



# Understanding key capability domains of adolescent girls and gender justice

Findings from Nepal

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## Abstract

Human development reports of the past few years show that, despite the conflict, Nepal has made admirable progress in terms of the wellbeing of its people. However, these developments are unevenly distributed, and adolescent girls and women are among those in a disadvantaged position. In addition, adolescents have received limited attention, with the focus on them only in relation to sexuality and reproductive health (Harper et al., 2012). In the belief that there are other, equally important, issues that have an impact on wellbeing and that discriminatory social institutions such as formal and informal laws, norms and practices play a critical role in enhancing or limiting human capabilities, this study looks at their role in influencing the educational, economic, physical, psychosocial and political capability of adolescent girls and young women in Nepal.

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# Acknowledgements

The team is very grateful to all the adolescent girls, young women and men of Doti and Ilam who shared their insights and experiences patiently with us. To make this possible, several people and institutions played a key role. We express our gratitude to the District Administration Office and District Education Office in Ilam, CARE Nepal, SDC, IOM, World Education and SAFHR in Kathmandu. In addition, we would like to give special thanks to Mr Baburam Khatiwada, Chief District Officer, Ilam; Mr Suman Ghimire, Local Development Officer, Ilam; and Mr Dil Nath Puri, District Education Officer, Ilam, for their time and for providing materials, giving access to their database and helping us reach other relevant government offices. We would also like to thank Mr Man Bahadur Kathayat, Principal of Soojung School, Doti; Mr Min Rana, Principal of Shree Saraswoti Boarding School, Doti; Ms Darshana Gurung; Mr Kumar Gurung; Mr Krishna Khatiwada; and Ms Champa Adhikari and their family members as well as local community leaders in Ilam for their enthusiasm and support in the fieldwork. Most importantly, we would like to express our heartfelt acknowledgement of Ms Rewati Gurung, Member of the Project Team, for her comments and her hard work on formatting and shaping the report; without her help it would not have been possible to produce it. We also thank Mr Siddhi Manandhar of NCCR for taking care of logistics throughout the project and Gitta Thapa, NCCR Gender Expert, for her inputs and her help in critically analysing post-conflict gender dimensions.

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# Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CREHPA	Centre for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities
DFID	Department for International Development
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IDI	In-Depth Interview
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NCASC	National Centre for AIDS and STD Control
NCCR	National Centre for Contemporary Research
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIDS	Nepal Institute of Development Studies
NLSS	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NPC	National Planning Commission
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization

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# Executive summary

## Overview

Human development reports of the past few years show that, despite the conflict, Nepal has made admirable progress in terms of the wellbeing of its people. However, these developments are unevenly distributed, and adolescent girls and women are among those in a disadvantaged position. In addition, adolescents have received limited attention, with the focus on them only in relation to sexuality and reproductive health (Harper et al., 2012). In the belief that there are other, equally important, issues that have an impact on wellbeing and that discriminatory social institutions such as formal and informal laws, norms and practices play a critical role in enhancing or limiting human capabilities, this study looks at their role in influencing the educational, economic, physical, psychosocial and political capability of adolescent girls and young women in Nepal.

## Methodology

Integrating capabilities into both entitlements and rights provides a useful analytical entry point to understand how the development of capabilities is restricted and how discrimination functions. This study takes an entitlement and gender justice approach as its conceptual framework and employs the idea of capabilities and justice first put forward by Amartya Sen (1999).

Methodologically, the study takes a qualitative approach. Field work took place in two sites: Ilam, where gender norms are not as discriminatory, which represents a more developed part of Nepal and which has diverse ethnic and religious groups and less presence of international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs); and Doti, where gender norms are very discriminatory and which represents the least developed part of Nepal, with high NGO presence and less ethnic and religious diversity. The sites were purposely chosen for the study to bring out a more complete picture of the situation of adolescent girls and young women in Nepal. A rural and an urban community were selected in each site.

Methods of inquiry consisted of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews (IDIs), key informant interviews (KIIs) (at national, district and local levels), focus group discussions (FGDs) and observation. Tools such as life history questions, historical timeline mapping, community mapping exercises, generational pairings, time-use diaries, social network mapping and policy response kits were used with adolescent girls and boys, young women, older women and other people who play critical role in their lives, such as fathers, mothers and teachers and other service providers. In total, the study involved four community mappings, thirteen FGDs, thirty-two IDIs, four case studies and sixteen life histories and generational pairings. The data collected were analysed and interpreted using the conceptual framework on capability.

## Capability deprivations

The sections below present a summary of our findings in each domain. Note that it is difficult to generalise findings because they vary by age (young/older adolescents), class, caste, ethnicity, religion, rural/urban location and culture according to geographical location (Ilam/Doti).

## Education domain

While value placed on education has increased as a result of government and NGO programming, girls still face a number of barriers to continuing and making achievements in higher education, although not so much in enrolment, as was previously the case. Household chores and responsibilities are inflexible and disproportionately higher for girls than for boys, and lifecycle issues of marriage and childbirth are the main

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constraints preventing girls from continuing their education. In addition, the way girls are brought up leads to barriers such as age-related stigma and lack of confidence among girls to negotiate aspirations for higher studies with parents and in-laws.

### **Economic domain**

Adolescent girls need to be equipped with skills and knowledge if they are to get decent jobs in the future. However, very few opportunities exist for girls to obtain information and acquire skills and knowledge to build their employment prospects. The focus is on education, which so far is doing little to impart knowledge about different jobs and the skills and knowledge girls should acquire during adolescence to get these in the future. In addition, restricted mobility, mostly in Doti, means girls aspire to work in jobs like teaching or nursing in their home villages because they know they will not be able to work outside their home and they do not have enough information on the different types of jobs available in the market to make an informed choice.

There is gender discrimination in household tasks in Doti, with women and adolescent girls doing a very large chunk of work, including digging fields, which in other parts of Nepal is done mainly by men. Household work is fairly equally divided in Ilam, with no gender stereotyping. When engaged in income-generating activities (only in Ilam), adolescent girls mostly work as agricultural labourers. However, they work on their holidays, and it does not need to hamper their schooling. Girls can also decide on their own on how to use their earnings. Girls in Doti were not found to engage in income-generating activities. Meanwhile, even when wages do not vary by gender, the fact that adolescent girls are less likely to have paying jobs means they have less money than boys of the same age.

Migration is an important employment activity but varies by gender and by place. Girls do not migrate at all for work in Doti; in Ilam we found only two cases of girls migrating for work.

As it is assumed that adolescents are under the guardianship of their parents, adolescents do not have access to family assets for investment. However, in some indigenous groups in Ilam, girls are given a small part of the family's assets – mostly land and animals – from which they can earn pocket money. This does not occur in Doti.

### **Physical domain**

We did not find cases of girls facing violence or corporeal punishment by their parents. This was confirmed by the KIIs. Physical violence towards adolescent girls is rare but it is common among women, and more so in Doti, where gender discrimination renders women very vulnerable. In cases of violence, mainly sexual assault, the perpetrators are usually members of the extended family, neighbours or other members in the community. A culture of wife beating still exists, mainly in Doti, although this is decreasing. This mainly occurs when drunk husbands or mothers-in-law beat wives/daughters-in-law because of dissatisfaction, and mostly affects women who cannot work hard enough. Girls interviewed in Doti and in urban areas in Ilam fear drunkards very much, although they had not been victims in this regard. It was also found that adolescent girls from Ilam who go from rural to urban areas for higher study or to work are vulnerable to being trapped in sexual exploitation by hotel owners, fake boyfriends or local guardians. This does not happen in Doti, as girls there are not allowed to stay away from home.

If we take humiliation as a form of violence, we found polygamy to be very common among older women. A woman whose husband takes another wife can neither leave, as she is dependent on her husband for social and economic reasons, nor fight for her rights. Polygamy also often results in other kinds of violence, such as beatings and neglect of children. However, adolescent girls did not see polygamy as a threat.

Harmful traditional practices such as restrictions on mobility and on consumption of milk products during menstruation still exist, more so in Doti. Premarital sex and abortion as a result of pregnancy before marriage are not common. Most adolescents have fairly good knowledge of HIV and AIDS and family planning, with information given to them by local organisation such as the Red Cross and the Family Planning Association in collaboration with schools.

There is no gender discrimination in health services or gender bias in nurture. Positive changes seem to be happening owing to increased awareness: the age of marriage is increasing; the number of children, especially

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sons, a woman is expected to have is decreasing; and women are opting for medical care during pregnancy and childbirth. However, there is still a tendency to ignore girls' aspirations while choosing their spouses.

### **Psychosocial domain**

Expected behaviour for girls and boys is different, with girls expected to be docile, shy and submissive and not outspoken, opinionated and mobile. Girls felt their behaviour was harshly scrutinised and linked to the honour of the family. Restrictions on dress and on ways of carrying and presenting themselves exist for girls; they must wear appropriate and modest clothes, not talk to boys, not laugh loudly in public or run, jump and so on. If they do not follow these rules, they are seen as 'spoilt' and of loose character. Being fashionable is also associated with being provocative, as is staying out overnight or going to a late night function outside the home.

All these restrictions and fear of being judged hamper girls' social interactions, their participation in society and their ability to express their concerns. They also diminish girls' self-confidence and morale and make them feel insecure. We found that, rather than gaining strength from being a part of society, adolescent girls were constantly in fear of society.

However, differences prevailed, with girls from urban areas and from indigenous groups being more confident and less affected by such discriminatory rules than girls from rural areas, those belonging to so-called high-caste groups such as the Brahmins and the Chhetri and low-caste Dalits.

### **Political participation domain**

School is the main venue for participation of adolescent girls, followed by the home. Participation in community is greater if there is presence of NGOs in the community. Voices of adolescent girls are heard in the household if they are older, educated (beyond Grade 10) and/or have taken on major responsibilities in the household.

In school, there are schemes to promote equal participation-such as by keeping girls in leadership and management position in programs, and we found no evidence of gender discrimination in schools exerted by members of the school community. However, mostly in rural Doti, adolescent girls – and more so the married ones – are reluctant to participate freely as they fear being ostracised by society for being active.

Girls seldom participate in clubs or other community-organised groups outside school. Similarly, girls do not participate in political activities outside school, and these do not exist in schools.

### **Policy recommendations**

Given the diversity of needs presented by caste, class, ethnicity, rural/urban locality and culture, there is no 'magic bullet' to address gender discrimination to enhance the capability of girls in Nepal. However, improved skills, awareness and confidence can be generated by investing more in education and preparing adolescent girls and the community to ensure girls have better employment prospects. This can be brought about through the following programmes:

1. An education package that provides English language courses, courses on how to look for scholarships and counselling on the range of opportunities and subjects available for study when girls pass out of school;
2. Skills development for adolescents, including training on managing a business, vocational training on entrepreneurship and training on computer and accountancy skills;
3. Life and relationship management skills training, so girls can manage the new relationships and responsibilities that come with adolescence, and training on effective communication and interaction with adults.

In addition, we propose that psychosocial elements be crosscutting issues for enhancing the capability of girls across all domains. Such elements tend to be missing in current government and non-governmental policy and programming. While it is likely that many programmes have an indirect impact on these issues, a specific focus on psychosocial issues would clearly be beneficial to adolescent girls. For example, the government and the international community are attempting to increase the literacy rate among girls, but without understanding the underlying reasons why parents do not want to send girl children to school, these programmes cannot address

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the root cause of low literacy among girls. A study that focuses on psychosocial issues would be an important way of informing development programmes that work towards empowering women and girls.

Nepal is in a post-conflict transformation phase. This is a critical time to address its past shortcomings, and gender justice is one crucial aspect of this. Although issues related to female children and women are beginning to be discussed, those pertaining specifically to adolescent girls remain largely ignored. Thus, adolescents often remain a missing population in the development vision. A focus on adolescent girls and gender justice is critical if the country is to meet its development goals and also ensure the wellbeing of its population.

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# 1 Introduction

## Why a focus on adolescent girls and gender justice is critical in Nepal

In the past decade, Nepal has been experiencing gradual improvements on several indicators relating to human development, human rights and gender parity. The percentage of the population living on less than \$1 per day decreased from 42% in 1996 to 23.4% in 2011 (CBS, 2012). The poverty gap ratio has reduced by almost 50% since 1996, and there have been an increase in average life expectancy and a reduction in child mortality. Gender parity in enrolment in primary education has been achieved. However, although the country has recorded the fastest overall progress in the world on the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNCT, 2012), and the end of conflict has opened up avenues for the participation of women in economic and political spheres (Ghimire, 2012), Nepal's position on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) shows women still hold a weak position in society. The country ranks 113th out of 146 on the Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, 2011), and 123th on the Global Gender Gap Index (WEF, 2012). Similarly, women and adolescent girls are still recognised as one of the groups most vulnerable to social exclusion in Nepal (UNCT, 2011).

The most important challenges to ensuring overall wellbeing in Nepal relate to the uneven distribution of improvements in quality of life and the persistence of social institutions and norms that are particularly restrictive towards the female population in the country. These restrictive norms translate and guide the social structures and power relations within the private boundary of family and the different public spaces, as well as within the broader policies and programmes of the country. Many of these norms around social interactions and codes of conduct are guided by Hindu notions of chastity and honour. These are applied to women and girls more than men and boys. Hindu connotations for women and girls derive from their various attributes and include them being referred to as *grihalakshami*, or 'goddesses of prosperity of the home', *dharmapatni*, 'virtuous spouses' and *illalu*, 'mistresses of the house'. Similarly, the word for 'woman', *sthri*, is said to be made up of consonants that refer to qualities such as humility, modesty, meekness and preparedness to sacrifice their life for the sake of both their and the family's honour (Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, 2009). Hindu epics such as the Ramayana reinforce such notions by exemplifying the sacrifices of women. Thus, female members are under pressure to keep secure the chastity and honour of the whole family, and this honour is judged by how far the female members of that family adhere to such norms (see, e.g., Hemalatha, 2009; Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, 2009).

