Education is also seen as a factor that eases the tensions brought on by these decisions; if the family members are more educated, they are less likely to attach high levels of distrust or contention to the husband choosing to listen to someone else. If the wife is educated, and actively shows that she supports taking care of the parents, that fear is eased, the mother-in-law trusts the wife and she does not feel so bad if he listens to the wife over her because she knows they will still take care of her. A majority of the participants assented to taking the word of the parents (especially the mother) over the wife and the mother-in-law often partakes in important decisions especially involving the daughter-in-law.

Family Headship

There is the general belief that the family needs one leader to be able to run smoothly and more often than not, the leader is the husband or the eldest person in the household. In most families, the husband makes decisions, and if he is not around, then the wife can make decisions in a single-family situation. For example, in one of the communities (Chitwan), a high percentage of the male population are away on foreign employment so the women carry out most of the decision-making within the family and the community. Originally, the men in the family have handled most of the decision-making but women are increasingly being invited into the decisions. When a man consults with his wife to make decisions, he might receive some criticism from neighbors and family.

'...In the place where I used to live before, people even used to say that some men were kept in leashes by their wives. Such horrible comments were made there. But whatever I do, it is done with the mutual agreement with my wife...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Community Member)

Most of the men in joint family homes talk about making joint decisions with their families; they all sit down and discuss things before making decisions. Even if there is a head in the family, they still meet and

discuss before decisions the head makes the final decision. It is believed that family members should consult each other before making huge decisions to avoid conflict. The opinions of the elders (mother and father-in-law) often take precedence and in some cases, the opinions of males take precedence over females in the family. Sometimes religious leaders are asked to help in decision-making.

Family headship is decided on a family-by-family basis however, allowing the man or his parents to be the major decision makers in the family is the norm and is seen as a sign of respect. It is the job of the head of the family to keep the peace within the family, provide guidance, maintain the prestige of the family and assign duties. In single-family situations, the opinions of the in-laws have less pull than in a joint family situation. Some couples are able to make decisions on their own but there are men who do not take advice from their wives and make unilateral decisions because they feel that they are superior to them. These men are thought to be less educated or pressured to act that way by the outdated opinions of their families. Some men take advice from their mothers and not their wives, which is cited as a source of conflict. Education is also seen as a factor in decision-making.

'...I take all the decisions by myself because my wife is not educated. I have attended till class 10 but my wife has not even attended till class 1 so due to this I take all the decisions of home by myself. I take consult with my sons and with my family but the last decision would be mine...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Family Member)

A man is more likely to take his wife's advice if she is educated and if he is educated.

Acceptability of Violence

When discussing acceptability of violence, the community leaders agreed that men did indeed hit their wives but it most likely happened if he was drunk or if she had done something impudent i.e. speaking back to him during an argument. There is also some mention of violence to men by females in a specific community outside of the study context (*Tharu*) but these episodes were said not to happen very often, and are generally not taken seriously. There was also a mention of the generational transmission of

values; the grandfather beat the grandmother, the father beat the mother and so the men grow up thinking they are allowed to beat their wives. There is this idea that a man who cannot beat his wife into submission is weak.

'...that husband is really suffering. And he is suffering because he cannot beat her. He is not courageous enough, not strong enough. That is why he is easily dominated...' (Female, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)

The mother-in-law is listed as a source of violence in the home both directly (through beating) or indirectly (through encouragement of beating). Alcohol is also cited as having a role in the frequency of episodes; when the husbands are drunk, they are more likely to be violent. Some men go out to drink with friends after work, something that many of the wives do not appreciate. If she confronts him when he gets home drunk, he often gets defensive and feels disrespected which could lead to an episode of IPV.

'...in some instances, I have seen that men go outside the house. They go to the hotels, eat and drink. They return home at 10, their wives ask them where they have been. And the men threaten their wives, beat them...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Community Leader)

'...if he has stop drinking then there may be no more fight in family...I frequently say him stop drinking alcohol so much. When he drinks alcohol, he become fully uncontrolled and does not understand anything...' (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

'...no, no when you (the wife) are sitting without speaking or doing anything then not. When male raise his hand over wife for beating then probably something has entered inside him, he must have drink alcohol...' (Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

Even without provocation from the wife, a drunk man is seen as more likely to treat his wife poorly.

The way the community members react to a victim of intimate partner violence can affect the cycle of abuse. When witnessing an episode of violence, outsiders are not likely to step in because even the women who are being abused see that behavior as interference in family issues. The participants often used the word 'interference' to define any intervention towards IPV episodes because this issue is often

seen as a family issue, not a public one. The wife is seen as the property of the husband and his family, so many people believe that the decision to use violence within a home is a family issue and not a public issue. This behavior can embolden the perpetrator and encourage victim isolation.

*'...for three days she locked the door from inside and hit her, and if he had to go out he locked her inside and went. When his parent and people of the society asked then he said why do you care. Yesterday he beat his wife till she fainted, so police was called and they handcuffed him and took him away. Even when the police arrived he cursed them by saying – you stick man why have you come here? **Why do you care if I beat my wife?** So, they took him to jail. These things happened...'* (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Many outsiders do not do anything about it because of a bad experience they might have had the last time they tried to separate a couple e.g. being beaten or insulted for interfering. If beating happens too often, then some outsiders have said that they will interfere but if it happens only sometimes, they leave it alone unless the woman directly asks for help.

Some of the men said they do not believe in using force and issues can be solved with conversation but pressure is often felt from parents to be stronger in the way they 'control' their wives. However, some men feel that when talking to their wives does not work, they have to introduce force.

'...strength must be needed...depends on what it is...if she does not obey then...must hit 1-2 slaps'.

(Male, Chitwan, Family Member)

'...if your wife is free and she does whatever she can then to control her a husband must warn her...at first the if not then must scold her as well then she must get beaten as well sometime not always...'

(Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Violence seems to be conditionally accepted within the family and community; it is seen as something that has to happen sometimes to maintain the decency in the home, a tool used to put the woman back in her 'place' during suspected infidelity or impudence.

'...Violence is not good but also some time somewhere we can hear about this because of some women. women also should not miss use their rights and responsibilities. She should respect her husband and In laws. Yes, women are equal to men but it is limited only in saying. Women have to tolerate a lot and should understand things differently...' (Female Nawalparasi, Family Member)

IPV episodes are conditionally accepted based on the severity of violence, if the woman could be found at fault and frequency of episodes. Generally, the women do not feel that men should beat their wives in an effort to control because they are not animals. However, when witnessing an IPV episode, some of the women say they approach the issue to find out what the victim did to cause the episode then they try to counsel her. Acceptability of violence is on a family-by-family basis, in families where it is accepted, the family members encourage beating if they feel the wife is in the wrong. However, in families where violence is unacceptable, family members can act as a buffer and deescalate or discourage beating. When a family member is against the use of violence, they can influence occurrence of IPV by stepping in and providing counsel. When they see a serious case of IPV, some family members stated that they are likely to step in and try to stop it and others preferred to keep quiet and allow the situation to resolve itself.

