

IMAGES Country Study Documentation

Nepal

2012

1 KEY OBJECTIVES

This research in Nepal was based on the wider study conceptualized and designed by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in New Delhi and was implemented in partnership with two research partners in Nepal and Vietnam. In Nepal, the study partner was Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA). This research adapted the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) survey tool to explore men's attitude towards son preference. IMAGES is one of the most comprehensive surveys ever carried out on the attitudes and behaviors of men aged 18-49 years, on issues related to gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, gender-based violence and men's participation in care-giving and family life.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

Strong son preference in parts of Asia has led to serious discriminatory practices towards girls and women, with disturbing effects on their status, health and development. The significant male surplus in some populations resulting from the excess of male births since 1980 has an impact on the sex ratios at birth and subsequently affected the dynamics of marriage in several regions of this continent. The lack of women available for marriage has created further discrimination through increased violence against women, trafficking, abduction, forced marriages, or sharing brides among brothers as different practices in different countries. Girls who are born also face discrimination in their lives through unequal opportunities for health care, education and fulfilling their aspirations.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

The patriarchal nature of Nepalese society combined with socio-economic and religious values creates a strong influence to have a male child in the family. Men's views about the importance of sons and daughters are highly influenced by traditional customs, gender roles and expectations. There are several rites and rituals that can only be performed by sons such as lighting the funeral pyre.

Economically, daughters are considered a liability because of dowry and because they live their natal home upon marriage, so for old age security, parents can only rely economically on sons. Socially, preference is given to sons because of their role in continuing the family lineage. Nepal's patrilineal social structure discourages women from practicing contraception until they have a son.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

Despite the many barriers, Nepal has made progress in reducing gender-based discrimination and empowering women over the last decade. Women now have significantly better access to education. Gender-inclusive/friendly policies and national plans of action have been framed to increase women's access to political, economic and social spheres, and to reduce gender-based violence. Legal reforms have been introduced and institutional mechanisms have been established and strengthened in order to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition to the legalization of abortion, the Domestic Violence and Punishment Act was passed in May 2009 in Nepal. The country's gender empowerment measurement has improved significantly from 0.391 in 2001 to 0.496 in 2006 (UNFPA, 2007).

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KEY OBJECTIVES

Thus, the main objective of this study was to understand the dimensions, nature and determinants of Nepali men's attitudes to son preference and gender-based violence. The specific objectives of the project included assessing men's current behaviors and attitudes on a wide range of issues as they relate to gender equality, assessing men's knowledge and attitudes toward son preference and violence, exploring contributing factors that can be attributed to men's attitudes and behaviors related to gender-based violence and son preference and assessing men's knowledge of and attitudes toward policies that have sought to promote gender equality (e.g., gender-based violence, sex selection, family planning and inheritance rights).

2 DATA COLLECTION

Thus, this study explores men's attitudes towards gender equity, son preference, and violence (intimate partner violence and other forms), and their knowledge about reproductive health and existing policies, through household surveys. As a consequence, the survey instrument was designed to be relevant to these issues as they applied to adult men in stable, co-habiting relationships as well as those not in a stable relationship. Specific topics in the questionnaire included: socio-demographic characteristics, childhood experiences, attitudes about relationship and son preference, Intimate relationships, Reproductive history of partner, preference on family size and composition, knowledge about abortion law, fatherhood, health and wellbeing, policies, and sexual experiences.

2 DATA COLLECTION

This study uses a modified version of IMAGES to include a focus on son preference. A structured interviewer-administered paper questionnaire was developed based on the IMAGES survey tool and Partners for Prevention (P4P), translated into the local language (Nepali) and pre-tested locally. Based on the pretesting results, the questionnaire was revised and finalized. Most of the questions were close-ended and some key variables were included in the multiple questions. The individual questionnaire was divided into 11 sections with approximately 250 items and took about an hour to apply.

2 DATA COLLECTION

The household survey with men was carried out in July to August, 2011. The Center for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities (CREHPA) in Nepal had their own team to conduct the survey; they did not need support in terms of manpower, but prior to the survey, they took permission from the local authorities. Since the survey respondents were men, all the data collectors were male, because it has been found that male interviewers are likely to get more accurate information on sensitive issues from male respondents. The interviews were conducted at locations convenient for the respondents, usually in a closed room in their homes. Each face-to-face interview took 60-90 minutes. During the field study, core team members visited the study sites to ensure interview quality and respondents' privacy. None of the respondents refused to give an interview, but in a few cases, interviewers had to spend a considerable amount of time in explanations about the study.