This already presupposes that norms are highly gendered and more restrictive for girls and women. However, as in any society, existing gender norms vary based on overlapping social constructs, socioeconomic conditions, geographical remoteness and age and/or lifecycle issues. For example, gender norms for men and women are much less discriminatory for adolescent girls from indigenous groups such as the Gurung, Rai and Limbu; while beliefs among such indigenous group derive from Hindu and Buddhist religious norms, they also have their own ethnic religious practices to which they adhere, for example animism. The same cannot be said between high and low castes. For example, Dalits, who are supposed to be the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system,<sup>1</sup> follow

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<sup>1</sup> In the traditional Hindu caste system, people are divided into four caste groups: Brahmin, Chhetri, Vaishya and Sudra. Prescribed occupation forms the basis of this division, i.e., the Brahmin are supposed to be engaged in religious activities and preaching spirituality, the Chhetri in the protection of the state as warriors, the Vaishya in business and the Sudra in artisanship. The four groups are further divided into two groups: those like the Brahmin and the Chhetri, who wear sacred thread on their body, and others like indigenous groups, who do not wear sacred thread and can consume alcohol. Those who do not wear sacred thread are further divided into two groups: the *choi chito halunu parne*, meaning the 'untouchables' like Dalit groups, after touching whom one has to sprinkle holy water on oneself, and the *choi chito halnu naparne*, meaning the 'touchables'. However, within each of these groups there is further hierarchy. For example, within the Newar – an ethnic group that falls under the Vaishya categorisation in the above classification – there are high and low castes. The system of Dalits and non-Dalits mentioned above is based on this Hindu caste system whereby Dalits are groups of

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norms of high-caste Hindus, and norms are stricter for Dalit girls than for girls from other indigenous groups who are higher in caste than Dalits but lower than Hindus. Moreover, within indigenous groups, there is further distinction between low and high castes. This intermix of ethnic and caste elements, as well as religion (Hinduism and Buddhism), makes it extremely difficult to say that gender norms are restrictive for certain categories. However, in general, it can safely be said that norms are extremely discriminatory and restrictive for girls from groups such as the Brahmin and the Chhetri since, according to the Hindu caste system, they are supposed to follow a more restrictive lifestyle. Thus, the higher the group is in the hierarchy, the greater the emphasis on abstaining from five main forms of evils: greed, pride, sexual desire, anger and passion for material objects (Shradananda et al., 1992). When it comes to practice, these ideologies guide what each caste group should and should not do.

Backing up such findings from the literature (Das, 1997; Sharma, 1999), our findings from the field, as this study shows, suggest norms are more restrictive for Brahmin and Chhetri women and more flexible for women from indigenous groups. Additionally, norms are more restrictive in rural areas, where individuals tend to be more bound to the community, or perhaps more easily observed than in urban areas. Discriminatory gender norms are also closely linked to age: gender discrimination is less for younger adolescents and more significant for older adolescents since, as they start growing older, the risks of them engaging in immoral behaviour, for example sexual relationships before marriage, which is taboo in Nepali society, increase.

Norms and values, however, are not static entities, and gradually modify with time. The Maoist conflict in Nepal's history has played an important role in accelerating these changes in gendered norms. Thus, for instance, the 40-point demands<sup>2</sup> (the Maoist put forward to the government before taking up arms had the liberation of women as an important focus. Despite negative impacts (e.g. loss of human lives and property), the ideology of women's liberation the Maoists held and the participation of women in the armed struggle have played an important role in both breaking the traditional images and roles of women in Nepali society and changing society's perception towards gender (International IDEA, 2011). This change in the role of women, especially women from rural areas, has helped to a certain extent in changing traditional social and religious values related to gender-segregated work, as well as images of what it means to be an 'ideal' Nepali woman. Changes at the macro level, such as the compulsory 33% participation of women in Constituent Assembly elections and the enshrining of the right to inherit property and the right to equality in citizenship after the peace agreement, are some explicit outcomes of these shifts. Thus, while reading this report, from the perspective of both the primary and the secondary material, it is important to keep in mind the history of the Maoist conflict and the impact it has had in terms of bringing awareness about gender equality to Nepali society.

Drawing on the conceptual framework outlined in Section 2, this study therefore explores the range of formal and informal institutions and norms that are critical to the empowerment of women and adolescent girls in Nepal. This is explored through an analysis of capabilities that both affect and are affected by a range of domains/spheres of life: education, economic, physical, psychosocial and political. Section 3 outlines the methodology and Section 4 presents an overview of the country context by capability domain through an exploration of secondary materials, largely based on national census data and other quantitative surveys. Section 5 describes the study sites, and Section 6 presents the bulk of the fieldwork findings. The report concludes in Section 7, which includes recommendations as suggested by study respondents themselves.

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people who are at the bottom of the hierarchy and are thus rendered untouchable. To discriminate against people as untouchable is illegal in Nepal, but the practice is still strong in rural areas, and is very common among the older generation.

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.humanrights.de/doc\\_en/archiv/n/nepal/politics/130299\\_40demands\\_Maoist.htm](http://www.humanrights.de/doc_en/archiv/n/nepal/politics/130299_40demands_Maoist.htm)

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# 2 Conceptual framework

## 1.1 Capabilities and entitlements

The conceptual framework that serves as the basis for our research draws on the ‘capabilities approach’ that has arisen over the past decade or so as a leading alternative to standard economic frameworks for thinking about human development, poverty, inequality and social justice. The approach emerged out of Amartya Sen’s (1999) theory of ‘development as freedom’ and has been further elaborated and refined by others. This posits development as a process of expanding ‘freedoms’ or ‘capabilities’ that improve human lives by opening up the range of things a person can effectively be and do, such as to being healthy and well nourished, being knowledgeable and participating in community life. Development from this perspective is about facilitating the acquisition and use of such capabilities as well as removing obstacles (such as illiteracy, ill-health, lack of access to resources or lack of civil and political freedom) to what a person can do in life (Fukuda-Parr, 2003).

The capabilities approach has evolved over time as a broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual wellbeing and social arrangements and the design of policies and proposals about social change in society. For some of the capabilities in question, the main inputs are financial resources and economic production; for others, they are political practices, such as the effective guarantee of freedom of thought, religion or political participation. For yet others, they are social or cultural practices, social structures, social institutions, public goods, social norms, traditions and habits. The capabilities approach thus offers a comprehensive approach to enhancing human wellbeing and understanding the social arrangements that either foster or inhibit it (Robeyns, 2003).

The concept of capabilities as embracing sociocultural entitlements to **inclusion and participation** has been applied to notions of poverty as ‘social exclusion’, defined as a combination of deprivations that stem from reduced capacities or ‘functionings’. This has contributed to the multidimensional definition of poverty, with important implications as well for understanding and assessing gender inequalities (Alkire, 2008; Sen, 2000). According to Fukuda-Parr (2003), the capabilities-based human development paradigm provides a more gender-sensitive agenda to public policy than its alternatives, since gender equity is a central concern of the approach; it is sensitive to a range of inequities and discrimination that are important in women’s lives; and it has the scope to delve into complex issues that constrain women’s life choices, including discriminatory political processes, social institutions and norms that need to be tackled head-on. Through the work of feminist thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum, the capabilities approach has been used as a potent tool for construction of a normative concept of social justice and the promotion of ‘gender justice’ (Nussbaum, 2000; 2003; 2011).

An **entitlements approach** informed by a rights perspective considers the range of key economic, sociocultural and political entitlements fundamental to a transformative approach to development and the achievement of social justice. The evolving notion of ‘gender justice’ may be one way of combining the capabilities approach and rights-based approaches for adolescent girls around issues of their social, economic, political and individual ‘entitlements’ and the measures needed to ensure such entitlements may be claimed and activated in practice (Goetz, 2007; Mukhopadhyay, 2007).

In expanding such a concept to embrace gender justice as the basis for promotion of capacity enhancement for adolescent girls, the way is paved for consideration of adolescent girls as citizens with rights and entitlements that need to be accorded and claimed through an enabling environment structured within the larger social units of which they are a part. While strengthening capabilities in various domains is critical for human development as a whole, eliminating gender discrimination in the evolution and exercise of such capabilities is essential for gender justice in particular. For this reason, it is important to conceptualise adolescent girls as evolving citizens to whom rights and entitlements accrue, and to consider, therefore, the full range of actors at various levels –

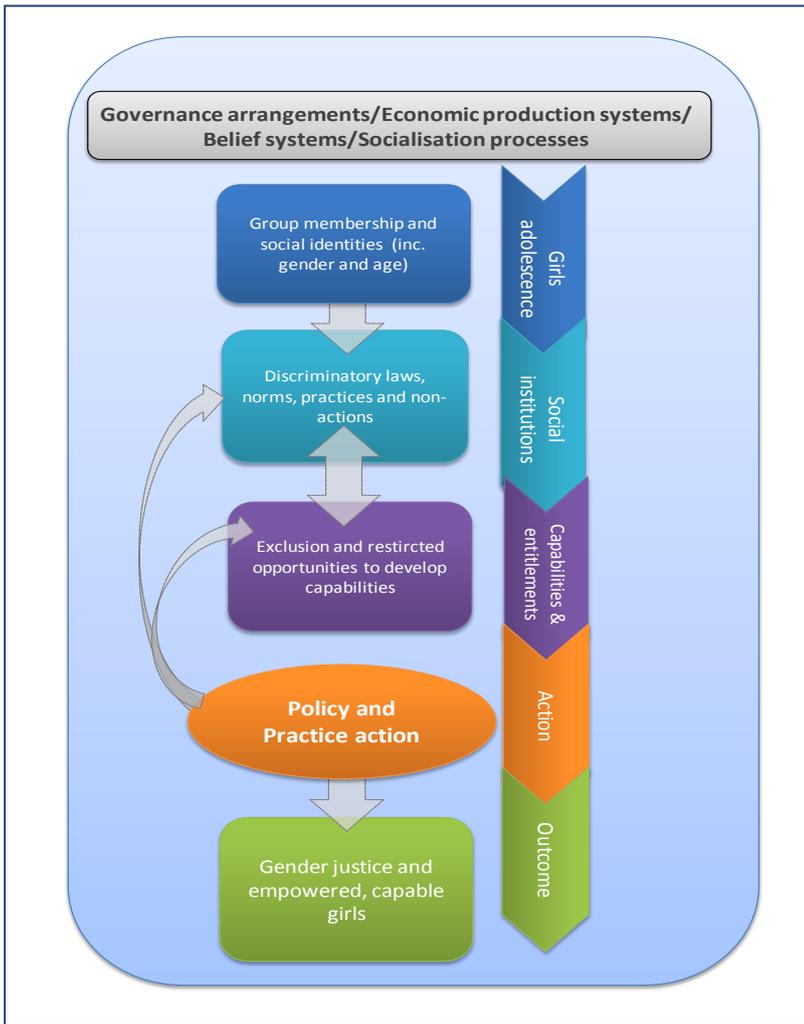
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including family, community and state – who bear responsibility for creating the enabling environment and providing the services required to nurture and enhance these capabilities.

## **2.2 Capabilities and social norms**

In seeking to understand how the development of capabilities is restricted and how discrimination functions, we need to go beyond recognition of the compromised capabilities themselves to understand the forces driving discriminatory laws, norms and practices. This discrimination results in exclusion and restricted opportunities to develop capabilities, the outcomes of which are unrealised potential, limited development, disempowerment and, ultimately, a lack of social justice, particularly what we and others term ‘gender justice’ (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**



Source: ODI, 2012.

Integrating capabilities with both entitlements and rights provides a useful analytical entry point and contributes to the development of a conceptual framework linked to gender justice. It can help guide research into and policy action regarding the underlying social norms, attitudes and practices that either foster or inhibit the development of girls’ evolving capacities and potential. Such an approach has the additional advantage of linking both ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ along a continuum that posits Sen’s ‘development as freedom’ as a means as well as an end.

As Table 1 illustrates, the framework also leads to specific actions that enhance entitlements and capabilities. Drawing on the literature discussed above, the framework identifies five capability domains for attention: the education domain; the economic domain; the physical and bodily integrity domain; the psychosocial domain; and the political and civic domain.

**Table 1: Capabilities framework and gender justice for adolescent girls**

<b>Vulnerabilities to overcome</b>	<b>Norms and practices compromising capabilities and leading to exclusion</b>	<b>Non-actions compromising capabilities</b>	<b>Entitlements that underpin gender justice</b>
<p>1. Educational domain and capability            Goal: Capability to access and make the most of quality educational and vocational training services            Situation: Restricted opportunities for capability development through education</p>			
Poverty and parental underinvestment in daughters Pregnancy as cause of school dropout Early marriage and cessation of schooling Gender-insensitive school environments Gender-based violence, lack of safety and security Gender biases in learning processes and curriculum Gender impacts of HIV and AIDS	Gender- and identity-based school exclusion based on son bias Unequal care burdens Lack of choice over time use Violence in school or community Gender inequalities in teaching/learning processes	Non-provision/ implementation of education services Non-provision of quality child care Non-provision of reproductive health services to prevent early pregnancy	Education Health care Leisure time Vocational and technical training opportunities
Limited vocational training and labour market preparation/ opportunity (including access to credit) Unpaid household labour and 'time poverty' Exploitative child labour	Limited access to assets Unequal inheritance and property rights Transfer and control of dowry Exclusion from labour markets and decent work Occupational discrimination – hereditary employment Effect of child labour – exclusion from schooling	Inequality or non-provision/ implementation of inheritance laws Weak implementation/non-enforcement of labour laws Gender discrimination in equal opportunities Weak access to justice	Income-generating opportunities, skills, training Productive assets – land, credit, technology Vocational and technical training opportunities Decent work Access to information/ awareness training
Sexual and gender-based violence Limited control over physical body (safety/mobility) Limited control over fertility Limited control over sexuality Poor reproductive health Lack of mobility	Unequal quality and provision of care (son bias, including female foeticide/infanticide) Limited authority in family Early marriage Harmful traditional practices Socially accepted notions of 'masculinities' re violence Gendered norms of 'honour and shame' underpinning ideologies of male control over female bodies	Limited safe spaces Limited protective services Limited access to justice Non-provision of health services Non-provision of reproductive health services Non-enactment or enforcement of national laws consistent with international norms	Life Adequate food and nutrition Bodily integrity Care and protection (nurture) Good health and access to health care
Sociocultural stereotypes (of girls'/women's role in family) Overcoming negative attitudes Mental ill-health Lack of mechanisms and support to cope with stress	Stereotyping of female roles Restricted mobility Restricted access to education Limit on private roles Restrictions on association	Insufficient legal protection Insufficient counselling services/support systems	Inclusion in decisions that affect self Freedom of association Supportive and nurturing social life

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Limitations in political and civil liberties, agency, gender justice and citizenship

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Restrictive citizenship laws and practices	Control/surveillance	Non-provision/implementation of information	Voice/representation
Public/private ideologies and restricted mobility/agency for girls (participation in peer groups, leadership opportunities)	Restricted mobility	Non-provision/implementation of justice services	Group membership
Lack of access to justice	Limit on public/private roles		Association
	Limited authority in family		Mobility

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*Note:* This is an evolving framework to which research results will contribute.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Study design and process

Table 2 describes the study process.

**Table 2: The study process**

Time	Activities
July-September, 2012	A review of the literature on the country context was conducted based on tools/guidelines developed by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to explore the five capability domains. Two members of the research team were oriented on tools and methodology by ODI.
January 2013	The data collection process at national level began in January 2013 with key informant interviews (KIIs) as part of the project's stakeholder engagement plan. Further KIIs were carried out at national level once the main fieldwork had started (interviewee list in Annex1).
February 2013	The ODI focal person oriented the remaining members of the research team on the methodology and the tools in a pre-fieldwork methodology workshop. A rigorous discussion of the tools within the team help revised the tools. The methodology and the revised tools were shared with the stakeholders in a workshop organised to introduce the study.
February 2013	Feedback on the methodology and the tools was collected in the workshop and revisions were made. On 27 and 28 February the tools were pretested in Lamatar Village Development Committee (VDC) in Lalitpur. The tools were modified after the pre-test.
March-April 2013	Field data collection was carried out from 2 to 9 March 2013 in selected sites of Doti district and from 25 March to 3 April 2013 in selected sites of Ilam district.