Sometimes, when the wife complains about IPV episodes to her husband's family she might be met with disbelief or told she is at fault because of the traditional belief that the wife is an outsider. One of the participants pointed out that many of the women in the focus group discussion are being beaten by their husbands but are unable to say anything because of fear of their husbands and his family. IPV episodes can also occur more often when the woman does not have a support system-one of the respondents talked about how her husband gets drunk and beat her more often now that her son and his wife moved away (incidentally, they moved away because of the father's drinking). Other forms of control, such as movement restriction, were also mentioned during the focus group discussion.

Women Tolerating Circumstance

Women tolerating violence is seen as a '*God-given*' talent, which is necessary for everything to run peacefully. There is immense pressure on women to keep episodes of violence within the family so as not

to stain the family reputation. At a young age, the female child observes the male-female roles and interactions within the home and watching her mother and other women in the home endure cases of intimate partner violence transmits the propensity to tolerate unfavorable circumstances for the sake of the family name. A woman has the burden of making sure that she does not damage her image when she reports a violent episode because people will wonder what she did to make her husband react in such a way. She has to overcome concern about what people would say about her if she accuses her husband of intimate partner violence. Very often, when a woman speaks out about abuse, the conversation focuses on what mistakes she may have made to instigate the violent episodes.

'...they think that they will be dishonorable if they say issue of violence outside home, rather they tolerate the violence instead of raising voice against it...' (Male, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

'...they have to keep their image and reputation also in mind. There is a fear of image. When she goes and say things outside they may ask what did you do so that you are suffering? So for that also she has to keep many things in mind...' (Male, Chitwan, Family Member)

She has to consider her children and family; she is expected to tolerate because these things happen in every home. She also has to weigh the fear of her husband hitting her more if she embarrasses him.

'...she has to think about her house, family, society. She has to look after everything.' (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

When facing violent episodes, a woman is expected to bear a little but not forever because as a female family member participant in Chitwan said, *'we can't save our reputation by dying'*. However, it depends on the degree of violence; she is not expected to report *'only getting 2-4 slaps'* as another woman from the same group said.

'...like it depends what kinds of violation is she feeling. Like for example it depends on if that is a sexual violence or a normal violence like scolding...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Family Member)

She is expected to tolerate even more if she made a mistake causing the IPV episode. Then attempts should be made to solve the problem within the home so as not to shame her family. If that does not solve the problem, she needs to approach other women in secret with the problem and share her it in a way that will not affect her. Women are expected to try to solve the problem at home or keep quiet because she has nowhere else to go.

'...no one should let their house matter to be out because we have to live in same home...' (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Member)

'...she has to tell it in such a way that tomorrow she can return to the same house and stay there...' (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Going public with accusations of intimate partner abuse is often seen as a misuse of a woman's rights and responsibilities because she is not respecting her husband or his family. The woman even has to tread carefully when reporting an IPV episode to her husband's family because they might think she is lying in an attempt to form a negative perception of him to them and take it negatively.

When the woman stays mostly within the home, she may not have the opportunity to create support systems outside the home. Her sense of agency lies within the confines of the home and in combination with the learned responsibility of women tolerating circumstances, she is less likely to reach out and take action against episodes of intimate partner violence.

'...women don't have the courage. Because of the roles assigned to women, like cooking food, washing dishes, cleaning etc., and because the society is keeping her confined to those roles, the women cannot develop their decision making ability. Suppose if the women are taken to some community meetings and gatherings, and if they are taught about certain things, that would make a lot of difference...' (Male, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)

However, if non-traditional roles are encouraged during her upbringing, the woman is more likely to be active outside the home and build a sense of agency and a support system that is not rooted to her home.

This way, she might feel like she has more choices and is more likely to reach out when facing IPV episodes, which disrupts the pattern of abuse.

There is a history of women tolerating violence within the home but more recently, the women have begun to speak up. Education is cited as a factor in this; the more educated people do not believe in tolerating any violence at all. In some focus group discussions, there was no direct conversation of women tolerating violence but when discussing handling episodes of violence, the participants focused on discretion and keeping discussions within the family.

Influences on Norms

Several factors were discussed as having an effect or not having an effect on the norms within the family and community. Factors such as age, culture/caste, religion, educational status, socioeconomic status, employment, family members, understanding and travel were mentioned as factors that altered how people within the community conducted themselves or reacted to non-traditional norms.

Neighbors

When discussing the effect of neighbors on the norms, a lot of the discussion centered on division of labor and non-traditional roles. The opinions of neighbors play a role in acceptance of non-traditional roles.

Some men might be afraid of criticism from neighbors if they participate in household chores; however, if people who do not care about non-traditional roles surround them, they feel more comfortable. He is often seen as less of a man or people say that his wife has too much control over him. These kinds of talk affect how he acts and can make him less likely to deviate from the norms.

'...male wants to help her wife but only looking after here and there; this type of difficulties is here...'

(Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

'...that does happen. People say that in the society. They call men submissive to their wives...' (Female, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)

'...there are male in our society who wash clothes and other male people who laugh over those male who help their wife... female themselves start to do backbite of those male who assist his wife...' (Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

One man described a case where he washed his and his wife clothes when they lived in a certain district but as soon as they moved to another district, he stopped washing even his own clothing.

'...so if the clothes have been left out to dry and if there is no one in the house, you have to take them inside. You are obligated to do that. But the neighbors still talk behind your back about it. There is that culture in our society still. You do it, but everyone is not the same in the society. Therefore, in some places it has improved and in others, it is still the same. I lived in a VDC of Lalitpur district for one and a half year, and there it was really nice. There was no discrimination there. You had to wash your clothes yourself. The women wash their own clothes and the men their own. Sometimes, they even used to wash each other's' clothes as well. But here, where we live, that happens a bit less. We make women wash our clothes, but we don't wash women's clothing. We might wash our own clothes, but not theirs. But in that place where I lived for one and a half months, everybody used to do that. In Lalitpur district. But it is not the same in our district...' (Male, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)

Another person described a case where she wanted to follow a different feeding schedule for her female child; she wanted to continue feeding her baby girl milk instead of introducing solids early but her husband and family disagreed because everyone else in the community had introduced solids to their female children earlier than the male children did. The friends or neighbors that a family relates with can affect how the man or the woman behaves. If they relate with peaceful and hardworking people, they are likely to be the same but if they relate with people who imbibe often in alcohol, the man is more likely to come home drunk and cause issues in the family. In affecting norms, one of the male family member participants from Nawalparasi remarked

'home comes first and then neighborhood, after that society and at the end the village'.

People are mindful of what their neighbors might say if they behave in a certain kind of way. This might affect acceptance of non-traditional roles but it is also a consideration for reducing negative attitudes and conflicts within the family in order to maintain the family's prestige. A man's concern for what people might say if they find out he beats his wife can make him less likely to perpetrate IPV episodes.

Family Members

Family members have an effect on norms by enforcing traditional values. The family member most influential on norms seem to be the mother-in-law. Before becoming a mother-in-law, she was a daughter-in-law, and as thus possesses experience and ideas of what the role of a daughter-in-law should be which she passes on to the daughter-in-law and her son. The family members have a strong influence on the norms in that their presence or absence can alter how the husband behaves. The men often feel ashamed to participate in household chores when his parents or other family members are present but is able to help wife with household chores when they are alone. There is also extra pressure on the wife when the family members especially the mother and father-in-laws are present- she feels pressure to perform household duties faster and with fewer imperfections. The type of family setup can affect norms within the family. For example, in a joint family home, the opinions and pressure of other family members (especially the mother-in-law) can greatly affect how things are done in the home often toward more traditional roles.