2

DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was administered by the interviewers for the first 10 sections and self-administered for the last section with more sensitive questions. Standard procedures were followed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Men's attitude towards gender norms were assessed using an adapted version of the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale developed initially by the Horizons Program and Instituto Promundo in Brazil. This scale has been widely adapted to many countries and has shown high levels of validity.

2 DATA COLLECTION

For this survey, 24 statements were used to measure men's attitude towards gender equality which were sub-categorized into: gender roles; sexuality/sexual relationships; violence; reproductive health; masculinity and value of sons and daughters. In Nepal, 15 statements respectively were finally selected using factor analysis and after assessing reliability test (Cronbach Alpha score was 0.79 in Nepal). Responses were collated under two broad categories: agree (which combined the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree') and 'disagree' (which combined the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree').

3

SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

The study in Nepal was based on a stratified two-staged cluster sampling technique. It was carried out in three districts (out of 75), chosen to represent consistently high, medium and average sex ratios of children less than a year of age (SRU1), based on the 2001 population census. It was assumed that the selection of study sites representing districts with varying sex ratios would provide a balanced picture of men's attitudes and behavior pertaining to son preference and masculinity. The three districts chosen for the present study were: Saptari (109/100 females); Gorkha (106/100 females); and Dang (102/100 females).

First stage: The study selected 40 primary sampling units (PSUs) (24 rural wards and 16 urban wards/sub wards) using probability proportion to size (PPS). Given the low level of urbanization in Nepal (15 percent in the 2001 Census), the allocation of proportional urban samples would have been inadequate to reveal significant rural and urban differences, if any. Hence, it was decided to select 40 percent of the clusters (16 clusters) from the urban areas.

3

SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

To select the clusters, VDCs (Village Development Committee) were listed alphabetically, separately for rural and urban, with their corresponding wards/cluster and their households and populations, and systematic random sampling was applied.

Second stage: A sketch map of each sampled cluster was prepared and divided into 2-5 segments (in the case of more than 100 households), from which a segment was chosen randomly. From an up-to-date list of households, 25 households were selected through systematic random sampling. A screening questionnaire was administered to the head or most knowledgeable person of the household to identify eligible respondents (men aged 18-49 years) in the sampled household. If more than one eligible man was identified in the sampled household, only one man was selected using the KISH table. If a selected household had no man who could be identified as eligible, sampling continued using the same approach until the desired sample size of 25 had been reached in each cluster.

3

SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

The team interviewed 1,000 men aged 18-49 years (400 urban and 600 rural). The primary sampling unit (PSU) was a village ward or combination of wards of a village development committee (VDC) in a rural area and a municipal sub-ward in an urban area, with at least 100 households. As targeted, 1,000 men aged 18-49 years from 1,283 households were successfully interviewed.

DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE SIZE IN NEPAL					
District	Rural clusters	Urban clusters	Rural Sample	Urban sample	Total number of interviews
Saptari	11	4	275	100	375
Gorkha	5	3	125	75	200
Dang	8	9	200	225	425
Total	24	16	600	400	1,000

Over a quarter of the respondents in Nepal (29 percent) were below 24 years in age, and over one-third of them (39 percent) interviewed were between 35 and 49 years (table 3.1). The mean age of the men participating in the survey was 32.

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SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

Three quarters of men reported to be married and one-third of the unmarried men were cohabiting. In Nepal, eight percent men were illiterate while others had been to school and one-fifth of them had attended higher secondary. Nepal being a Hindu dominated country majority of men their followed the Hindu religion. In terms of occupation, in Nepal nearly half were farmers followed by nearly one-fourth of men who were in service. The caste/ethnicity analysis of the sample of Nepali men shows that the largest proportion of men in the sample belong to the Brahman/Chhetri group (35 percent) followed by the Janajatis (31 percent), and the Dalits (22 percent).