### 3.2 Data collection and tools technique

The study used qualitative and participatory research tools. For details, see Table 3.



Picture 1: Community mapping in Jamuna, Source: Study Team, 2013



Picture 2: Sitting around the fireplace with family members in case study household, Ilam, Source: Study Team, 2013

**Table 3: Data collection tools and techniques**

Tools	Purpose	Respondents
Community mapping/ institutional mapping <sup>3</sup>	To gain information about different kinds of infrastructure and resources as well as entry into the community To gain general information on the community	Adolescent girls and boys, their parents, local leaders, local teachers, mothers' groups, local activists, senior citizens of the community
Historical timeline/trend	To understand changing patterns of each domain	Key national and district/sub-district government officials, government and non-government service providers, community
Observation	To capture behaviours, household conditions and other general characteristics of the community and households	Conducted within the household and at community level
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	To find out about the status of adolescent girls, opportunities, challenges, empowerment factors and changes over time	Key national and district/sub-district government officials, government and non-government service providers, community leaders and development partners
Intra household-case studies	To explore intra-household dynamics <i>vis-à-vis</i> adolescent girls by triangulating views of adults and children, and by gender	Selected household with adolescent girls with male adolescent sibling
Life histories and generational pairing	To explore key moments in girls' lives present and past; generational differences in adolescent experiences	Older adolescent girls, their grandmothers and mothers
In-depth interviews (IDIs)	To understand individual experiences of adolescent girls and their gender dimensions	Adolescent girls and boys, and older women
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	To explore general community-level definitions, views and experiences of adolescent girls	Adolescent girls and boys (10-19) and older women

### 3.3 Data collection: Study population, sampling strategy and size

A range of criteria was identified in order to obtain a mix of respondent types. These included gender, age range/bracket (10-14, 15-19), marital status, presence of siblings and ethnicity and discrimination (Dalit and non-Dalit, Brahmin and indigenous), among others. Within these predefined criteria, the respondents were selected purposively with the help of the local key informants. Contacts with district-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, government authorities, school headmaster, teachers, media persons and youth leaders were established before starting the data collection. These representatives acted as entry points to the VDCs and linked the research team to the local community, and through their support the rest of the study respondents were recruited. Table 4 outlines the details of tools and respondents.

<sup>3</sup> For details on numbers see Table 4.



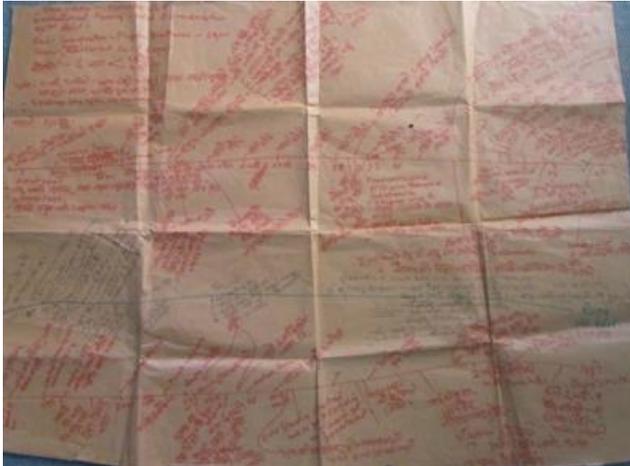
Picture 3: FGD with older women in Doti, Source: Study Team, 2013

**Table 4: Respondent type and size**

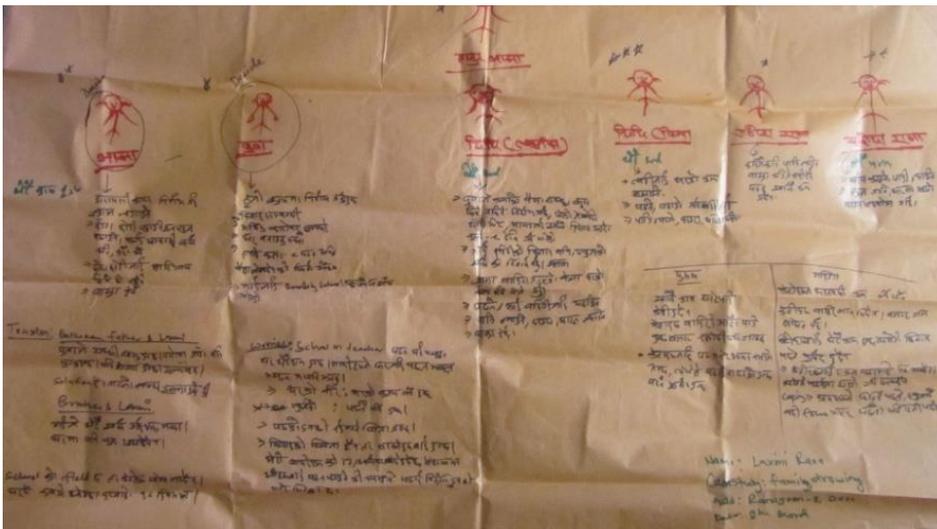
SN	Method used	No. of respondents		
		Doti	Ilam	Total
1	Community and institutional (bubble diagram) mapping	1 rural 1 urban	1 rural 1 urban	4
2	KII (political and/or community leader, female teacher, head teacher, NGO person, female community health volunteer, employer, training provider, head (female) police from women's cell, media person) different respondent for different capabilities	11	22	33
3	FGDs			13
	Younger adolescent girls (10-14 years)	1	1	2
	Older adolescent girls (15-19 years)	2	3	5
	Mixed adolescents	0	1	1
	Older women	0	2	2
	Adolescent boys	1	2	3
2	IDIs			32
	Younger adolescent girls (10-14 years)	2	2	4
	Older adolescent girls (15-19years)	8	8	16
	Married young women	1	1	2
	Adolescent brothers of older adolescent girls	4	4	8
	Older women	0	2	2
4	Intra household case studies	2	2	4
5	Life histories and generational pairing	7 + 3=10	5+1=6	16

### 3.4 Data management and analysis

Most of the interviews were recorded; a few took the form of written notes and diagrams. All the data were translated from the Nepali language (including from three Doteli dialects) to English and transcribed, except a few national-level KIIs, in which the respondents answered in English. All the notes and the transcribed and translated data were analysed manually and entered into pre-developed matrices according to different themes as they emerged during analysis.



Picture 4: Generational Pairing (product) between 3 generations in Illam, Source: Study Team, 2013



Picture 5: Stick-drawing about family responsibilities done by case study adolescent girl in Doti, Source: Study Team, 2013

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

Respondents gave verbal consent before the data collection started. They were provided with full information regarding the purpose of the study and the nature of the information required. They were also assured that confidentiality would be maintained and that they were free not to respond and to discontinue the interview at any time.

# 4 Country context by capability domain

Following a brief overview of the adolescent population in general, we then describe the situation in relation to adolescent girls by capability domains, based on a review of secondary materials.

According to Mason (2012), rapid growth of the adolescent and youth population worldwide is ending and an era of stability is beginning. Asia is expected to see a 20% decrease in its adolescent and youth population by 2060. However, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007) suggests high fertility rates in Nepal will lead to a substantially increased adolescent population in the country in the coming years. Like the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) in Nepal takes adolescents to be those aged between 10 and 19 years (MoHP, 2012). As Table 5 shows, adolescents numbered approximately 6.4 million in 2012 and made up 24.19% of the total population, with an almost equal proportion of male and female adolescents (CBS and NPCS, 2012). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2003), the adolescent population is estimated to reach 6.5 million by the year 2016 and almost 7 million by 2021 (Table 5).

**Table 5: Projected adolescent male and female population**

	2012	2016	2021
Total adolescents	6,407,404 (24.19% of total population)	6,581,205	6,985,927
Male	3,207,821 (12.48% of total population and 50.06% of adolescent population)	3,388,796	3,594,082
Female	3,199,583 (11.72% of total population and 49.93% of adolescent population)	3,192,409	3,391,845

*Source:* Adapted by authors from CBS (2003).

Table 6 shows the adolescent female population as a proportion of the total female population in different development regions in Nepal. Female adolescents make up 20.10 % of the female population in the Eastern region and 21.3% of the total female population in the Far-West, where the study was carried out.

**Table 6: Female adolescents as a proportion of the female population, by development region**

Development region	Female population (%)	Adolescent girls as % of female population
Eastern	54.2	20.10
Central	53	17.8
West	54.5	18.9

Mid-West	53.7	21.1
Far-West	55.2	21.3

Source: Adapted by authors from CBS (2011b).

## 4.1 Education capability

A number of studies (e.g. Ritchie et al., 2004; Upadhyay, 2010; USAID and Shrii Shakti, 2010) show an increase in the literacy rate in Nepal over the past decade. However, literacy rates vary between rural and urban areas and across social groups, as well as by age and gender, as Figure 2 shows. The current overall literacy rate is 61% (male 72% and female 51%) for age group six years and above (CBS, 2011b), markedly higher in urban areas (77%) when compared with rural areas (57%). As gender parity between male and female children has been achieved at primary level, this gap relates mainly to post-primary schooling.<sup>4</sup>

This improvement in overall literacy, and in female education in particular, has been attained since the implementation of the School Sector Reform Programme. This programme, introduced in 2007/08, aims to achieve easily available, quality education for all, as well as community participation in education. It has entailed improving enrolment, making the teaching system more effective by running programmes in different education-related sub-sectors, improving school infrastructure, setting up early childhood development programmes, implementing a monitoring and supervision system in schools and providing incentives to students and their family members, such as free textbooks, lunches in schools, free education and uniforms. To increase girls' enrolment, incentives are offered to households if they send their girl children to school, issue-specific teacher training is held and female teachers are promoted. Social mobilisers and local NGOs raise awareness on sending girl children to schools, thus involving the community in increasing girls' enrolment. The programme will be implemented until 2015, and the UN plans to adapt and continue with it after 2015 (UNCT, 2012).

As Figure 2 shows, gender differences in literacy rates become more pronounced in late adolescence, and this gap is wider in rural areas. According to the latest estimates, the literacy rate for males and females is almost similar in early adolescence (10-14 years) in urban areas, at 93% and 91.5%, respectively. However, there are rural/urban disparities: in rural areas, the rate for early adolescents (10-14 years) is slightly lower for females (82.8%) as compared with males (86.3%). The literacy rate decreases significantly as girls enter late adolescence (15-19 years), and differences between boys and girls become more pronounced (boys 94.8% and girls 84.1%), suggesting barriers to female adolescents continuing education. These barriers seem to be more pronounced in rural areas, where the literacy rate for late adolescent boys is 94.4%, compared with 82.5% for girls. Similarly, the fact that the gap between the net enrolment ratio (NER) of boys and girls widens, with a lower NER for girls as they reach lower-secondary and secondary levels, and with the gap in the ratio of men to women in tertiary education (i.e. men attending higher education in comparison with women doing the same) at 0.37, demonstrates that barriers are more pronounced for girls as they enter late adolescence and above (Acharya and Saiju, 2011).

Figure 2: Literacy rate by age group and rural urban area

Age Group (years)	Urban Nepal			Rural Nepal			Nepal		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
6-9	67.2	67.5	67.4	51.8	54.0	53.0	54.2	56.0	55.2
10-14	93.0	91.5	92.3	86.3	82.8	84.6	87.3	84.3	85.8
15-19	96.3	90.9	93.6	94.4	82.5	87.7	94.8	84.1	88.9

<sup>4</sup> However, note that the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) report (OECD, 2012) suggests lower enrolment of girls in primary education, whereas data from other sources, like the Ministry of Education and the CBS, point to the achievement of gender parity at primary level.

Source: CBS and NPCS (2012).

In Nepal, the proportion of girls who have never been to school/college is still high (12%) compared with that of boys (5%) (MoHP, 2012b). Similarly, the average dropout rate is higher for adolescent girls (22%) than for adolescent boys (16%) (ibid.). However, this national average dropout rate does not convey one significant result: we find that the dropout rate for adolescent girls is higher in Grades 1-5 and decreases as girls enter lower-secondary level, where it becomes lower than the rate for boys (girls 57.8%, boys 58.1%). Analysis of data from the adolescent survey (ibid.) shows that girls tend to drop out if they start school at a later stage than the official starting age, which is four years.

Reasons for dropout show a gendered pattern. As Table 7 shows, marriage causes dropout of girls in both early and late adolescence more than is the case for boys. The difference becomes much more prominent as girls enter late adolescence. Economic problems cause dropout for boys more than for girls, and the difference becomes prominent as boys enter late adolescence. When the reason is family condition, as Table 7 shows, girls drop out owing to the additional responsibility of having to take care of the household and younger siblings, whereas boys drop out for economic reasons.

**Table 7: Reason for dropout from school, by gender (%)**

Age group	Economic problem	Family condition	Health condition	Marriage	Fail in exam	School too far	Parents not willing	No interest	Work	Other	Don't know	Total
10-14 male	40.73	29.55	3.40	0.00	7.73	1.45	1.05	14.02	1.02	1.05	0.00	100
10-14 female	31.45	33.01	1.20	2.19	6.33	2.47	2.24	13.68	7.44	0.00	0.00	100
15-19 male	33.17	25.25	2.01	2.41	3.59	0.76	0.24	17.00	5.11	0.48	0.00	100
15-19 female	13.95	25.17	1.71	26.64	13.94	0.91	2.18	12.88	2.12	0.00	0.49	100

Source: MoHP (2012b).

When they go to school, the net attendance rate in class is higher for girls until secondary level (primary: boys 67.2, girls 70.2; lower-secondary: boys 26.5, girls 26.9; secondary: boys 14.2, girls 15.7) and becomes lower at higher-secondary (boys 4.6, girls 4.4) and tertiary levels (boys 9.8, girls 7.1). Regarding choice of schools, a large majority of students (71.9%) go to community or government schools and colleges (CBS and NPCS, 2012) rather than private schools.

## 4.2 Economic capability

Data on the usual economic activity rate<sup>5</sup> and the current economic activity rate of adolescents and youth<sup>6</sup> show that adolescents are highly involved in economic activities, and adolescent girls (58.7%) are usually more

<sup>5</sup> The usual economic activity rate is the proportion of respondents involved in any economic activities during the 12 months prior to the survey; the current economic rate is the proportion involved in any economic activities during the previous 7 days.

<sup>6</sup> In the definition of the survey, adolescents are those aged 10-19 years and youths are aged 20-24 years.