'...I: What kind of work she does not want her son to do?

R2: Household works like cooking. In field work we all work together. She feels unhappy when her son helps in cooking, washing dish and clothes. She says "I did not make him to work and now you are making him to work" ...' (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Members)

However, in a single family, the couple makes the decisions on how things are run and are more likely to accept non-traditional roles. In a joint family home, there is more household work to be done and a lesser

probability of the woman having time for employment outside the home. The hierarchy of decision making also becomes more complicated because the mother and father in-laws have a stronger pull in how the decisions are made than the wife and sometimes even the husband. The family members (especially the mother-in-law) can have an effect on the norms within a family through transmission of values. Since things were done a different way in her time, she can put pressure on the couple and insist that they follow traditional roles because that is how things have always been done. For example, she might insist that her son and husband not participate in household duties. Family members also offer advice and opinions during conflicts, which can help shape the outcomes of those kinds of events positively or negatively. Family members are important in modelling values in the family. For example, the behavior of the mother and father-in-law can directly affect how the couples in the family relate to each other. There is also a collective effort by all family members to preserve the family prestige and this can affect the decisions people take within the family.

Culture/Caste

The culture and caste was cited as having an effect on division of labor within a family i.e. in certain cultures the daughter-in-law has to be the first to wake up. According to some cultures within Chitwan, even if the woman is fully employed, she is still completely responsible for the household chores. There were also some cultures discussed where there was a higher incidence of violence against men perpetrated by women but that community is not a part of this study. The culture/caste was cited as being a factor in the likelihood of the formation of a joint family. Some cultures (*Tharu*) are more likely to have families that live together and form joint families after marriage while some other cultures (*Brahmin-Chhetri*) have families that branch out and separate after marriage. In addition, certain cultures do not allow women to partake in community meetings and this contributes to conflicts within the family.

Religion

Religion is seen as a factor that supports traditional norms especially concerning division of labor. For example, according to certain religions, the daughter-in-law needs to be up early to make tea. Religion of

a family is seen as having an effect on the likelihood of intimate partner episodes i.e. if the religion discourages violence and the family is deeply rooted in the faith, there is little motivation to be violent. Religion is seen as encouraging combined decision making between couples. The leaders of each religion also have an effect on norms because they provide advice to families during conflict. Religious difference was identified as one of the factors that could lead to conflict within a family.

There are several cultural and religious beliefs within the study context that have the potential to encourage better treatment of women within the family and community. For example, women are seen as goddesses of the home. In the Hindu story of the Ramayana, Rama (the protagonist) had to conduct a Yagya (fire sacrifice) but was unable to do so without his wife Sita who had been kidnapped her. He eventually had to create a replica of his wife in order to complete the fire sacrifice. Stories like this are often discussed during religious activities to promote the understanding that the wife is an important part of the man's home and his life. The wives are also called the '*Laxmis*' (goddesses of wealth) of the home. According to the Hindu wedding ritual, the man is made to hold the woman's feet. He is made to acknowledge her as his home's Laxmi and he asks her to take care of the household. He promises to give her all his earning and he asks her to make reasonable financial decision. These promises are to be taken seriously and encourage respecting the woman's opinions in the home.

'...after having done all this (the Hindu wedding ritual), shouldn't he consult her? You give the bride so much respect and welcome her to your home and then how could you work alone, without consulting her. Won't you be condemned by the gods for that? So you should consult her even from a religious perspective...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Community Leader)

Additionally, if a daughter is born in the family, the religious leaders express how wonderful it is that a girl was born into the family because Laxmi has arrived into the home. There is also the '*Kumari Puja*' where a young woman is worshipped in front of the idol of goddess Durga. This ritual emphasizes the divinity of women and encourages respect for women.

Employment

Employment status (of the woman) does not seem to have an effect on the amount of responsibilities she has at home because she is still expected to take care of the household chores before and after work.

'...In addition, if she has job then should go for job otherwise should go in farm field and look after cattle. After coming back, should make ready dinner for all, family and routine is same for another day...'

(Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)

In addition, men performing non-traditional roles is sometimes conditionally accepted if the woman is the main breadwinner of the home. A married woman gaining employment can initially be met with resentment especially in the joint family home where there is a lot of household work to be done.

However, if she begins to make significant financial improvements to the family, her contributions will eventually be accepted and appreciated.

Education

Education status (of the woman) is discussed as not having much of an effect on the division of labor within the home; even when educated, the primary responsibility of a woman lies within the home and this role takes precedence. However, it is a factor that has a potential effect on her sense of agency and her proclivity to deviate from traditional expectations. Education-or the lack thereof- is seen as having an effect on the behavior of the men in the community. It is perceived that men without education retain misogynistic behaviors and are more likely to drink alcohol, get drunk, and perpetrate IPV. However, when a man is educated, treats his wife better and takes her side in a family argument, his parents might see him as disrespectful. Education is also seen as something that can '*spoil*' the behavior of a young woman.

Education is perceived as a factor that improves acceptability of non-traditional norms i.e. educated people are more likely to adapt to change and non-traditional roles than people who are not. For example,

some men are able to help their wives with household chores despite community norms because they are more educated than their counterparts are. Education can also be a source of conflict if there is a mismatch in educational status between married couples but is generally seen as a factor that leads to a reduction in conflicts and acceptability of violence within the home.

'...first of all education is everything, so who have studied, like if both husband and wife are educated then it's ok. If only husband is educated, then they don't agree and if wife is only educated then also they don't agree. So, there is difference in thinking when they are not educated...' (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Education affects how both men and women spend their days. An educated woman may have a higher chance of getting involved in activities outside the home either through employment or community events. It is more acceptable for an educated woman to look for employment outside the home; without education, a woman is more likely to spend all her time within the home with household chores and fieldwork. The less educated men are more likely to be involved in hard manual or agricultural labor to generate income, which could have a profound effect on his daily demeanor, stress level and likelihood of perpetrating IPV. If he has a fulfilling job and feels like he is an adequate provider, he is likely to have less stress and more resources to deal with the stress that he does have. Also, the education level of a woman can determine if her opinions are seen as relevant within the home; a man is also less likely to consult with his wife in decision making if she is uneducated (or not as educated as he is). Education is also seen as a factor that results in the reduction of IPV episodes but does not have a strong effect on the likelihood of women tolerating violent circumstances.

Socioeconomic Status

The lower and middle class families are perceived as having higher likelihood of gender discrimination, conflicts and IPV episodes due to stress from the hardships they face and a lack of awareness. However, even among people with high socioeconomic status, a woman having positions outside the home can be met with resentment from her husband if it keeps her out of the home for too long. In a family with low-

income, all the members of the family may have to work in the fields (including women) to earn income for the family as opposed to depending on the man alone. This means that the women are involved in fieldwork in addition to their household chores and have even less time to participate in other activities within the community. The men from the low-income families are perceived to be more likely to come home drunk after work and engage in conflicts at home or perpetrate IPV.