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SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

The large majority of the respondents in Nepal (79 percent) were currently married. Similarly, the majority of the sampled men in both countries lived in the rural areas. While a slight majority of the Nepali respondents (54 percent) lived in a nuclear family structure, the vast majority of the men interviewed in Vietnam (91 percent) lived in a joint family. Most of the Nepali men had married at a younger age as their mean age at marriage was 20 years. In fact, almost half the sample of Nepali men (48 percent) had married before they were 20 years old. The following table presents selected social characteristics of the study population.

3

SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS	
Characteristics	Nepal
	Percentage
Level of education	
Illiterate	8.0
NFE/up to primary	15.1
Primary to SLC	55.2
Higher secondary and above	21.7
Caste/Ethnicity	
Brahman/Chhetri	35.4
Janajatis	30.8
Disadvantaged non-dalit terai caste group	12.1
Dalits/religious minorities	21.7
Religion	
No religion	-
Hindu	92.1
Christian	2.2
Buddhist	2.9
Muslim	2.8
Others	-

4

RESPONSE RATE

As targeted, all 1,000 men aged 18-49 years from 1,283 households were successfully interviewed.

5

WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

No additional information available in this section.

6

MISSINGNESS ASSESSMENT

No additional information available in this section.

7

QUALITY CONTROL

No additional information available in this section.

8

INTERVIEWER TRAINING

The field teams underwent five-day intensive training in the application of the research instrument and quality assurance from the core team members, based on standard World Health Organization practices for carrying out research on sensitive issues. There were a total of 12 interviewers in the country field team.

9

DATA COLLECTION PARTNER

The GEM scale was originally developed by the Population Council and Promundo with young men aged 15-24 years and later adopted by the IMAGES for adult men, and adapted in Nepal to consider the gender dimensions of the local context.

This study was undertaken by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in partnership with Center for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities (CREHPA) in Nepal. Former Technical Specialist at ICRW, Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh, and former Research Associate at ICRW, ARO, Ms. Sonvi Kapoor contributed in finalizing the study instruments, sampling design and guiding the teams in Nepal during data collection and analysis. Ms. Chandana Anusha also contributed in the tool development process as a research fellow with ICRW.

9

DATA COLLECTION PARTNER

The study was commissioned by UNFPA, Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok and funded by Australian Government, AusAID.

Ms. Anuradha Bhasin, Consultant at ICRW contributed to the preparation of the study report and Dr. Ellen Weiss, Senior Advisor, ICRW, Head Quarters (HQ) contributed editorial support in finalizing the report.

Caroline Klein, Budget and Sub-grant Manager at ICRW, HQ and Sandeepa Fanda, ICRW, ARO provided administrative support throughout the project.

10 ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study protocol was approved by ICRW's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and by the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of the Centre for Research Environment and Population Activities (CREHPA). The study team, including the research assistants were made aware of the sensitivity of the area being explored under the study and took several steps to minimize discomfort to study participants. Ethical guidelines developed by the WHO on studying sensitive issues were maintained throughout the study and beyond. Participants in the study were fully informed about the nature of the study, the research objectives, and the confidentiality of the data, and gave written consent (a thumb-print for those who could not sign their names) for their participation in the study. Standard procedures were followed for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

11

NOTES ON STUDY

This study was first of its kind in Nepal that explored men's attitudes on a wide range of issues related to gender equality, son preference, the levels and types of intimate partner violence and knowledge and attitude toward laws and policies related to women's right. There is need for more comprehensive, long-term and male-targeted intervention programs or campaigns at national and local levels taking into account men's specific socio-economic conditions that influence their preferences.

11

NOTES ON STUDY

The study was carried out in the three districts in Nepal which were selected using the sex ratio of children under one year of age. Therefore, the findings are meant to be representative at the district level and not for the country. The fieldwork coincided with the peak monsoon, so there were several barriers to physically accessing the target populations. Another challenge was the high migration of men for employment, so it was difficult to find the selected respondents, which resulted in replacements in the sample.

A general limitation of the data could arise from response bias, which is found unavoidable in every interview. In this study, for some 'sensitive' questions, especially about violence and sex selection practices, respondents may tend to give responses that they think are socially and politically acceptable as "right" or to please the interviewer.

The background is a solid teal color with several dark blue, hand-drawn style lines. These lines are abstract and somewhat chaotic, with some forming loops and others being straight. They appear to be drawn with a thick marker or brush, giving them a textured, slightly irregular appearance. The lines are scattered across the page, with some being more prominent than others.

IMAGES

International
Men and Gender
Equality Survey