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economically active<sup>7</sup> than boys (37.2%) (CBS, 2011b; MoHP, 2012b). The usual activity rate and the current activity rate of those aged 15-19 years are also higher for girls than for boys: 44.9% vs. 42.9% (ibid.).

Although no disaggregated data for adolescent girls exist, Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) data (CBS, 2011b) show that the largest proportion of the economically active female population is self-employed in agriculture. Other studies (UNIFEM and People's Forum, 2009; Upadhayay, 2010) suggest women are often confined to self-employment, working in the informal sector where they are either not paid for the work they do or do not get the same pay as men for the same work; or they are stuck in unpaid household work, mostly because of norms that restrict women to engaging in activities that are compatible with household responsibilities. This indicates that a majority of women are doing unpaid work and that time poverty remains one of the major causes of vulnerability in terms of economic empowerment. Time poverty also means women cannot take up the jobs or participate in training or education that is available to them. Data from the national survey on adolescents and youths (MoHP, 2012b) show adolescents are more economically active in rural areas than in urban areas. For example, the labour force participation rate in rural areas is 84% whereas that in urban areas is only 62%.

Our assessment of the literature related to economic capability finds an important link in Nepal between migration, mobility and employment, and hence between migration and economic capability. Migration is one of the most important sources of employment among youths. It is estimated that, at present, an average of 1,100 Nepalis migrate outside Nepal for work each day (Bhattarai, 2012). A total of 384,665 Nepalis went out for foreign employment in fiscal year 2011/12 (ibid.). Out of a total population of 28 million, 7.5% are absentees, among whom 43.1% are believed to be currently living outside Nepal (CBS and NPCS, 2012). 56% of the total families in Nepal receive remittances and it makes up 31 percent of the household income (ibid.). Thus, migration constitutes an important issue in the discussion of employment and economic capability in Nepal.

Sexual harassment in work is another factor that has a negative impact on adolescent girls' experiences of working in the formal and informal economy. Sexual harassment occurs in certain types of work, such as in the garment industry, carpet factories, restaurants and hotels. Similarly, perceptions of the nature of jobs are gendered in Nepal (Bushell, 2008). Social stereotypical gender roles dictate that women be 'home-oriented', making it difficult even for educated adolescent girls to choose jobs freely and take part in related vocational training. This creates unequal gender distribution in employment, with women facing higher competition with each other for the jobs they can access, which affects their employment status and their economic capability.

Access to resources and assets such as land and family property is another important factor that determines women's economic capability. For example, Allendorf (2007) shows there is an important relationship between women's right to land and women's empowerment and welfare. Her study finds that women who have their own land have a say in household decisions and that children of women who have land are less like to be undernourished. The 11th Amendment of the 2002 Property Law broadened women's property rights. As such, there is now more incentive for transferring property in women's names, and the law has made it possible for women to have equal access to parental property. However, according to Joshi and Kharel (2008), in practice women still cannot sell, rent or transfer property without the consent of their spouse or sons. Studies show that a large majority of women are rendered economically vulnerable because they do not have possession of and command over land, other property like gold and ornaments or capital (Pokharel, 2009; Pradhan and Strachan, 2003; USAID and Shtrii Shakti, 2010). In addition, lack of decision-making power over property and investment is found to be a significant factor impeding girl's economic capability (e.g. to make investments in a business) (ibid.).

### **4.3 Physical capability**

This section discusses the health concerns and practices that potentially create/lead to vulnerability among adolescent girls. The literature review suggests physical violence as well as migration is also an important aspect of the discussion around physical capability of adolescent girls, so we also present in brief on security issues.

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<sup>7</sup> Work done outside home such as wage jobs and business and jobs inside the home such as home-based occupations and earning activities and collecting firewood and water (but not cooking and serving food, caring) are included in economic activity.

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Studies related to the physical capability of adolescent girls focus mostly on reproductive and sexual health. The government has a target of reducing the maternal mortality rate to 192 per 100,000 live births by 2013 (NPC, 2011). The latest available data show the rate is at 281 births<sup>8</sup> (MoHP et al., 2012).<sup>9</sup> However, we did not find any literature or other data to show the pregnancy rate or maternal mortality/morbidity rate exclusively for adolescent girls. One of the reasons for this may be that pregnancy before marriage is a social taboo, and for married girls the data come under the category of women.

A range of practices, such as early/child marriage, early pregnancy, abortion, *deuki*,<sup>10</sup> *chaupadi*,<sup>11</sup> migration and trafficking, as well as unequal care and decision-making power at home and work burdens, all put adolescent girls in a physically vulnerable position (Goonesekere, 2006; Joshi and Kharel, 2008; Onslow, 2010; Work, 2006). Studies emphasise that the Nepali tradition of early marriage and giving birth early puts girls into a physically vulnerable situation. The mean age for marriage for women is 17 years, as is the first childbearing year for women in Nepal (MoHP, 2012b). Hervish and Fieldmann-Jacobs (2011) finds that 7% of girls get married by the age of 10, 40% by the age of 15 and 60% by the age of 18. Nepal ranks ninth among 'child marriage hotspot countries', with 54% of the population married by the age of 18 (ICRW, 2010).<sup>12</sup> There is also a significant gender disparity in early marriage. It is estimated that, while 10% of adolescent males are married, 32% of adolescent females are married (MoHP, 2012b). The median age for first marriage, which coincides with the median age for first living together, is lower for girls (17) than for boys (19). This age difference may have impacts on the personal status of the girl child in the in-laws' house. However, there is also a marked difference in age of marriage according to level of development of the area (rural and urban) and caste group. The proportion of youth married before 15 and 20 years is higher in rural areas and among Terai (plain) caste groups (MoHP, 2012b).

In terms of partner choice, there are underlying gender disparities in Nepal that may contribute to the weak psychological positioning of women. A higher number of adolescent and youth girls (10-24 years) (61%) are married according to their parents' wishes; 30% marry according to their own personal desire. For boys of the same age group, the rates are 54.83% and 38.53%, respectively. There are no studies to show why these differences exist or how they have changed over the years. We could speculate that one reason may be the relatively young age of girls when they marry. Structural factors, such as the culture and traditions of the family and society, that place girl children in an inferior position could be other explanations.

The survey of adolescents and youths (MoHP, 2012b) reveals interesting perceptions of virginity before marriage: 76% of adolescent and young men (10-24 years) feel girls should be virgins whereas 69% of girls feel boys should be virgins. This changes by level of education, caste, ethnicity and urban dwelling. The survey (Annex 4, Tables 2 and 3) shows that, while there are no adolescent boys who are divorced or separated, 0.04% and 0.08% of adolescent girls are divorced or separated by the age of 19, respectively. Although these figures are low, this is a very early age to be divorced or separated in Nepali society, as there is very little chance these girls will get married again without difficulty. The social preference for a virgin woman for marriage places the abovementioned girls in an insecure social position.

The tradition of early marriage is reinforced by cultural and religious values as well traditional practices such as the dowry system; the operationalisation of all of these, however, varies according to geographical area, level of education and caste and ethnicity. It is particularly common in the country's southern Terai region. In some districts in eastern Terai, like Rupendehi, Dhanusha and Mahottari, more than 50% of marriages involve girls under the age of 12 years with nuptials routinely undertaken in secret (IRIN, 2012). Thus, the government is unable to intervene in such situations. As son preference is very strong in Nepali society, a young mother is expected to continue childbearing until she meets the desired number of sons, which is generally two sons per family (Dahal et al., 2008)

Abortion is another factor exposing adolescents to physical vulnerabilities (MoHP, 2005; Puri, 2002; Tamang et al., 2010). A survey by MoHP (2012b) on youths (15-24 years) who had experience of pregnancy found that 2%

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<sup>8</sup> UNDP estimated the 2010 maternal mortality rate at 170. Figures range from a low estimate of 100 to a high estimate of 290

<sup>9</sup> UNDP (UN Development Programme), 2011. *Millennium Development Goals: Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010*. Kathmandu.

<sup>10</sup> *Deuki* is a system whereby a girl child is offered to the temple to provide services including forced prostitution to the priest.

<sup>11</sup> *Chaupadi* is a system whereby girls are kept in secluded huts outside their own home during menstruation.

<sup>12</sup> The legal age of marriage in Nepal is 18.

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of female youths had had an unwanted pregnancy terminated. But no exact data are available about the proportion of women having unsafe and safe abortions. The main reasons for termination included already having children (34%), health problems (27%) and pregnancy before marriage (14%). Studies also find that those who are pregnant before marriage solicit the help of unskilled locals for abortion and thus are at higher risk. While legally a woman can take her own decision regarding abortion, in practice women cannot seek abortion without her husband's consent (Omar, 1996). This is more pronounced in rural areas, where sometimes the cost and shame in seeking abortion services also force women to do it discreetly, choosing unsafe measures (ibid.).

Other harmful traditional practices around menstruation, such as *chaupadi*, also render girls vulnerable (MoHP, 2012b; WaterAid, 2009). The survey by MoHP (2012b) estimates that 4% of girls in the Far-West region are made to practise *chaupadi*. Local newspapers are often full of stories about rape, physical violence, snakebites and other incidences that occur during their stay in *chaupadis*. These often cause psychological stress to girls, apart from restricting their mobility and hampering their attendance in school.

Security is an integral part of physical empowerment in Nepal. Onslow (2010), in an assessment of perceptions of security and justice in three districts of Nepal, finds a difference between men and women. Whereas men perceive crimes such as robbery and physical attacks to be causes of insecurity, for women domestic violence, rape and dowry-related violence are the principal causes of feeling insecure. Thus, for women, security is closely related to protection from physical violence. Most women were found to suffer physical violence, and perpetrators are often people within close social networks. In studies of physical violence, Naved (2003) and Bhattacharya (2003) found that 77% of physical violence, including beatings and rape, occurs within the family and/or among people who are known to the woman or girl; the remaining 33% is committed by unknown persons.

While previously violence was either unreported (CREHPA, 2011; Saathi et al., 2010) or reported to informal sources (such as through *kachahari*<sup>13</sup> or the *ama samuha*<sup>14</sup>) and did not get redressed (Onslow, 2010), trends are changing now. However, another most significant factor is acceptance of gender differences and superiority of males over females in crucial issues pertaining to rights and safety, as shown by the MoHP national survey on adolescents and youths (MoHP, 2012b) (Table 8). Although the percentage is low (4.2%), there is still acceptance of boyfriends or husbands beating wives to show their control over them. This shows girls are expected to be submissive and bear physical violence. As Table 8 demonstrates, this is accepted more among the 20-24 age group, more by boys and more in urban areas and among uneducated people. Similarly, 7.63% of adolescents and 8.33% of boys who are of age 20-24 (which is the likely age of a husband of a married adolescent girls) still feel that forcing wives into sexual intercourse is justified. The fact that 4.75% of girls also feel it is justified shows that girls accept gender violence.

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<sup>13</sup> *Kachahari* is an informal system of judicial practice whereby cases are heard and decided on by a group of elderly people from the community.

<sup>14</sup> The *ama samuha* is an organisation made up of women in the local community, which carries out various activities related to the social, economic and cultural aspects of women's lives.

**Table 8: Perceptions of rights and gender roles among adolescents, by different background characteristics (%)**

	Men and women should have equal rights	It is appropriate for boys to do household chores	Provision of equal participation of boys and girls in making important decisions	Only boys should be sent to school if the family lacks economic resources	It is good for male family members to expect female members to wash their clothes and cook their food	Women must get an equal leadership role as men	It is justified for the husband to force the wife into sexual intercourse without her consent	It is appropriate for a boyfriend or husband to beat a girlfriend or wife to prove control over them	Some married couples prefer having sons to daughters	N.
<b>Age group</b>										
10-14	91.08	78.07	72.64	5.92	20.18	71.38	5.74	4.07	20.98	6,647
15-19	98.51	88.94	93.16	3.90	16.98	91.60	6.69	3.71	14.86	4,830
20-24	97.69	88.41	91.71	4.44	18.87	90.81	7.63	4.38	18.93	3,277
<b>Sex</b>										
Boys	94.35	81.13	82.24	6.16	22.36	81.72	8.33	5.62	22.14	7,109
Girls	95.57	86.53	84.86	3.79	15.56	82.86	4.75	2.54	15.16	7,644
<b>Rural–urban</b>										
Rural	94.48	82.49	81.92	5.35	19.04	80.97	6.80	4.19	18.76	11,798
Urban	96.99	89.68	90.28	3.25	18.03	87.69	5.18	3.35	17.58	2,957
<b>Education level</b>										
No education	88.62	64.74	69.04	10.01	27.49	69.86	10.28	6.51	32.12	1,310
Primary	90.51	77.90	71.02	6.42	21.40	68.31	5.77	3.76	22.90	4,726
Secondary	97.97	88.14	90.98	3.71	16.88	89.74	6.85	3.82	15.01	5,690
School Leaving Certificate and above	99.10	93.71	95.64	2.69	14.80	95.60	5.22	3.74	12.41	3,029
Nepal	94.98	83.93	83.60	4.93	18.84	82.32	6.47	4.02	18.52	14,754

Source: MoHP (2012b).

There have been important changes in the laws related to physical violence. For example, the Gender Equality Bill of 2006 now includes marital rape as a crime and lists it as grounds for divorce. The Bill has also increased penalties for all other forms of rape to between five and twelve years' imprisonment. Meanwhile, the

government passed the first law against domestic violence in 2009. Sexual harassment of any kind is also now a criminal offence, carrying a fine of up to Rs10,000 and a prison sentence of one year.

An important aspect of physical capability is mobility. As Table 9 shows, physical mobility is much restricted for female adolescents, especially as they enter later adolescence. Sayings such as ‘chhori ko ijjat siyo ko tупpo ma’, which means ‘daughters’ honour is on the tip of a needle’, forces mothers to become more protective of their daughters, often restricting them from doing things, even attending school and skills-related trainings in some cases (Pokharel, 2009). As Table 9 shows, mobility of males is three times higher than that of females, and negative reactions to mobility (especially late at night) are higher for females (48%) than for males (41%) (MoHP, 2012b). A total of 85% of females (compared with 54% of males) need permission from family members to go to public places, mainly for security reasons (ibid.). However, these figures again vary by location and ethnicity.

**Table 9: Perceptions of mobility (%)**

	Ability to go outside the home without permission		
	Male	Female	Both sexes
Age group			
10-14	27.72	12.22	20.28
15-19	55.86	14.59	34.22
20-24	76.59	19.88	43.28
Rural–urban			
Rural	44.03	13.25	28.00
Urban	54.17	21.82	37.74

Source: MOHP (2012b)

#### 4.4 Psychosocial capability

Themes and issues associated with aspects of the psychological domain were also found to be linked and intersecting with the other domains, and/or are factors that affect these other domains. For example, issues related to discriminatory family codes mentioned in the previous sections, such as girls being expected to be meek, undemanding and not outspoken, to wear traditional clothes, to be less mobile and to have confined social networks etc., have repercussions for practices around education and the economic empowerment of adolescent girls. Thus, gendered patterns in the psychosocial domain can lead to vulnerability in other domains for adolescent girls in Nepal.