Understanding and Travel

Understanding and travel were often mentioned in relation to each other and to education. It is seen as an attribute that grows with exposure, travel and education. Understanding and travel is seen as a factor that can increase acceptability of non-traditional behaviors and reduce conflict within the family i.e. the more understanding there is within a family, the less conflicts there is. Understanding and travel is said to have an effect on the acceptability of men helping with household chores. Men might face criticism on participating in non-traditional roles but not from people who understand the changing times or people who have increased exposure from travelling. In addition, understanding between couples can affect how much general community norms affect a couple- the more a couple understand each other, the more they are able to make their own rules.

Intervention Roles

The roles of the community leaders as well as the community members regarding intimate partner violence was examined. The community leaders play responsive and preventive roles while the community members often act in a group.

Community Leaders

The community leaders are the people within the community that the people look up to. These may be elected leaders but they also include religious and cultural leaders. The community leaders are often called to homes during times of conflicts because they are often able to give advice and handle the issues in a confidential manner that results in less embarrassment for the family involved. When a woman comes to the community leaders after an IPV/GBV episode, they first have a discussion with her to find out the

reason that the episode happened and to find out if the situation is considered an emergency. Then they try to talk to the couple to solve the issue within the community and direct them to '*model couples*' within the same social class that are functioning well to set an example. When all fails, they help with legal proceedings. They also help victims gain financial independence by enrolling them in income generating programs within the community.

Most of the time, they only come when they are called. This is because, when the community leaders try to help during IPV episodes without invitation, they are sometimes faced with indignation and ridicule from the husband as well as the wife. However, sometimes community leaders intervene when they find out that a woman is being beaten. The leader gathers the family and provides counsel, which often works in changing behaviors. They provide a safe space where the couples can talk about their issues without fear of their family problems being exposed. They try to find out the cause of the violence and who is more at fault. They talk to the couple and try to solve the problems with the ultimate goal of keeping the family together. A community leader related one instance where a man was sleeping with other women and hitting his wife, however, the community leader did not say if he stopped sleeping around or hitting her, they only said triumphantly that the couple is still together.

These community leaders also realize that they have a responsibility to raise awareness within the community in order to prevent those episodes from happening. The religious leaders often teach on the importance of giving respect to women and the value of a wife in her husband's life during sermons or conversations with community members. The community leaders organize dramas, programs, street rallies and speak at various women groups in the community to raise awareness of violence against women. They also have some '*model couples*' that they direct people to for emulation. They have some programs targeting alcohol consumption because they have noticed that a lot the IPV cases are related to alcohol abuse. When the religious leaders perform naming ceremonies for female children, they make sure to praise the family and encourage them to take care of her as they would a male child (e.g. feeding of solid food at 6 months not five or encouraging them to send the girl child to school). They also teach

the children in the community that men and women are equal in an attempt to reduce future gender discrimination. Some of the community leaders feel that in addition to raising awareness about women rights, they have a responsibility to teach women about their obligations/duties so that they do not end up *'mis-utilizing their (her) freedom'* as one of the community leaders in Chitwan stated and become a victim of IPV.

Community Members

After severe IPV/GBV episodes, the community tries to punish the perpetrator. They also offer help with confrontation and in extreme cases, financing and relocation for the victims. The women in the community often interfere (as a group) into family conflicts or episodes of IPV that have gone out of hand. They show up (as a group) to big fights between couples and separate them and sometimes involve the police. In some cases, they separate the couple and temporarily physically restrain the man to prevent him from hitting her.

'...if we hear about such things then we have to go there are separate them. We have to ask them – why do you fight like this, don't fight. I had a brother-in-law like that. He used to come home drunk and beat his wife. He made us so frustrated. He used to come shouting from outside and sister-in-law used to shout from inside. We had to go after shouted, and we went and tied brother-in-law and took him to the river and dipped him in...after we dipped in him water we tied him to a tree and said to his wife – you go sleep he can't untie it, we've tied his hands and also his back. So we tied him like that...'

(Unknown, Chitwan, Family Member)

Then they hold meetings and decide how best to handle the situation. The community members try to keep and solve IPV episodes within the community but they also help to take the issue to the next level (police station, municipality) if they are unable to solve the issue.

Chapter V. Discussions

This qualitative study examined the contextual attributes of the family and the community that encourage or hinder the practice of intimate partner violence among our study population. These attributes do not operate in a vacuum but interact with each other on a multi-level scale. This finding is consistent with the evidence based ecological framework, postulated by the World Health Organization in 2002, that states that violence is not caused by a single factor but instead a multi-level interplay of individual level, personal relationship, community contexts and societal factors [16]. The 2013 Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific also support a complex interaction of factors at several levels [42].

The roles of the man and woman in this society are clearly defined and seldom ignored, this leads to a marked difference in what is expected of each gender and what opportunities are granted them. The female child is taught that the role of a woman lies within the home and in some families; this responsibility can take precedence over education, employment and involvement with the community. On the other hand, the man is charged with generating income for his family and his education and development outside the home is supported. The evidence of this effect lies in the workforce disparities between genders; women make up only 15% of the workforce in Nepal by 74.8% of unpaid family labor force [28]. The denial of education to the girl-child is important because it was found to be a factor that affected a woman's sense of autonomy and predilection to deviate from traditional compulsions. In turn, her autonomy has an effect on her ability to challenge the acceptability of violence and female tolerance, how she expects to be treated by her husband and his family and the amount of social support she has outside the home. These connections were also found in other studies that looked at the relation of women empowerment to intimate partner violence [43, 44, 45]. One study found that the women with high level empowerment experienced higher rates of spousal violence but this was likely attributed to an increased confidence to combat social structures and refusal to conform to gender norms which made them more vulnerable to intimate partner violence in a society that condones it [43].

Education was also found to be important for the man as it seen as a factor that increases his tendency to ignore traditional behaviors and reduces his likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence. This finding is supported by the 2012 Study on Gender, Masculinity and Son Preference in Nepal and Vietnam which found significant relationship between men's gender equity scores and their educational level among other factors; 30% of the men with secondary schooling and above scored in the high equity category compared to only 12% with primary senior school education and 5% with only primary school education [11] . However, a mismatch of the education level of the couples (if the husband was illiterate and the wife was literate) was identified as a possible source of conflict. This was also found in studies done in other developing countries such as Bangladesh, India, Peru and Albania [45,47,48,49,50].

This effect is referred to in the Bangladesh study as 'male backlash' where the men feels threatened if his wife surpasses him. These nuances expose the complicated nature of education; interventions that promote the education of women to reduce IPV prevalence need to promote the education of their husbands as well so as not to cause harm. Additionally, since the delineation of gender roles begin at an early age, it stands to reason that violence prevention strategies should include the education of children with special focus on empowering the girl-child.

The behavioral expectations of masculinity and femininity operate symbiotically to protect the practice of intimate partner violence in this context. The most valued attribute of a man is his dignity and he demands the utmost respect from his family, especially his wife. If he does not get the level of respect he deserves, he often resorts to a show of power to restore his dignity; intimate partner violence. On the other hand, the most valued attribute of a woman is her patience and subservience. She is expected tolerate unfavorable circumstances for the sake of her family and her reputation. As a result, he perpetrates this violence and she does not speak out, both playing their traditional roles to perfection and feeding the cycle of abuse. The rigid construct of masculinity and femininity has also been found in several other studies examining factors surrounding intimate partner violence [51,52,53].