A number of aspects associated with the psychosocial domain emerged from the secondary material. The adolescent and youth survey (MoHP, 2012b) shows that girls are more likely to be in a psychologically vulnerable position in their adolescent years than boys. The survey highlights incidence of feeling sad and lonely, having suicidal thoughts, depression and so on, with a higher proportion of females (12%) reporting feeling sad and depressed for several days than males (9%). This situation is more pronounced in urban areas. A higher percentage of girls than boys lack confidence (43.4% vs. 36.2%), and 18.8% of adolescent girls in the survey had considered committing suicide. Similarly, a higher proportion of girls (49.1%) feel they cannot cope with their existing situation compared with boys (29.1%). The survey does not provide further information on why these conditions prevail and why these differences exist.

## 4.5 Political and civic capability

Because we could not find much information related specifically to adolescent girls' participation in political and civic life, we needed to infer here from findings on the political and civic capability of women in Nepal. Studies show that local community-based organisations (CBOs) have boosted women's participation in political and civic affairs. For example, the participation of women in national politics has increased to 33%, and has also significantly improved in community forestry and in other user groups at community level. Theoretically, there are no discriminatory laws that hamper women's active participation in this regard. Taking participation of youths (15-24 years) as a proxy indicator to map patterns of civic and political engagement of youths, MoHP (2012b) finds that relatively few adolescents are active in political and civic life: 2% of females and 3% of males (Table 10). Among those who are active, interests vary according to gender: boys are more interested in participating in political activities (6% vs. 1%) whereas girls are more interested in participating in women and mothers' groups. When adolescents do participate in political organisations, there are more adolescent boys (38%) in decision-making (executive) positions than girls (36%). Around 6% of adolescents below the age of 15 years also participate in child clubs.

**Table 10: Participation of adolescents and youths (15-24 years) in civic organisations**

Group/organization (15-24 years)	Male		Female	
	% who have received general membership	% who represent in executive body	% who have received general membership	% who represent in executive body
User group	1.72	32.67	0.45	31.40
Saving credit group/cooperative	1.77	20.83	2.46	26.72
Club/NGO/CBO	5.98	40.42	1.43	44.49
Political organisation	6.45	38.65	0.92	41.97
Local government/peace committee	0.70	46.16	0.21	39.38
Caste/ethnic organisation	2.40	32.56	0.95	31.11
Professional organisation	0.84	39.74	0.27	25.17
Agricultural group	1.35	34.20	0.56	46.72
School/health management committee	1.05	58.54	0.32	65.66
Child club (10-14)	5.60	41.89	5.23	46.93
Women/mothers' group	-	-	6.79	32.87
Total	2.96	37.63	1.52	36.31

Source: MoHP (2012b).

At the legal and political level, the Interim Constitution contains special measures to allow for women's participation in the Constituent Assembly and the Parliament. As a result, 57 women (out of a total of 330 members, 17.3%) participated in the reinstated Interim Parliament, compared with only 10.5% before that. The reinstated Interim Parliament passed a resolution requiring 33% participation by women in each and every organ of the state, which paved the way for women's participation in the Constituent Assembly, in which women currently make up 33% of members (International IDEA, 2011). Despite the new emphasis on the participation of women in all sectors of political and civic life, women make up only 2% of the judiciary, 3% of the army and 7% of the police in Nepal (Pant, 2012).

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The fact that women remain disinclined to participate in political activities raises an important question related to existing political and civic structures and practices around these. For example, as Table 10 shows, participation of adolescent girls in macro-level structures like the peace committee (0.21 against 0.70 for boys) and professional organisations (0.27 against 0.84 for boys) is much lower than that of boys, whereas in micro-level organisations like local clubs, saving groups and agricultural groups, the reverse is true. Furthermore, the study shows that male adolescents (6.45%) are more inclined to become members of political organisations than are females (0.75%). This shows women are more active in organisations related to small-scale livelihood activities than in broader political structures.

The literature suggests that two main factors impede the active participation of women in Nepali society. The first is related to the patriarchal structure of the social system and formal and informal practices reinforced by this, whereby the male dominant power structure results in lesser active participation of women in political and civic life. Even when women find themselves in positions of responsibility, the issues they raise are considered 'petty'. The second factor is a product of the norms of this patriarchal society. The widely accepted image of an 'ideal' or 'perfect' woman – women should be submissive and not outspoken – is maintained and reinforced in and by the system. As adolescent girls are embedded in the same social structure and system, this is likely also to apply to them (Upadhyay, 2010). Upadhyay (2010) observes that women speaking in public places are not viewed positively. Beliefs that women are born to serve men still prevail, and the Hindu system suggests that father, husband or sons should support women in all phases of their lives. However, there are grey areas in terms of when this support takes the form of control and domination. Meanwhile, Joshi and Kharel (2008) observe that lawmakers continue to argue that increased women's rights will cause the social structure to break down, that infidelity will increase and that women cannot handle economic matters.

## 5 Description of the study sites

### 5.1 Site selection and justification

Based on the criteria set by ODI,<sup>15</sup> analysis of national and subnational data and initial consultations with stakeholders at national level such as CARE Nepal, UN Women and World Education, two districts,<sup>16</sup> Doti in Far-West Nepal and Ilam in Eastern Nepal were selected (see Figure 3). Although both districts are in the hilly region of the country, Ilam is a highly developed district in human and gender terms (related to, e.g., literacy rate, child marriage, gender discrimination) as well as infrastructure and services, whereas Doti is among the least developed (Table 11). While Ilam has a mixed ethnic and caste group composition and includes different indigenous and religious groups, Doti is predominately Hindu, with mostly Brahmin, Chhetri and Dalits. In terms of presence of NGOs and other donors, in Ilam there are 96 national NGOs and in Doti 182; similarly, in Ilam there is only one international donor whereas in Doti a total of 35 international donors fund 30 projects and work in 75 different sectors.<sup>17</sup>

In each district we took a rural area (a VDC) and an urban area (a municipality or a VDC adjoining the municipality) to capture the difference within each site. Table 11 outlines key indicators for the two sites. The information on the two sites was obtained from the community mapping tool we used during the fieldwork, from observation and from existing district-level data obtained from district offices.

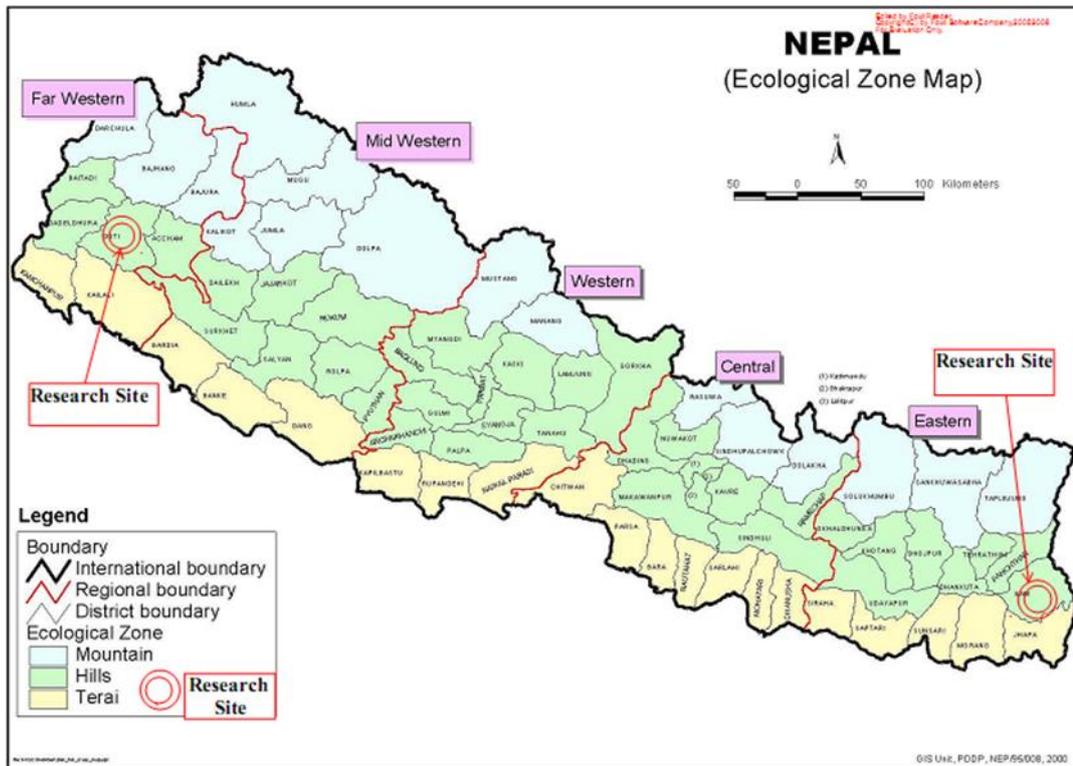
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<sup>15</sup> Criteria included presence of rural and urban contexts, a variety of ethnic/religious groups, presence/absence of international/national NGOs, contexts with more/less development.

<sup>16</sup> Administratively, Nepal is divided into 75 districts.

<sup>17</sup> There were a total of 30,454 registered NGOs in Nepal as of July 2013, 30,284 national and 170 international.

Figure 3: Map of Nepal showing study sites



Source: National Planning Commission, GIS Unit (2012).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> National Planning Commission-GIS Unit (2012). Nepal: Ecological Zone Map. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission

**Table 11: Ilam and Doti – comparing indicators**

<b>S N</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Ilam</b>	<b>Doti</b>	<b>Nepal</b>
	Gender Development Index	3	70	0.499
	Human Development Index	0.51	0.402 (2003)	0.509 (2010)
	Human Poverty Index	33.70	53.4 (2007)	32.1 (2007)
	Rank according to overall composite index within Nepal	12	66	N/A
	Rank according to poverty deprivation index within Nepal	6	66	N/A
	Rank according women's empowerment index in Nepal	19	61	N/A
	Proportion of child marriage	0.17	1.50	41% of girls marry before they turn 18.
	Rank according to gender discrimination index	3	70	36 of 86 countries
	Rank according to primary sector development index	26	68	N/A
	Rank according to infrastructural development index	36	44	N/A
	Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	95	84	94
	Literacy status (%)	66.5 (male 57.2, female 67.8)	49.8 (male 61, female 16)	60.3 (male 73, female 48.30)
	Total primary schools	294	236	32,684
	Total lower-secondary schools	43	45	11,939
	Total secondary schools	50	34	7,266
	Total higher-secondary schools	10 (3 private)	9 (1 private)	2,564
	Higher education	3 (2 technical)	3 (1 technical)	1,072 (24 technical)
	Hospitals	2 hospitals, 194 primary health care and outreach clinics	1 hospital, 2 primary health posts, 10 area health posts	91 hospitals, 14,292 primary health care outreach clinics

*Source:* Adapted by authors from different sources.

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## 5.2 Ilam

Figure 4: Map of Ilam showing study sites



Source: National Planning Commission, GIS Section, 2012

Ilam lies in the eastern part of Nepal (see Figure 3), has a total area of 1,703km<sup>2</sup> and comprises 48 VDCs and 1 municipality. It was selected as being more representative of a more developed area of Nepal: as Table 11 shows, among 75 districts of Nepal, Ilam ranks 12th on the overall development index. The total population of Ilam is 290,254, and it has a total adolescent girls' population of 35,053 (CBS, 2012). Ilam has a range of ethnic and caste groups, including eight linguistic groups and seven religious groups. The majority of the population here according to religious classification are Kirant<sup>19</sup> (47.28), followed by Hindus (36.17) and Buddhists (15.68). The district's gender-related index shows high women's empowerment and low gender discrimination, which suggests there are better opportunities for female capability development. The female literacy rate (67.8%) is higher than the male literacy rate (57.2%).

While Ilam is relatively advanced in terms of broader development, it has the highest rate of suicide in Nepal 32 cases were reported to the police in fiscal year 2011/12, according to a KII at the female police cell.<sup>20</sup> Besides this, polygamy, early school dropout by girls, elopement, early marriage and early childbearing are also common, according to discussions with stakeholders. To include both a rural and an urban context within Ilam, we selected Barbote (urban) Jamuna VDC (rural) sites.

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<sup>19</sup> The Kirant are indigenous ethnic groups from the mid-hills of Nepal and mostly worship nature and their own ancestors.

<sup>20</sup> Gender-disaggregated data on suicides were not available.

## 5.2.1 Barbote



Picture 6: Traders weighing tea leaves in Barbote, Source: Study Team, 2013

Barbote with an area of 18.67 Km<sup>2</sup> is 4km or a half-hour jeep ride from the main market place Bibrate, in Ilam municipality. The highway joining Ilam municipality and Phidim (Pachthar district) cuts the VDC in two. Apart from this highway, the VDC has several rough seasonal roads passing through, some of them going all the way to India. The total population of the VDC is 5,865 (male 2,943, female 2,922) living in 1,166 individual households (CBS, 2012). The study sample was taken from a government school and from a neighbourhood of Barbote. Most of the inhabitants in Barbote are Hindus (i.e. Brahmin, Chhetri) and Kirant (i.e. Limbu and Rai) with two separate Dalit communities within the VDC. There was mixing of Dalit and non-Dalit communities in some places. Migration to the plains was common, but so was in-migration to the village from other districts, given its high agricultural productivity.

As shown by the community mapping, in terms of services the VDC has electricity and telephone facilities. The VDC office, health post and higher-secondary school are in the centre of the VDC near the highway passing through it. Each of the nine wards in the VDC has schools, with two secondary schools, one higher-secondary school and 6 primary schools. Apart from these government schools, there are two private secondary schools. For higher education, young people have to go to Ilam bazaar. The district profile of the VDC shows 100% school enrolment in 2012, and the literacy rate is 69.9% (male 75.84%, female 64.17%).

Agriculture and dairy are the main occupations, and people grow corn, potatoes, vegetables and rice for subsistence. Along with these, some cash crops are also grown, such as tea, bamboo, oranges and ginger, which are sold in the nearby market or collected by traders. Cows' milk is collected by a central cooperative to be taken to another district for processing and also by a local dairy.

In addition to the government health post, there is a private pharmacy in Bibrate (the bazaar area of Barbote) run by a health worker and a family planning clinic run by Family Planning Association Nepal. Ilam bazaar is nearby and has both a private and a government hospital.

In the community mapping, participants pointed out Bibrate bazaar within the VDC and nearby Ilam bazaar as being the main commercial or trading centres for the VDC. People also frequent these areas for fun and recreation. Other hangout places for adolescents and youths are the small hill in Bibrate bazaar and a temple/sacred place (mai pokhari) in the nearby VDC of Maipokhari.

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## 5.2.2 Jamuna



Picture 7: Settlement in Jamuna, Source: Study Team, 2013

Jamuna VDC is located on the northern hilly side of Ilam. It covers an area of 28.87km<sup>2</sup>. It is 24km or a four-hour jeep ride from Ilam municipality. Although it has a rough seasonal road, public vehicles go regularly from Jamuna VDC to Ilam municipality.

The total population of the VDC is 3,200 (1,523 male, 1,677 female) living in 777 households (CBS, 2012). The study sample was taken from a settlement in Jamuna village. Most of the inhabitants in Jamuna are from indigenous groups: the Gurung followed by Limbu, Brahmin, Sherpa, Rai Chhetri and Dalits, respectively.<sup>21</sup> Nepali is the major language of communication (54%); 17.5% speak Bantawa and 12.6% Limbu. The major religion is Buddhism, followed by Kirat and Hindu. There are also a few Christians and some preachers from India who come to the VDC to preach Christianity. The community mapping revealed that the VDC has four monasteries, two temples and four schools, including a primary English school, two lower-secondary schools and a secondary school. It also has two local health posts and one Ayurvedic clinic.

An important feature that came out in the community mapping was that the red panda and the spiny babbler inhabit Jamuna: the spiny babbler is a bird found only in Nepal and the red panda is an endangered species found only in Jamuna. Many tourists have started coming here to study and observe these animals and birds; the villagers have started home-stays and this is becoming an important source of income.

People from the VDC go to Jaubari – a ward within the VDC that touches India – to shop to fill their daily needs. They also go to the municipality market in Ilam. Jaubari is a transit point on the India–Nepal border, five hours' walk from Jamuna. People use mules and horses to bring goods from India. In the community mapping, respondents said that important destinations for adolescents and young people were trekking and religious sites such as Shree Antu, Maibeni, Maipokhari, Sandakpur and Sidhhithumka. There is a growing tendency of boys to go to Malaysia and the Gulf countries for labour. There is no other migration; some people, who previously went to urban areas, have returned to the community and started growing new cash crops like kiwis. Most of the older adolescent boys and girls live temporarily in Ilam municipality for higher education. Literacy is at 57.85% in Jamuna (66.9% male, 48.5% female).

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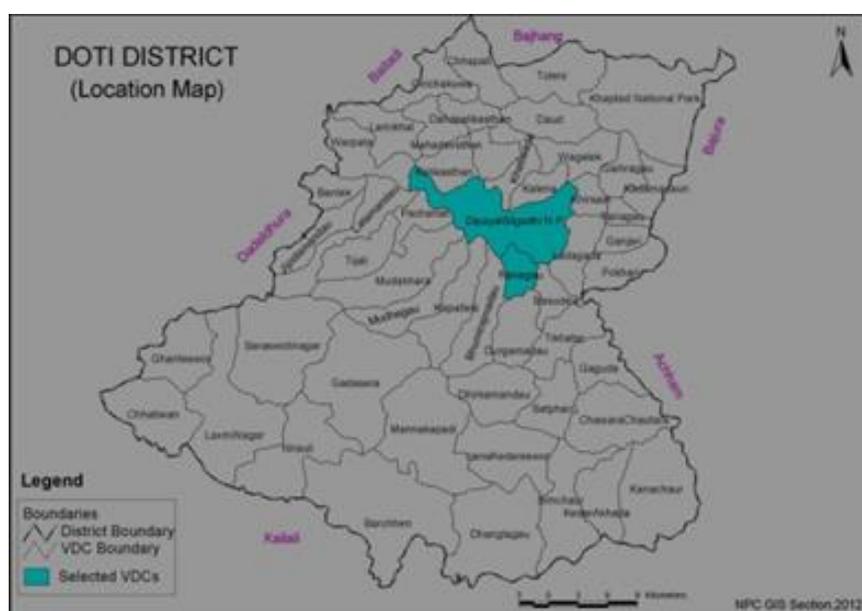
<sup>21</sup> Among the mentioned groups, all but the Brahmin and the Chhetri are indigenous.

Agriculture is the main occupation, and people grow corn, potatoes, peas and wheat for subsistence purposes. Along with these, some cash crops are also grown, such as tea, bamboo, chiraito (a medicinal herb<sup>22</sup>) and cardamom. Traders who travel between India and Jamuna come to collect these products from the fields. Dairy is another important source of income. Cows' milk is collected by a local villager and taken to Ilam bazaar. This is used for consumption in the market area, and is also taken to another district for processing. Besides this, people make churpi<sup>23</sup> from milk in their own houses for export to India, or other parts of Nepal, through the abovementioned local traders.

Telephone and electricity are available and water is abundant. There are no NGO and international NGO offices/programmes, but there is a local mothers' group and community people gather for development and social work. There is also a non-formal organisation (NGO) of indigenous groups. People rely on the local health post and Ayurvedic clinic for regular health check-ups and find it to be very effective. For serious health problems, people prefer to go the hospital in Ilam municipality.

### 5.3 Doti

Figure 5: Map of Doti with study sites



Source: National Planning Commission, GIS Section 2012

As Figure 3 shows, Doti falls in the Far-West part of Nepal. It has a total area of 2,025km<sup>2</sup>, with 50 VDCs and 1 municipality. Its total population is 211,746; out of this, 26,856 (12.1%) are adolescent girls. It is one of the least developed districts of the country, but one of the most accessible (in terms of having roads) among the least developed districts. The majority of the population are Chhetri (59%), followed by Dalits (25%) and Brahmins (11%). As shown in Table 11, the gender development index is very low, pointing to great gender disparities. For example, the gap in the literacy rate between males and females is very high (61.7% vs. 16%). There is high in-migration from other districts of the Far-West region<sup>24</sup> and a large amount of intermixing of different cultures, traditions and customs that are particular to the western part of Nepal. Doti also has a very high rate of migration for work to India. Among the total population, 24,018 (21,083, or 87.45%, male, 2935, 12.17% female) are absent from the district; 7.83% of the total population work outside the country.

As mentioned above, Doti has a high programme presence: compared with other districts of Nepal, it has the second highest number of government and international community interventions. There are around 70 UN programmes alone. During site selection discussions, stakeholders pointed out that, owing to discriminatory

<sup>22</sup> It's scientific name is *swetia chirayita*.

<sup>23</sup> Churpi is made from milk and is akin to a hard cheese.

<sup>24</sup> Administratively, Nepal is divided into five development regions from east to west.

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practices like polygamy, early dropout and elopement, early marriage and early childbearing, as well as high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, Doti would be a suitable place for study. Discussions with key informants showed the district adequately represents the Far-West development region and constitutes a least developed region in terms of cultures and institutions that affect adolescent girls. The research took one municipality, Dipayal Silgadi, to represent the urban context and another VDC, Ranagaon, to represent the rural context.

### 5.3.1 Dipayal Silgadi



Picture 8: Study site, Dipayal Silgadi of Doti, Source: Study Team, 2013

The community mapping exercise showed that Dipayal Silgadi municipality consists of two bazaars/trading hubs for the district: Silgadi, which is situated on the hills and which is the district headquarters; and Dipayal, located along the banks of the Seti River, which is the regional (Far-West region) headquarters and houses both district and regional-level government and NGO offices. We conducted our fieldwork in these two places. The Bhimdatta Highway, which joins Doti to the Terai/plains and other districts in the Far-West, passes through the municipality.

The municipality has an overall area of 407.23km<sup>2</sup> and consists of 14 wards. The study sample was recruited from the government school in Silgadi, from a private school in Dipayal and from a nearby Dalit community in Dipayal, both in Ward 7.

The total population of the municipality is 23,416 (10,774 male, 12,642 female) living in 5,493 households (CBS, 2012). The predominant religion is Hindu (98.78%). As the municipality is a hub for trading, formal work opportunities exist in both government and NGO offices; informal labour opportunities are also present. There is out-migration to the plains and labour migration to India, although this is low compared with other interior parts of the district. In-migration from other districts also takes place, as does migration within the district for work and study.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> No specific out- and in-migration figures were available.

Community maps showed that important sites were Saileswori Temple in Silgadi and Shalmani Temple in Dipayal, which are famous for festivals and used both by people living locally and by those from the surrounding VDCs. The bazaar areas in both Dipayal and Silgadi contain eateries, hotels, beauty parlours, internet facilities and shops for groceries and clothes.

Silgadi is the only place in the district that offers higher education (bachelor degrees), although there are schools in each community. Additionally, a regional-level technical school, Seti Technical School, is located there, which focuses on engineering and midwifery courses, among other things. The VDC profile shows that the literacy rate of the municipality is 49.9%.

There are 30 international and national NGOs and 30 international donors. Some of the most visible are CARE Nepal, United Mission to Nepal, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Family Planning Association, with work in sectors such as health, economic empowerment, infrastructure, agriculture, equity and justice and education.

There are two hospitals in the district, both of which are in the municipality – one in Dipayal, run by Christian missionaries from Korea, and the other in Silgadi, run by the government of Nepal. Apart from this, there is a family planning clinic run by the Family Planning Association. Besides this, the community mapping showed there are two private clinics, which people all over Doti tend to prefer, because they feel that they are better at ‘curing them’ than the government hospitals.

Within the municipality different caste groups exist: in the core bazaar area/trading places, people from different castes, such as Sudhi, Thakuri, Brahmin and Dalits, are mixed with higher number of Newar and Chhetri. Outside the bazaar area, the abovementioned caste groups live in separate communities, such as Dalit and Shahi villages, with little or minimal mixing.

### 5.3.2 Ranagaon



Picture 9: Settlement in Ranagaon, Source: Study Team, 2013

Ranagaon VDC is among 50 VDCs in Doti. It covers an area of 10.01km<sup>2</sup> and is situated on the incline of a hill. It is 18km or a one-hour jeep ride from Dipayal Silgadi municipality. The road that connects it to Dipayal – the only market place for the district – is muddy and seasonal. As there are no regular public vehicles, people mostly go on foot to shop at the market place.

The total population of the VDC is 2,890 (1,172 male, 1,718 female) living in 596 households (CBS, 2012). Most of the inhabitants are Rana (Chhetri), Brahmin, Magar and Dalits, the latter living in a separate Dalit community. Hindu is the main religion (98.78%). Although Nepali (96.13%) is the most spoken language in the VDC, older and illiterate people speak their local Doteli language.

Saraswoti Higher-Secondary Community School is the only higher-secondary school in Ranagaon (it runs all the way through from primary to higher-secondary). It is a community government school, and most students in the VDC go to study there. Previously, it was a Nepali medium school, but it recently started to teach in English language from primary level, so as to provide a quality education and discourage students from going to private English schools elsewhere. Besides this, a lower-secondary school is located uphill at the other end of Ranagaon. Students go here for lower-secondary education if their house is far away from Saraswoti Higher-Secondary Community School.

Because of lack of water and the un-irrigated hilly terrain, there is high male migration to India and to other Terai districts for employment. Although we do not have exact numbers, during our research we found that, in

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most households, husbands were absent. Apart from boys going to school, shopkeepers and teachers working in the schools, we saw only old men. This was confirmed in the KIIs. People who can afford it often have another household in the adjoining Terai district of Dhangadi, so they can educate their children and strive for a better living: KIIs suggested that more than 3% of households in Ranagaon have another house in Dhangadi. Agriculture and remittances from India are the main sources of income. Although migration to India predominates, a few youths (male) have started going to Malaysia and Gulf countries in the past three to four years. As such, the VDC consists mainly of ‘left behind’ women, older men, children and adolescents.

According to our own observations as well as findings from IDIs and KIIs, women work harder than men in Ranagaon. Women’s daily work includes collecting firewood and grass from the forest and fetching water, which is very scarce. People who own land for agriculture usually have two houses: one permanent house and another semi-permanent one based in the fields, where they stay during the farming season. Families often split up during the planting and harvesting periods, with some remaining in the main house while others go to the field. Given the scarcity of water, the river is very important; it is used for washing clothes, bathing and watering the cattle. Accessing drinking water is a major challenge.<sup>26</sup> The forest is another important natural resource, widely used by the community for fuel, manure and cattle feed. It has recently been declared a community forest to prevent deforestation.

There are no specific places, like clubs or sport centres, for recreational activities. The most common recreational activity for girls seems to be chatting with friends, which they do while in school or when they go to fetch firewood and grass. Mobility diagrams with adolescents show that boys use the school grounds even after school, hang out with friends in the few shops and gather near the community water tanks or bhanad ghar – a house for worship with a big courtyard in the local community. Since boys hang out there, girls are not supposed to not go. Although an NGO had opened the Jaydurge Youth Club, the study team found this had closed owing to a lack of resources.

For health facilities, people of Ranagaon VDC go to Soojung Hospital in the municipality. Saileswori Temple in Silgadi is a culturally and religiously very important place where adolescents and young people from Ranagaon go to worship and hang out with friends.

## 6 Overview of adolescent girls’ capabilities

### Opportunities and challenges for gender justice

This section presents our findings from the IDIs, KIIs, FGDs, life histories, case studies and general observation from the field/at local level.

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<sup>26</sup> The community was building a canal to bring water from a distant river to a tank from where they would distribute it to households. An external project was financing this, and community members were to contribute in kind by providing their labour. During our fieldwork, canal digging was going on; each household had to send one person to dig the canal on alternate days.

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## 6.1 Educational domain

In this domain, we explore the changing value placed on education from girls' and others' perspectives and the barriers girls continue to face regarding accessing and staying in school, and end with some suggestions around skills training going forward.

### 6.1.1 Changing value placed on girls' education

Drawing on life histories and FGDs with older women (up to the age of 75 years) as well as IDIs and FGDs with adolescent girls, the study found significant changes in society's perception of the value of educating a girl child. An FGD with older adolescent girls in Ilam revealed that approximately 50 years ago there was great social pressure against sending a girl child to school. Either educated girls were seen as becoming witches (*'When I was married, I brought along my books to my in-laws' house, but they said no you should not read. Women who read will become witches' (life history, older woman, Ilam)*) or there was just simply an unquestioned acceptance that girls had to do household work and had no time to study (*'No, we had too much work to do – we had to bring fodder and wood and take care of our siblings – there was no question of studying for us' (life history, older woman, Doti)*).

Things started changing around 25 years ago. In both sites, educating a girl child then would not necessarily make her a witch, according to interviews with middle-aged women and FGDs with adult women, but was perceived as making her more clever and giving her more freedom but ultimately possibly leading to elopement, a matter of great shame to the family and community. According to an older woman in Ilam, *'Important people in the villages like village leaders would say don't send her [the girl child] to school, she will elope.'* As such, parents continued to be reluctant to send their girl children to school.