In this study context, the family members (especially the mother and father-in-law) introduce some complexity to the issue of intimate partner violence. In addition to encouraging strict gender roles from a young age, the family members have the opportunity to enforce these roles after marriage. The prevailing form of family dynamic in the study context is the joint family and within this setup, there is a potential for daily modelling of behaviors. Additionally, poor relationship with her husband's family increases a woman's vulnerability to intimate partner violence. The dowry system was mentioned as one of the underlying causes of tension between the woman and her husband's family. The woman is often treated poorly if she does not bring in enough dowry. This finding is consistent in several studies within our study context and other developing countries [54,55,56]. The woman is often seen as an outsider within the joint family home and this creates feelings of hostility that often translate into violence perpetrated by the family members or frequent complaints about the wife to the husband that leads to episodes of intimate partner violence. The men often side with their families in these instances because of the pressure to maintain an equal amount of love and respect for his family as his wife; a balancing act that often tilts in favor of his family. These findings were also present in a qualitative study that looked at household level risk factors of IPV in Nepal [44]. The part of the mother-in-law is specifically addressed throughout the study. They have a strategic position in the home and can be perpetrators or supporters of physical and psychological abuse. This is especially interesting because many of these women experienced these same kinds of treatment when they were young but still endorse these negative behaviors to future generations. This was also found in other studies examining IPV within our study context [45]. A large part of the onus falls to the mother-in-law to break the cycle of oppression.

The conditional acceptance of intimate partner violence was also found in this study population; people tended to judge occurrences of IPV on a case by case basis depending on what the woman did, whether the husband was drunk as well as the severity and frequency of occurrence. It is especially considered acceptable when the woman makes a bold departure from traditional roles. This finding is consistent with a host of other studies within Nepal and other developing countries [53,60,59]. This conditional

acceptance of violence affects how and when help is offered to the victims and is protective to the cycle of abuse; people are less motivated to intervene in episodes of IPV if there are situations in which it is acceptable. Even after offering help, the focus might be on correcting the victims mistake instead of the violent episode.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study provided rich themes that gave insight on the family and community based norms regarding gender equity and intimate partner violence in this context, there were some inevitable limitations. First, as is true with all qualitative studies, the results can only be generalizable to this specific context. Secondly, certain constraints imposed by the thesis timeline did not allow for the inclusion of subsequent focus group discussions with the target population, which may have provided information on changes in norms and attitudes as well as life transitions. The time constraint also affected the researcher's ability to share findings from the analysis with the participants so that they could verify or refute the researcher's perceptions of the data. In addition, this study did not allow for a deeper examination of different social castes, which appeared, from the analysis, to be a relevant factor within the study context. Finally, due to financial constraints, data collection concentrated on getting a depth of data from the three different communities in order to examine possible differences, which did not allow for an organic measure of data saturation. However, data analysis revealed that data saturation had been achieved because after a certain point, subsequent transcripts did not supply new themes and simply supported previously discovered themes.

Chapter VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

As was theorized by the WHO ecological framework for understanding violence, intimate partner violence does not have a straightforward path of causality but instead a multi-level myriad of factors that each alter the risk of being a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner violence. In this study context, the discretely defined roles of the male and female within the family and community have overarching effects on several levels. The individual risk of the wife being a victim of intimate partner violence are affected by what values are passed on to her by her parents and the prevalent values in her married home. How close she lives to her husband's family members also affects the amount of control she has in decision-making and her ability to build a support system within the home. The woman's concern for her reputation affects her likelihood of reaching out for help after experiencing violence, which has a significant impact on how long the cycle of abuse endures. Overall, the educational level of the woman has an effect on her ability to get employment, which might improve her autonomy. It also plays a role in her tendency to differ from traditional norms that might be affecting her negatively.

The individual risk of the husband being a perpetrator of intimate partner violence is also affected by what values are passed on to him by his parents. How close his family lives to them also has an effect on how he treats his wife depending again on the prevalent values held within his family of origin. The man's concern for his reputation can affect his ability to participate in non-traditional roles within the home and can prevent him from perpetrating acts of IPV. The educational level of the husband is a factor that affects his tendency to accept non-traditional behaviors. A higher level of education also often leads to better employment, which would reduce the amount of stress he faces and might increase the amount of resources he has to handle stress. Alcohol consumption by the husband has been implicated as a factor that could lead to an exacerbation of conflicts.

The relationships built within a family was also found to affect the risk of experiencing intimate partner violence as either a victim or perpetrator depending on the type of family home. In the single family

home, the family hierarchy is more straightforward which means that there are fewer opinions to contend with and a lower probability of conflicts. This means that the couple has more space to define their own rules and less pressure to conform to traditional roles. However, a single family home can increase the probability of victim isolation and can result in a lack of buffer during IPV episodes to protect the victim or deescalate the situation. In the joint family home, the presence of other family members can complicate the family hierarchy; introduce more opinions and opportunities for conflicts. The presence of his family, especially the matriarch can introduce pressure towards traditional norms through daily modeling of these behaviors. There is also competition for husband's affection and an imbalance amount of support for the husband during conflicts. However, the presence of more family members reduces the possibility of victim isolation and introduces buffers that can help deescalate conflicts and episodes of violence.

The attributes of the community members and leaders create social settings associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. The community members affect the social scene by either ridiculing or embracing non-traditional norms. They could also encourage female tolerance and conditional acceptance of IPV. The notion of 'interference' also affects the social setting that can be associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Sometimes, the community members do not 'interfere' in IPV episodes unless they are directly asked to, this could provide an atmosphere that fosters the practice of intimate partner violence. Other times, the community members 'interfere' in IPV episodes as a group or individually, this helps to discourage the practice of intimate partner violence. The community leaders are important because community members look up to them. How they handle IPV, episodes can set up an environment that encourages or hinders IPV. If they focus on returning family to status quo instead of stopping the perpetrator, they can encourage the idea female tolerance and conditional acceptance of IPV. However, when the leaders take on reactive and proactive role against IPV, they help discourage the practice of IPV.

The norms/beliefs of this study context can create a climate that either supports or undermines violence as an acceptable manner of handling conflicts within a relationship. Norms such as the conditional

acceptance of IPV, female tolerance, family privacy, the wife seen as outsider, dowry system and the traditional roles for men/women can negatively shape the way women are being treated in the family and the community at large. Other religious and cultural practices and beliefs such as the females as the goddesses of the home, the ‘*Kumara Puja*’, and the Hindu wedding ritual where the woman is called the ‘*Laxmi*’ of the home serves to improve how women are being treated within the family and community which in turn can have an effect on the occurrence and acceptability of intimate partner violence.

Public Health Implications

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health issue that outspreads international borders, overwhelmingly borne by women irrespective of social, economic, religious or cultural group. In fact, a global systematic review done by WHO on the prevalence of violence revealed that about 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence and when an event occurs at this level of frequency, it can be safely classified as a “global public health problem of epidemic proportions”. This thesis helped to uncover family and community based norms on gender equity and IPV in the Nepali context. The themes uncovered in this qualitative analysis provide insight into the changes in social norms that need to be encouraged to promote a sustainable transformation of these communities that protects the women from the experience and consequences of intimate partner violence. Based on the findings of this qualitative analysis, the following recommendations are being made for combatting intimate partner violence within this study context;

Target Young Children in IPV Prevention Strategies

The study findings reveal that a lot of the gender roles and responsibilities are imparted on the individuals from an early age. Designing and implementing interventions targeting young children might help to prevent the development of harmful behaviors that foster the practice of intimate partner violence.