In the past 10-15 years things have changed further, and now great emphasis is placed on educating girls. Information from KIIs suggests the improvement in overall literacy and in female education in particular has been attained since the implementation of the School Sector Reform Programme. Similarly, according to KIIs with representatives of the Ministry of Education, this trend arose as a result of the importance the government started placing on it and when it started implementing various programmes<sup>27</sup> designed to increase girls' enrolment in schools, including providing free education for girls up to Grade 10 and other incentives (e.g. snacks for girls at school in Grades 1-5 and incentives to parents in the form of either money (\$3 a month) or cooking oil (5 litres a month)). According to national-level KIIs, the programme, which started six years ago, has benefited around 62,000 girls and is now phasing out, having reached its objective. The impacts of these efforts have trickled down to the community and, while initially incentives to send girl children to school were critical, over time people, even older people, came to realise the value of education: *'Previously the old people were against it; they now say you should give them equal rights, you should also send your girl child to school' (KII, headmaster, Doti)*.

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<sup>27</sup> For more details, see [www.un.org.np/attachments/school-sector-reform-plan-2009-2015](http://www.un.org.np/attachments/school-sector-reform-plan-2009-2015)



Picture 10: Boys and girls coming for tuition after school in Ilam, Source: Study Team, 2013

However, these changes have not been even across the two sites. Placing less value on girls' education continued until fairly recently in Doti. This is shown in the fact that middle-aged women interviewed in Doti were illiterate, whereas their equivalents in Ilam tended to be literate, thus suggesting that recognition of the value of educating girls came much earlier in Ilam. This may be because the first school was established in Ilam as early as 1920, through community efforts, with English teaching introduced there in 1932; English was introduced at national level only in 1953.<sup>28</sup>

All adolescent girls in both Doti and Ilam placed a great value on education. This applied both to girls going to school and to those out of school. For those going to school, when asked about their main worries, almost all of them said how to excel in education. For those out of school, their main concern was about dropping out of school. This was found to be the same for boys, for whom the value of education was directly linked to them acquiring better jobs and thus a better future, but also linked to self-respect, knowledge and learning more broadly. The following quote shows the value adolescent girls place on education:

*Before, there was not so much stress on education as there is now. Before, education was considered for earning money only, now slowly the thinking has changed. Yes, it is a means to success, and even if nothing happens you are educated. People value education. Also, for girls they used to think that why should they be educated they are to go to others houses (FGD, younger adolescents, Doti).*

On the other hand, according to some girls, additional pressures come with being educated. Education raises expectations; girls suffer if they do not or cannot meet these. This was particularly the case in Ilam:

*Q: Do you think one studies (just) for a job?*

*A: Not only for job, but in today's generation, if anybody is not educated, society dominates them. But after being educated, if we don't get a job, then that hurts more. I feel it is better to be uneducated if we have to stay jobless rather than studying and staying jobless (IDI, older adolescent, Ilam).*

<sup>28</sup> This history of both education and English language teaching can also be linked to the fact that, in 1932, Ghurkha retired after World War I were resettled in Pashupatinagar in Ilam, bringing with them the tradition of educating children, including girl children. Thus, as early as 1951, the first female high school was established in Ilam. The first school in Doti was established in 1950 through government efforts, and only boys attended. Thus, it arguably took more time for people in Doti to start valuing female education.

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Generally, parents said they gave equal emphasis to the enrolment of both sons and daughters, in Doti as well as in Ilam. However, if we look at continuing education as a marker for the value of education, gendered differences emerge between rural and urban areas: when they have to choose, parents in rural areas place greater emphasis on higher education of their male child. Similarly, boys in Ranagoan (Doti) were found to go to the English medium boarding school, which is more expensive, whereas girls from the same household go to the Nepali medium government school. And the main worry for all adolescent girls in Doti was that their parents would force them out of education to marry: *'Our Number 1 worry is whether we can continue education or if our parents will force us to marry'* (FGD, older adolescent girls, Doti). Girls in Ilam, on the other hand, were confident they could continue education as long as they wished.

Another marker for value for education is related to investment in education. Study findings show that, when parents invest more in the education of their children, for example when they send children to private schools, they emphasise, monitor closely and place a higher value on the education, also allowing girls not to do their household work (although they may have to work more at weekends instead; see Section 6.1.2 on barriers to education for girls).

Community leaders and schoolteachers were found to be important agents in reinforcing the value of education in their communities. Additionally, at both national and community level, there exists non-formal and adult education that has benefited girls and women.

## 6.1.2 Barriers to education for girls

### Time and responsibilities



Time allocated to girls' education was found to differ according to the age of the adolescent as well as the economic status of the family. For younger adolescents (aged between 10 and 14 years) in both Doti and Ilam, there appears to be no gender discrimination in terms of time use, and time is not a barrier to education. However, with increased age, particularly in economically disadvantaged families, there is less time for studies for girls, as they have more household responsibilities and have to do household chores such as cooking and caring for younger siblings. According to an adolescent girl from Doti:

*According to the custom here, girls have more work than boys. So, girls get less time for study. They also pay less attention to studies. I like to study – but where is there the time for study? In the morning, girls get up and come to school. From school, they go back, wash their hands and feet and eat food. After that, there is household work to be done. Then they have to come for coaching classes in the school [the school runs compulsory coaching class for Grades 11 and 12]. After coaching, they go home and there is work. They have to make food and do other work. Then, given the long walk and work we become tired. Boys have more*

*time for study – they eat and leave the dishes. Then they wash their hands and can go and study.*

Work for boys is less and mostly outside the house, and includes going to market, which can be done after or before school hours. However, if boys start working, they are more likely than girls to quit school altogether. The narrative below shows both the value placed on private education versus government education, because of increased investment, but also the tasks girls have to do that limit them from going to or continuing in school:

*In a private school such as ours there is no problem as parents here invest in and care for girls and boys equally, but in the case of government school students, household work is the first priority and then only comes education. If there is some work at home they do not go to school, for example if there is a need to go to the forest to collect firewood they do not go to school that day. In this age group, the workload at home for girls is more than for boys (KII, schoolteacher, Doti).*

We found that sickness or death of the most senior female household member (e.g. the mother) was another major cause of school dropout for older adolescent girls. In such cases, the eldest daughter (or/and daughter-in-law) has to take on the responsibilities of household care and management and therefore discontinues education:

*I was good in studies, but I had to drop out owing to excessive work at home. It was not because of my parents. It was my decision. My mother is not healthy. I am the eldest and the only grown-up child at home, so I could help in the household work. So I left my studies (IDI, adolescent girl, Ilam).*

An emphasis on employment after acquiring a certain level of literacy, rather than investing in higher education, is also a barrier to continuing education, particularly among indigenous groups in Ilam and for middle-income families in Doti. However, this is equally applicable to boys (e.g. they go to India to earn money as soon as they

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pass Grade 10) as it is to girls (who start small-scale businesses at home; e.g. in Ilam, girls sell homemade and Indian brand liquors, mobile phone recharge cards and other things for daily use.

### **Gender-based discrimination and violence in school**

Gender-based violence (GBV) in schools appears to be limited, with only two girls from the same school in Ilam complaining that one particular male teacher had tried to touch them. Regarding psychological/verbal abuse, girls complained of general teasing in school by boys, but such cases applied to boys too, and girls and girls were able to tease back. However, although everyone said they had no personal experience of being harassed on their way to school, girls feared drunken men and boys who did not belong to the community if the distance to school was far, as in Doti (see also Section 6.3.1). An adolescent girl in Doti said, ‘Also, nowadays, there are many drunk people around. I keep on thinking, if the time for school was a bit late, I would not have so much fear. It is scary in winter, especially when it is dark in the morning.’ KIIs at national and local levels revealed that GBV on the way to school can be severe. The Ministry of Education has dealt with four cases this year of girls being raped on their way to school, for example. The government has established gender focal points and child rights officers in districts to deal with GBV against students.

Regarding coping strategies, in Ilam girls are able to deal with problems in school by themselves or in a group. They may humiliate the teacher in public through, for instance, satirical poems or derogatory names, or by ignoring the teacher’s questions. They also sometimes speak to their mothers about it. Mothers encourage them to adopt indifference as a way of coping. However, as abuse in school had happened to only two girls, such coping strategies are not common. In Doti, girls said they did not face such kinds of abuse; if it were to arise, there are no formal in-school efforts to address it. In both sites, however, there exist services where it is possible to register cases of violence, such as child rights officers. Walking together with male peers from the same neighbourhood, walking in groups and using mobile phones to ask for help are the main strategies girls use when they fear violence on their way to school.

IDIIs with adolescent girls as well as KIIs with headmasters and teachers showed that schools are aware of potential gender discrimination and hence take special measures to avoid it through promoting positive discrimination, for example by placing girls in leading positions and making them anchor cultural programmes. However, although the system encourages non-discrimination in school, girls themselves are reluctant to participate freely. This was especially the case in Doti, as shared by one adolescent girl: ‘But I feel hesitant most of the time – I always have this thought – shall I ask or not, shall I ask or not? How to ask? Would they laugh at me? And so I just sit like that most of the time without asking. Sometimes I gather courage and ask.’ Similarly, when married, adolescent girls are more hesitant: ‘No, there is no discrimination in school, friends ask, “So we are going to do this today in school – will you come?” And so on. But I do not have time. So I myself say, “You carry on, I do not have time.” Even if no one discriminates, we are ourselves hesitant and conscious and feel we are different’ (IDI, married adolescent girl, Doti).<sup>29</sup>

Although the existing literature suggests that an absence of female teachers is a barrier to education for girls, our research did not find evidence of this. However, the unavailability of proper toilets, as well as social practices related to menstruation (see also Section 6.3.2), has led to girls in Doti missing their classes each month in a few cases, as shared in informal talks in a case study house in Ranagaon: ‘Some girls who have houses far away leave their classes in the middle when they have menses because there is no water in the school toilet and they have to go back to their houses to use the toilet.’ Also, girls may have to take a long way to school to avoid passing a temple, because it is a cultural belief that girls are dirty when they are menstruating and are therefore seen to pollute sacred places like the temples.

### **Marriage and childbirth**

Pressure to marry was found to be a barrier to older adolescent girls, mostly in the case of the higher caste groups such as the Brahmin and Chhetri, and among Dalits. This was particularly the case in Doti; according to all the older adolescent (16-19 years) girls spoken to, their main worry was that their parents would marry them off while they would like to continue to study. A key informant supported this, saying that, as soon as boys enter late adolescence in Doti, they go to India to earn, while girls are married off. Similarly, a headmaster in Ilam

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<sup>29</sup> Note that there is no separate education/school policy for married adolescents or young mothers.

said that, as there are various incentives for girls' schooling, including free education, when there is an economic problem boys are more likely than girls to be taken out of school.

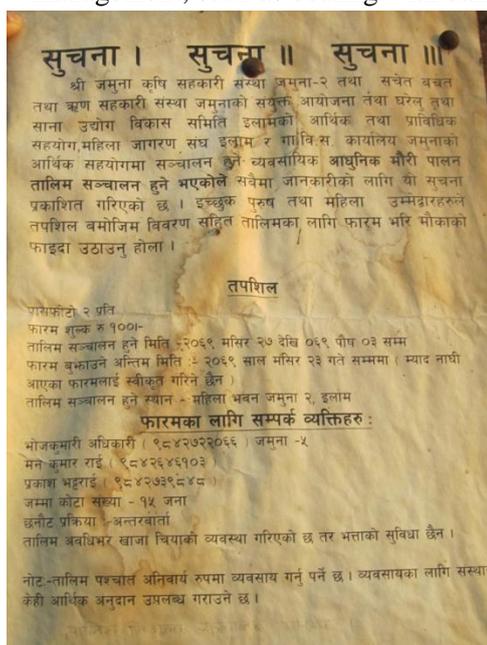
It is between 18 and 25 years old that girls discontinue education to marry. Girls from high castes and Dalits are married early (19-22 years, on average); for those from indigenous groups, pressure to marry comes at around the age of 25-26 years. However, an important positive change in recent years is that marriage does not now always prevent girls from going to school. In most cases, the two sets of parents negotiate for girls to continue education in the nearest school. However, the girls themselves are hesitant to negotiate when they come to their in-laws' house. KIIs with local leaders and teachers suggests that, although marriage does not often prevent girls from continuing with their education, once a child is born they usually drop out, because they no longer have the time. Key informants said that, in urban areas, women who have finished their secondary education may re-enter school when their children are around four or five years old, but this is not the case in Ranagoan/rural areas. Observation, IDIs and KIIs revealed that marriage and childbirth were not a concern for boys and did not stop them from continuing with their education.

### Age-related stigma

Another important barrier to continuing education is the stigma of studying with students of a younger age. This is often felt by the girls themselves rather than being imposed by the community: 'I am old now, how can I go to the school. I have to go back and sit in the lower class with children who are much below my age. My parents told me to re-enter school, I didn't go.' Sometimes, girls also fear harassment and teasing from peers. In such cases, teachers encourage them to re-enter school or facilitate continuation of their education by allowing them to sit exams through study at home instead of going to school. According to an adolescent girl in Doti who had dropped out of school for some time and then re-entered, 'I had to discontinue going to school from Grade 8 because my mother was sick. But my teachers insisted that I sit for the final exam only and I got passed to Grade 9 and continued my education.'

### 6.1.3 Skills and training going forward

When asked about policy responses, parents, community members and KIIs said that opportunities for training in computers and English language would be the most fruitful for adolescent girls. Additionally, management training for keeping shops, training on animal husbandry and agriculture and training on personal life management, such as dealing with daily problems of added responsibility, were seen as most important for older adolescent girls. Older adolescent girls from indigenous and Dalit communities in Ilam said they would like to learn karate, since they could use it for self-defence.



Picture 12: A call for free Bee-keeping training in Ilam Source: Study Team, 2013

While there have been many efforts by the government and NGOs to impart life skills (e.g., in Ilam, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in association with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has a programme whereby out-of-school girls and young women are formed into a group, trained in various skills – chicken and pig rearing, vegetable (mushroom) farming, tailoring – and given seed money (\$39.02) to set up a business), there remains a general perception that women and girls are at a disadvantage when compared with their male counterparts. In both Doti and Ilam, the majority of training takes place in urban areas and requires overnight stays or long hours, making it difficult for girls and women to participate. And while the majority of out-of-school and married girls in rural areas in Doti (Ranagoan) and Ilam (Jamuna) felt that trainings would help them greatly, the stigma attached to going outside the home and leaving their household responsibilities meant they were unable to participate. This was more pronounced in Ranagoan (Doti), where girls are allowed less mobility.

In addition, community members felt the training was ineffective, largely because, according to some, people continued to have a lack of

understanding of the potential benefits of such programmes and attended them for reasons other than learning skills; this was particularly the case in Doti, with its large influx of NGOs and programmes. Thus, according to one key informant;

*There is a lack of understanding among the locals. Before, a lot of NGOs used to work in Doti. Participants used to get as much as Rs1,000 for participating for one day. In a place where there is no other income-generating activity, these kinds of trends spoiled people. This was around nine or ten years back, so this has now become a system or culture here. People first think of training as a place to get money; what you will learn there is secondary.*

To conclude this section briefly, while the value placed on education for girls has increased over the past 50 years, assisted by government and NGO programmes and incentives, girls still face a number of barriers to education when compared with boys, particularly in relation to household chores and responsibilities and regarding the lifecycle issues of marriage and childbirth.