Multi-level Approach to Combatting IPV

The study findings show that intimate partner violence cannot be tackled with a single approach.

Prevention strategies need to incorporate several levels of the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 3 to produce more sustainable results.

Target the Norm of Wife as Property

Although, demanding a dowry is illegal in Nepal, the practice is still very common and the law is generally not enforced [46]. The dowry system introduces this idea of the wife as property and the problematic nature of this idea begins to manifest even before marriage; it affects how the amount of options presented to the girl-child and the probability of her receiving an adequate level of education. The male participants often talked about the importance of a husband having control of his wife and this furthers the notion that his wife is his property. This idea promotes the conditional acceptance of IPV as well as the concept of ‘interference’. Greater law enforcement and better understanding of the norms underpinning dowry would help to pinpoint family and community based interventions that do not perpetuate the notion that women become property of their husbands.

Target Female Autonomy in IPV Prevention Strategies

IPV prevention strategies should also aim to improve female autonomy within this study context. This could be achieved by advocating for female education, employment outside the home, female ownership of land and financial liberation. The victim needs to be presented with options other than tolerating physical violence in the home so that she can feel empowered to change her circumstances. It is important to remember that any opportunities to elevate a married woman’s status should also be offered to the husbands in order to improve uptake and reduce the harm of male backlash.

Address the Cycle of Abuse from Daughter-in-law to Mother-in-law

The female study participants described a cycle of abuse from daughter-in-law to mother-in-law. That is, after the daughter-in-law has spent years being suppressed by her husband and her own mother-in-law, she passes on the suppression to her daughter-in-law when she becomes a mother-in-law thus continuing

the cycle of abuse. The women need to be encouraged to stand with each other and end the cycle of abuse. Mother-in-laws, along with other family members should be engaged directly in violence prevention programming to employ their power within the family dynamic towards violence prevention.

Discuss the idea of 'Interference'

The term 'interference' was used by the participants to describe individuals outside the home coming in to intervene in episodes of intimate partner violence. Viewing this action in this unfavorable light makes people less likely to intervene in episodes of IPV. Prevention strategies should aim to correct and rebrand the action of stepping in and advocating for victims of intimate partner violence in order to encourage more people to do so.

Target Alcohol Abuse in IPV Prevention Strategies

Alcohol was cited numerous times as a factor in the practice of intimate partner violence. The men who come home drunk were seen as more likely to be involved in conflicts or be perpetrators of intimate partner violence. IPV prevention strategies should include programs that address alcohol abuse.

Future Research

Recommendations for further studies on the contextual attributes of the family and community that encourage or hinder the practice of intimate partner in Nepal, involve collecting longitudinal data to allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the factors. Subsequent focus group discussions with the target population are already being collected but are not going to be included in this paper due to time constraints. Further studies should also gather data for a deeper examination on indicators that could be relevant to the occurrence of intimate partner violence including the caste system and socioeconomic status. It is also recommended that further studies include participants from varying districts in an attempt to uncover more community level protective factors.

Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Ecological Framework for Understanding Violence (WHO)

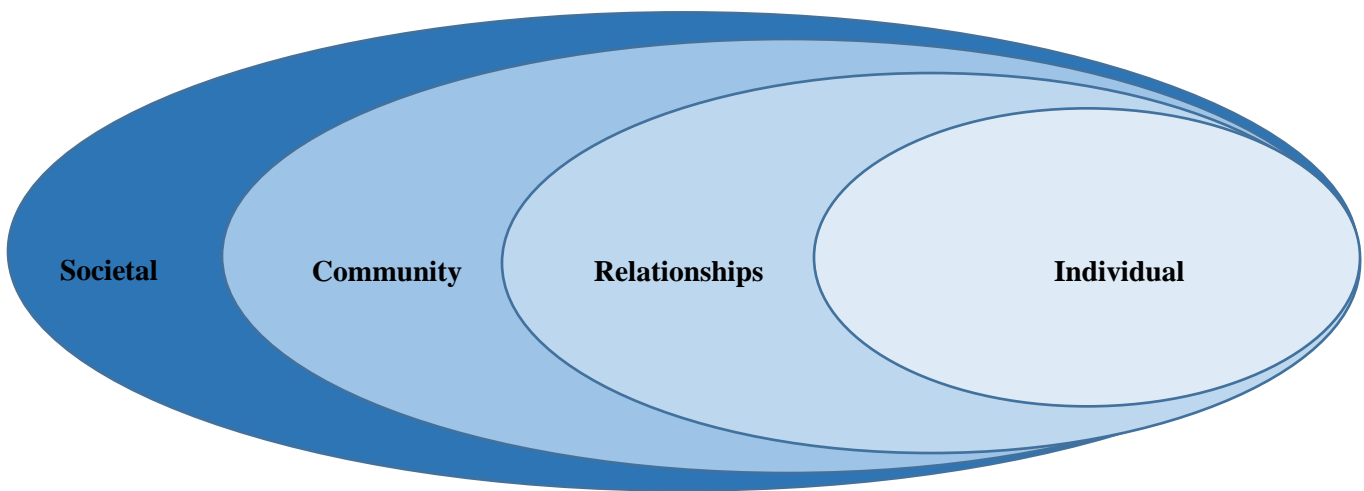
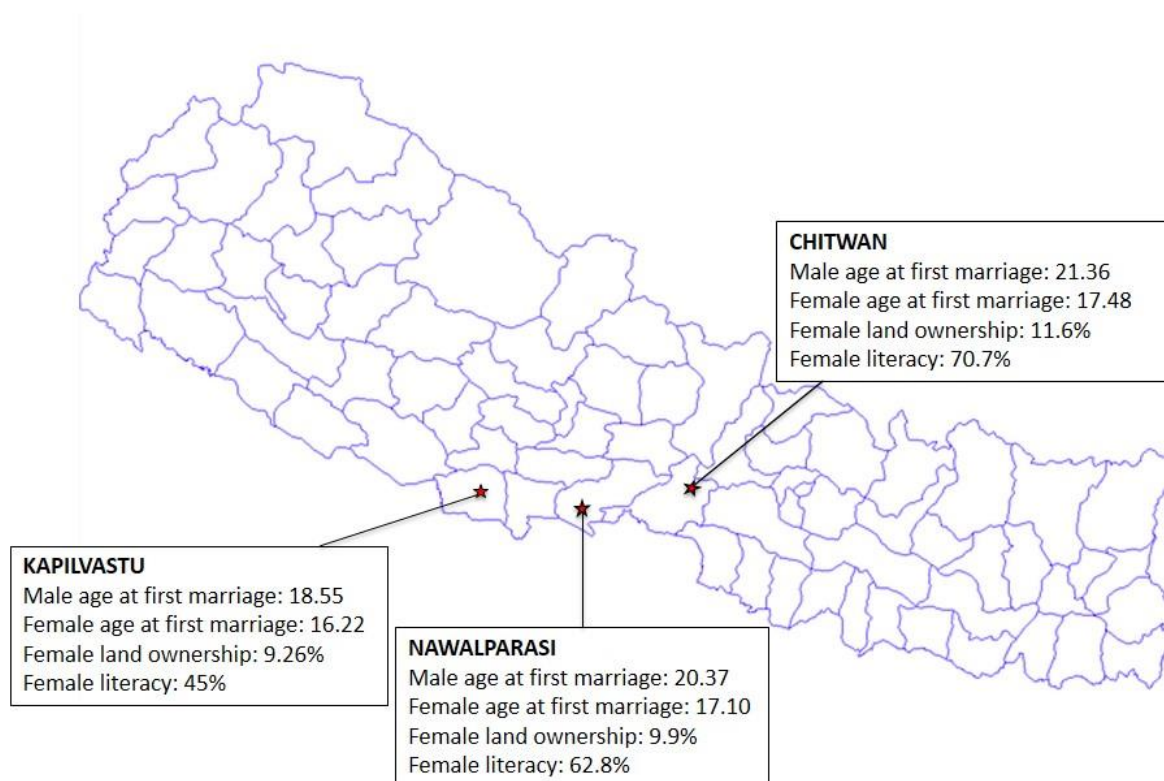


Figure 2: Study Districts and Characteristics



Source: Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1411003>

Figure 3: Contextual Factors That Encourage (+) or Hinder (-) the Practice of IPV in Nepal

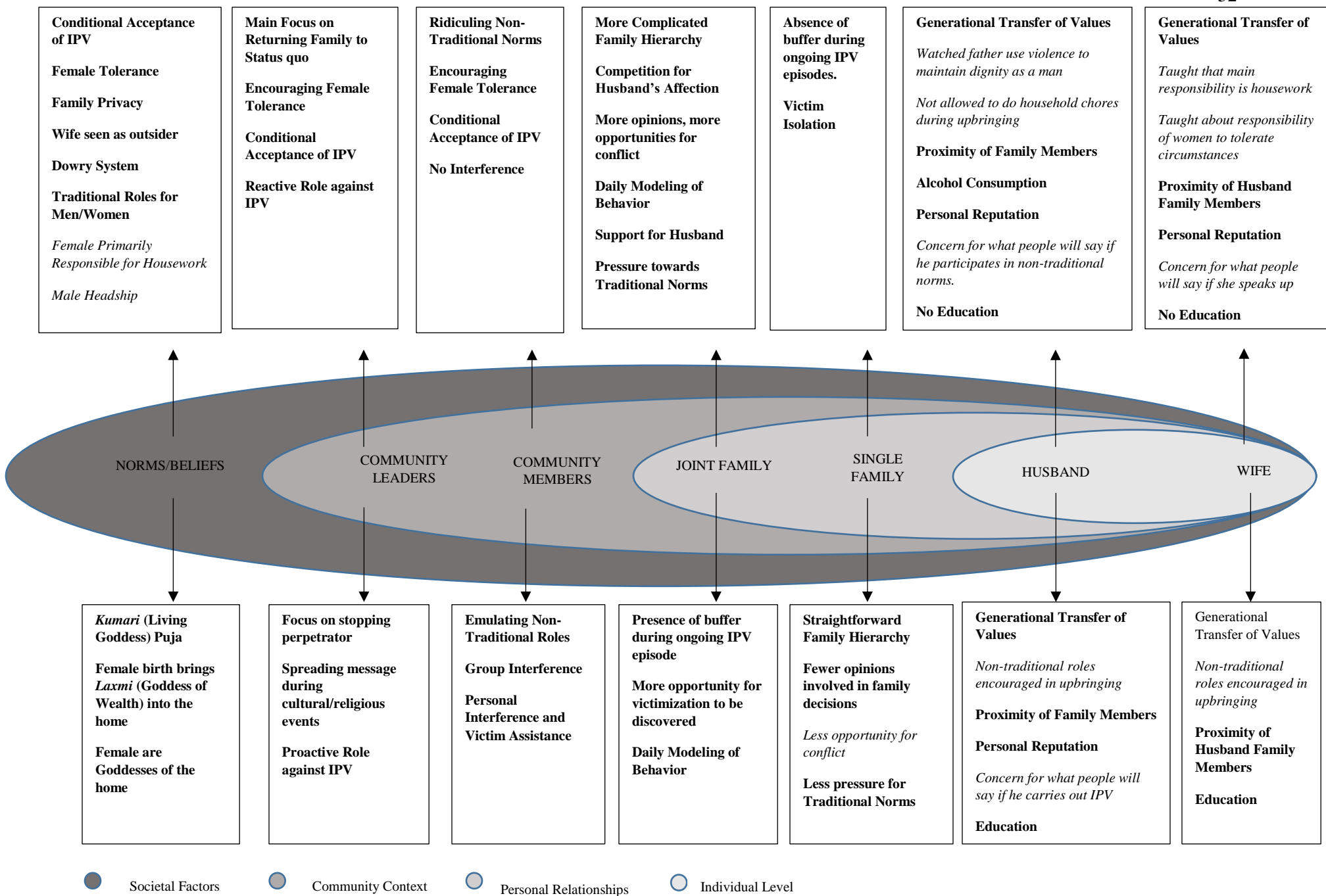


Table 1: Tabulated Presentation of Main Themes with Summary Quotations

Themes	Quotes
The Responsibilities of a Married Woman	<i>'...A woman's work is to work at home, help her mother in law, cook food, keep everything under good condition even outdoor works, and take proper care of her children.... That's a woman's morality...'</i> (Male, Nawalparasi, Family Member)
The Responsibilities of a Married Man	<i>'...Their responsibilities are to go out and earn money to look after family...'</i> (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Member)
The Role of the Family	<i>'...while the in-laws are present, we do everything faster. Suppose we wash the dishes faster. So when the in-laws come to visit, there are some changes in the husband's behavior...'</i> (Female, Nawalparasi, Community Leader)
Norms:	
Balancing Act Between Husband and Son Role	<i>'If he doesn't respect then we obviously get hurt. I gave him education, I raised him, I slept where he peed and kept him in my lap...So, if the son whom they have raised with such love and care only listens to his wife and doesn't listen to mother...then it is bad...There are sons who say—my everything is my wife.'</i> (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)

Family Headship	<p><i>'...I take all the decisions by myself because my wife is not educated. I have attended till class 10 but my wife has not even attended till class 1 so due to this I take all the decisions of home by myself. I take consult with my sons and with my family but the last decision would be mine...'</i></p> <p>(Male, Kapilvastu, Family Member)</p>
Acceptability of Violence	<p><i>'...if your wife is free and she does whatever she can then to control her a husband must warn her...at first the if not then must scold her as well then she must get beaten as well sometime not always...'</i> (Female, Chitwan, Family Member)</p>
Women Tolerating Violence	<p><i>'...they think that they will be dishonorable if they say issue of violence outside home, rather they tolerate the violence instead of raising voice against it...'</i> (Male, Nawalparasi, Family Member)</p>
Influences on Norms:	
Neighbors	<p><i>'...there are male in our society who wash clothes and other male people who laugh over those male who help their wife... female themselves start to do backbite of those male who assist his wife...'</i></p> <p>(Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)</p>
Family Members	<p><i>'...I: What kind of work she does not want her son to do?'</i></p>

	<p><i>R2: Household works like cooking. In field work we all work together. She feels unhappy when her son helps in cooking, washing dish and clothes. She says "I did not made him to work and now you are making him to work" ... ' (Female, Nawalparasi, Family Members)</i></p>
Religion	<p><i>'...after having done all this (the Hindu wedding ritual), shouldn't he consult her? You give the bride so much respect and welcome her to your home and then how could you work alone, without consulting her. Won't you be condemned by the gods for that? So you should consult her even from a religious perspective...' (Male, Kapilvastu, Community Leader)</i></p>
Employment	<p><i>'...In addition, if she has job then should go for job otherwise should go in farm field and look after cattle. After coming back, should make ready dinner for all, family and routine is same for another day...' (Unknown, Chitwan, Community Leader)</i></p>
Education	<p><i>'...first of all education is everything, so who have studied, like if both husband and wife are educated then it's ok. If only husband is educated, then they don't agree and if wife is only educated then also they don't agree. So, there is difference</i></p>

	<p><i>in thinking when they are not educated...'</i></p> <p>(Female, Chitwan, Family Member)</p>
Intervention Roles:	
Community Leaders	<p><i>'...At first, those kinds of case come in our committee... If it is emergency than we take action immediately and if it is not then we make them to come in procedural way .i.e. filing complain in written from. If that case can be resolved inside society then we arrange to resolve within society... convincing them and advising them... Understanding the fact... In addition, if case is complicated then we take it to Women Cell. Then after that it goes in other legal procedure...'</i></p> <p>(Chitwan, Community Leader)</p>
Community Members	<p><i>'...If we hear about such things then we have to go there are separate them. We have to ask them – why do you fight like this, don't fight. I had a brother-in-law like that. He used to come home drunk and beat his wife. He made us so frustrated. He used to come shouting from outside and sister-in-law used to shout from inside. We had to go after shouted, and we went and tied brother-in-law and took him to the river and dipped him in.</i></p>

	<p><i>After we dipped in him water we tied him to a tree and said to his wife – you go sleep he can't untie it, we've tied his hands and also his back. So we tied him like that....'</i></p> <p>(Unknown, Chitwan, Family Member)</p>
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Appendix

Focus Group Discussion Guides

Family Members; Baseline Questions

1. In your family, what is a typical day like for a married woman? What is the typical day like for a married man?

Probes: How are the patterns different across different members of the family?

2. How widespread is the belief in your family, that a man who does household chores will lose the respect of his family?

Probes: How widespread is the belief that performing household chores is an acceptable thing for a man to do? Who holds these beliefs and who does not? If there are differences across family members, whose opinion is followed in the household?

3. How widespread is the belief in your family that a man who makes important decisions jointly with his wife will be considered a weak man by his family?

Probes: How widespread is the belief that joint decision making is acceptable? Who holds these beliefs and who does not? If there are differences across family members, whose opinion is followed in the household?

4. What role does the wider family have in how married men and women get along with one another?

Probe: How does the family support couples to live harmoniously? How does the family contribute to conflict? What are the triggers for conflict?

5. In your family, how widespread is the belief that a man's family will think he is a disloyal son if he takes his wife's opinion over his mother's opinion?

6. How do men in your family maintain order in their households?

Probe: What happens if order is not maintained?

7. How widespread is the belief in your family that husbands may use force to reprimand their wives because men should be in control of their families?

Probe: How widespread is the belief that is not appropriate to use force in your family? If there are differences across members in the same household, whose opinion is followed?

8. When a woman in this community experiences violence, who does she go to for help, if anyone?

Probe: What are sources of help that exist in this community for women who experience violence from their husbands? What considerations does the woman have to keep in mind when deciding whether and to whom to discuss her experiences?

9. In your family, how widespread is the belief that a woman who complains about her husband's violence behavior is considered a disloyal wife by in-laws?

Probe: If there are differences across members in the same household, whose opinion is followed?

10. In your family, how widespread is the belief that a woman who does not tolerate violence from her husband is dishonoring her family and should not be welcome home?

Probe: If there are differences across members in the same household, whose opinion is followed?

11. In your family, how would most people respond if they saw or overhead a man hitting his wife?

Probes: What actions would they take, if any? Why? Why not? What would they be afraid of or concerned about?

12. How frequently do you hear messages or programs about violence between husbands and wives on the radio or television?

Probe: Program names, organizations, and format. Can you describe a program / advertisement that you have heard?

13. How frequently do leaders in this community speak publicly about violence between husbands and wives?

Probe: Types of leaders. Can you describe what the leader did or said on the topic of violence between husbands and wives?

14. What other programs are going on in your community that speak about gender relations or violence against women and girls?

Probe: name of the organization running the program, type of program and whether any member of the FGD are personally participating or know someone who is participating.

I've asked you a lot of questions and I thank you for your patience. Before I go, is there anything I haven't asked that you think is important for us to know around the topics we have discussed today?

Community Leaders; Baseline Questions

1. In this community, what is a typical day like for a married woman? What is the typical day like for a married man?

Probes: How are the patterns different across different members of the family?

2. Should men also work in the home in your opinion? Why?

Probes: How widespread is the belief in this community, that a man who does household chores will lose the respect of his family?

How widespread is the belief that performing household chores is an acceptable thing for a man to do? How would things be different if more men shared in the household chores?

3. Should a man make important decisions jointly with his wife? Why?

Probes: How widespread is the belief in this community that a man who makes important decisions jointly with his wife will be considered a weak man by his family?

How widespread is the belief that joint decision making is acceptable? How would things be different if more men and women made major decisions together?

4. What role does the wider family have in how married men and women get along with one another?

Probe: How does the family support couples to live harmoniously? How does the family contribute to conflict? What are the triggers for conflict?

5. How widespread is the belief that a man's family will think he is a disloyal son if he takes his wife's opinion over his mother's or father's opinion?

6. How do men in this community maintain order in their households?

Probe: What happens if order is not maintained?

7. How widespread is the belief in this community that husbands may use force to reprimand their wives because men should be in control of their families?

Probe: How widespread is the belief that is not appropriate to use force?

8. When a woman in this community experiences violence, who does she go to for help, if anyone?

Probe: What are sources of help that exist in this community for women who experience violence from their husbands?

9. In this community, how would most people respond if they saw or overheard a man hitting his wife?

Probes: What actions would they take, if any? Why? Why not? What would they be afraid of or concerned about?

10. In this community, how can community leaders use their power to stop men from using violence against their wives?

11. What role do community leaders, like yourselves, have in responding to a victim of violence?

Probe: Examples of actual assistance given, frequency of help offered (e.g. is it rare or common that a community leader helps a victim of partner violence?)

12. How frequently do you hear messages or programs about violence between husbands and wives on the radio or television?

robe: Program names, organizations, and format. Can you describe a program / advertisement that you have heard?

13. In the past 6 months, how frequently have you spoken about violence between husbands and wives during the course of your work?

Probe: Can you describe what you said or did on the topic of violence between husbands and wives?

14. What do you hope to achieve from participating in the Change Starts at Home Program?

15. What governmental and non-governmental programs are going on in your community now that target gender relations or violence against women and girls?

Probe: organization running the program, type of program.

I've asked you a lot of questions and I thank you for your patience. Before I go, is there anything I haven't asked that you think is important for us to know around the topics we have discussed today.