## 6.2 Economic domain

In this domain, we explore the gendered nature of work, income-generating activities, conditions in the workplace and migration; we also explore issues around control, acquisition and use of assets and other household resources. In all these aspects, we explore how they affect adolescent girls in particular.

### 6.2.1 Overview of gender patterns in work and income-generating activities

There is a marked difference in the work that men and women do, which is mirrored in the work and income-generating activities of adolescent boys and girls. However, the extent of the difference is not the same in Ilam and Doti, with work in Ilam appearing to be less gendered than in Doti: women in Doti are responsible for work regarded as household tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, caring for children and fetching grass and firewood, while men either do work that is paid or do not do any work at all.



Picture 13: Gender stereotyping of work: Carrying firewood is exclusively done by women in Doti Source: Study Team 2013

In general, household work such as cooking and cleaning is assigned to women and girls, while men and boys carry out supposedly more physically demanding work, such as digging fields. In Doti, however, women and girls do certain physically demanding jobs like cleaning the cowshed, fetching water and carrying things to sell at the market: ‘Boys, they never clean the cow dung, never carry things to sell in the market. We take the things and sell them and they take the money only’ (FGD, adolescent girls, Doti). Also in Doti, because of the extent of male migration to India, women do certain typically male tasks, such as digging fields. Generally, however, the work that women and girls carry out tends to be undervalued compared with the work that men carry out. These gendered norms, behaviours and attitudes towards work start mostly from older adolescence; in most cases, there was no stereotyping of work in the early adolescent phase, and it became more pronounced in the mid and late adolescent phases.

Gender patterns in income-generating activities were also found, and vary according to the nature of work, the main economic activity of the district, the economic status of the family and ethnicity. In urban areas of Ilam (Barbote) and Doti (Silgadi), where agriculture is not the main economic activity, parents encourage adolescents to go to school and not to earn an income. In rural areas, there was a marked difference

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between Ilam, where profit from agriculture is high and is the main source of income, and Doti, where agriculture is still the main occupation, but tends to be for subsistence, and where most households survive using remittances from migration. In rural areas of Ilam, a range of agriculture-related jobs are available, as the district is famous for exporting cash and food crops as well as medicinal plants and milk.

Both boys and girls in rural Ilam voluntarily become involved in income generation from around 12 years. This is common in both middle- and low-income families (children from wealthier families are sent to urban areas to study). However, children do not drop out of school; rather, they work in their holidays and free time, for example fetching milk before going to school in the morning. The idea of earning your own pocket money was more prevalent among adolescents from indigenous groups, and was the case for both boys and girls in Ilam but (surprisingly) not at all in Doti. Among high-caste Brahmin and Chhetri, adolescents are encouraged to focus on higher education rather than earning, and hence tend not to have paid work. As shared by a local male leader in Ilam, 'In Brahmin and Chhetri castes, girls work for the family and do not work for personal earning. They are encouraged to study at this age rather than go for paid work.'

In Doti, the main income-generating activity undertaken by older adolescents is migration to India, with a few also going to Gulf countries and Malaysia. This is exclusively for boys, however; the majority of girls who discontinue education do so to take up traditional household care duties and are not engaged in any income-generating activities, as confirmed in a KII with the school principal in Doti: 'The girls do not go to India, they are usually busy supporting in household work or starting their own family, not necessarily in income-generating activities. While boys mostly go to India. There is no other option or work in offices.' This reinforces the belief that boys have to earn an income while girls take responsibility inside the house.

Additionally, as the father, who is usually the male household head, is often in India working, and remains there for most of his adult life (or while he can do physical labour), there is an overt expectation that boys as soon as they are old enough (i.e. around the age of 20-22 years, when they finished Grade 12), will take on the responsibility of the father and start earning for the family. Girls, on the other hand, are expected either to marry early or to take care of the household. According to a KII with the school principal, on difficulties retaining boys in higher education, 'Previously, people used to go to India for earning, especially boys. So at that time their earning age started from 15-16/ or between grades 10-12. Now we have a slogan, "One shouldn't go to India unless one has passed the School Leaving Certificate exam [Grade 10 exam]', which helps stop them. School also takes their own actions. Now the number of people visiting India for earning is very low. Now students start to earn after higher education only.'

While few girls engage in income-generating activities outside agriculture, those who do (mostly during their holidays) undertake work that, again, in keeping with their gender, is regarded as low-skilled and less demanding, which includes carrying stones and bricks. Boys, on the other hand, work in the more skilled and demanding areas, such as lumbering, digging, carpentry and masonry. A few older adolescent girls in Doti also reported working for NGOs focused on reproductive health and women empowerment; in Ilam girls work in local radio and do short-term contract work collecting information for village profiles and recording weather conditions such as temperature variations and rainfall.

Educated and high-caste girls face additional sociocultural restrictions around mobility, which play an important role in defining the kinds of work such girls can carry out. In Doti, mobility restrictions for Brahmin and Chhetri girls mean their scope of work, and indeed their choice of career, is much more limited than for their male counterparts. Thus, even when they are educated, girls are only allowed to take up jobs that are available nearby,<sup>30</sup> with distance from home being the main criterion influencing the job selection; this restriction does not affect boys.

The restriction on mobility seems to have two causes: first, to protect girls from physical insecurity; and second, the perception that, if there is no close guardianship, girls will likely lose control and become involved with boys and ultimately elope. An adolescent girl from Doti shared her concerns around the influence of this norm/restriction on her career:

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<sup>30</sup> Although many girls spoken to aspired to work as teachers or nurses in their home community, since they held relatively strong notions of wanting to help their own community, to give something back.

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*Yes there is some difference [between boys and girls] – even in educated families. They do not do too much discrimination, but there is still some. For example, they allow girls to take only those jobs that are available near the house. They would not allow their daughters to go far away from home for employment. They will say, “No, you are a girl.” A girl should not go far away from home to take jobs. It is not good. They will say the society will say bad things. There is always a fear of society for the parents when it comes to the girl. So they bring the society in front when the girl wants to go far away from home and stop her. So the girl’s education becomes useless for jobs.*

Although trends are changing and girls are more able to take up jobs further afield (in Doti), our analysis of IDIs with older adolescent girls and KIIs with school headmasters suggests that, for the foreseeable future, girls’ capacity to negotiate with their parents to stretch this barrier and increase their mobility, particularly in Doti among high-caste girls, will not change significantly. As the quote above shows, even when a family is liberal towards their adolescent daughters, societal pressure will keep the family from loosening its restrictions on mobility. And as also expressed by the adolescent girl above, pressure from society to keep girls close to home, with fear of loss of face, shame and humiliation if this norm is not adhered to, makes them even less able to negotiate their mobility with their parents.

In terms of wages, within agriculture the amount earned depends on the amount of work done and does not vary by gender. An average wage in agriculture is \$2.2 a day in both Doti and Ilam; however, in Doti there is also the expectation that younger adolescents in particular will be paid in kind (e.g. food or clothes) rather than cash. However, outside agriculture, there is a marked gender difference in wage. Boys earn an average of \$3.31-5.52 a day while girls earn around \$2.76 a day.

In terms of how adolescents are treated in the workplace, our study found no experience of gender differences. However, questions of security in the workplace arose when speaking with female police workers, with adolescent girls themselves and with other members of the community. According to respondents, girls potentially (none said they had directly experienced it) face threats and violence in worksites such as forests and fields. For example, adolescent girls are scared of going to the forest in Doti because they have heard of drunken men misbehaving with girls in isolated places. In Ilam, adolescent girls are afraid to go to faraway markets alone because they fear men may misbehave with them on the way.

### **6.2.2 Gendered nature of migration**

Migration patterns vary by gender, with large variations according to numbers of migrants, cause of migration, destination sites and economic impact on the family, among other things. While national-level data show that around 10% of migrants in Nepal are women, in our study we found only a few cases of women migrating for work, mainly in Ilam. As mentioned above, only boys and men undertake migration for economic purposes and to raise income for the family. In Doti, where migration is common among adolescent boys, and a large majority of boys from rural areas have migrated for work to cities in India, girls have not migrated for work at all. In Ilam, where gender norms tend to be less discriminatory, we still found only two households where girls had migrated; there were many cases of boys migrating.

The gender roles of breadwinner and caregiver assigned to men and women, respectively, affect the cause of migration. Thus, even when girls do migrate, they are not expected to do so for the sole purpose of earning money to send to their family, rather to fulfil their own needs or for other purposes, such as education, marriage or accompanying female extended family members. Boys, on the other hand, are expected to migrate to fill the economic needs of the family. Similarly, family members do not expect girls to send money back regularly, but when sons migrate the family expenses largely depend on their remittances. Thus, migration does not exert the same pressure on girls as it does on boys. In fact, for girls, their being out of the home and sustaining themselves is viewed as lessening the burden on the family. As a result, as mentioned earlier, migration contributes significantly to dropout or discontinuation of education among boys, but not as much for girls. For example, an adolescent boy in Ilam was leaving Grade 12 and going to Dubai because he liked what his friends were doing and earning there and thought he would be able to support his family in paying their debts.

Migration destination is also different for boys and girls. When girls migrate from Ilam, they go to the nearest border cities in India to work as helpers for extended family members. Although this is international migration, since they have crossed a border, the cities they go to, that is, Jaubari and Darjelling, are the nearest urban

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centres to their villages in Nepal, so it is in a sense more like rural–urban migration. Besides this, many people in the villages in Nepal buy and sell things on a daily basis in the city markets and shopping centres, including soap, sugar and lentils, thus commuting across the border daily, and, although the abovementioned girls stay in India, they are regularly in contact with their neighbours and friends. Additionally, given that they are usually involved in extended social networks, often with family members, co-villagers and school friends, many of them end up in familiar surroundings.

### 6.2.3 Control over income and access to assets

Generally speaking, in both Doti and Ilam, adolescents are happy about the work they carry out and are free to decide how to spend their money. Younger adolescents mostly use it to buy clothes, sweets, sandals, football, pencils and, most importantly, recharge cards for mobile phones. Older adolescents and out-of-school adolescents, in addition to spending it on their personal needs, pay for household goods such as cups and crockery, as well as on their younger siblings, for example buying course books and pencils for them. According to an older out-of-school adolescent girl, *'I decide myself, and only sometimes my parents suggest what I should spend my money on. I buy books and pencils for my sisters. Also I buy things for myself of my choice like clothes, shoes; also I spend my savings when I go for outings. I also save money in a cooperative.'* However, in the case of migration – mostly for boys, as already mentioned – the income is shared with the family and used largely for the family needs rather than for personal needs.

Regarding access to assets, there is a marked difference according to ethnicity. For girls from indigenous groups in Ilam, parents give them a small part of their assets, such as a piece of family land, a chicken or other animals, as *pewa*, or personal assets. The earnings from these assets can be used as pocket money. This is not given to boys, as the underlying assumption is that boys inherit all the parental property. Girls receive *pewa* from an early age and before marriage, and can keep it for themselves after marriage. This system of *pewa* is not found among the Brahmin and the Chhetri.

As adolescents are under the guardianship of their parents, family assets (land, money) are not directly accessible by adolescents, and it is the adult members of the family, primarily the father and the mother, who take decisions regarding investing family money for adolescents. A change in decision making about personal assets was evidenced in IDIs and life histories. While IDIs with adolescent girls showed that they decided about the *pewa*, life histories with older women showed that, when they were young, even with assets their parents gave them, the parents decided on how to use them: *'I was very happy when my father bought me a gold earring. When my brother had to marry my father asked for my gold earring back so that they could give it to my sister-in-law, promising to return it. My father died so I never got my gold earring back. It made me sad (life history, older women, Ilam).* In the case of married adolescents, besides money and jewellery they receive as a dowry, husbands largely control other assets.

To summarise this section briefly, both unpaid and paid work are gendered, with women and girls tending to carry out the undervalued and jobs that yield less. Girls are also at a disadvantage when compared with boys since mobility restrictions limit them from taking up jobs far from the home. Generally, perceptions persist that boys should take up paid jobs outside the home (including overseas) to support the family, whereas girls should remain in the home.

## 6.3 Physical domain

Findings from the physical domain are grouped into GBV and coping strategies and responses; lifecycle issues; and access to health services and information, including on reproductive health.

### 6.3.1 Gender-based violence and coping strategies

#### Gender-based violence

As found in the literature review, the fieldwork suggested that, if girls face violence – and according to our respondents this was rare for adolescent girls, with violence perhaps more common in Doti than in Ilam – most often the perpetrators are people who are in regular contact with them, such as boys and older men from the neighbourhood, and sometimes related to them. This was confirmed by KIIs at the female police cell in Ilam and with the coordinator of a safe house in Doti, who noted that, most often, perpetrators were extended family

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members or people living in the same community as the adolescent girls. We did not find any evidence of violence against girls or corporeal punishment by parents.

Generally, girls in both Doti and Ilam feel safe to roam around in the community with friends, with fear of violence associated mostly with isolated areas and during the evening, when they are scared of drunkards in particular. According to an adolescent girl in Doti, *'It is not safe on quiet roads, there are many drunkards, they say vulgar things when girls pass by, they may also try to touch them unnecessarily, but in the bazaar area it is quite safe.'* In addition, girls in Jamuna, in Ilam, fear abuse by boys who are not from their community. Girls' fear of drunkards, along with news of rapes reported in the media, means girls are restricted by their parents from going out alone and at odd hours.

GBV – ranging from physical to verbal abuse and humiliation – is faced by girls at various levels and is perhaps most obvious when a girl marries and moves into the husband's home. KIIs in Ilam and Doti suggested that, in these settings, physical abuses are often perpetrated by the husband himself, and in Doti also by the mother-in-law. Young brides also face humiliation from community members. In both sites, ability to work hard in the husband's home is a key requirement when young women marry. According to respondents, if the woman is weak and not able to work on a par with other women in the house or community, she is likely to lose respect in the family/community and be verbally abused. Previously (15-20 years ago), she may even have been expelled from the home and her husband would remarry, as the mother of an adolescent girl from Ilam shared: *'My husband had a first wife. I heard she was from Terai (plains) and she could not work hard in these hills and satisfy her mother-in-law so she was driven out of the house and my husband married me.'*

Another form of violence women experience is physical beating by their usually drunk husband. Although less common in Ilam, this was reported by most respondents in Doti. Contradicting some of the migration literature, which describes the burden women face when men are away (e.g. Kasper, 2006; Siegmann and Thieme, 2010), our interviews with older women in Doti, where migration is extremely common, suggested they do not feel unhappy when their husband is away because they do not have to bear alcohol-related fights and difficulties related to this – for example spending of household money on alcohol, and additional work when men invite their fellow drunkard friends to party in the house. Rather than affecting newly married adolescents, alcohol-related beatings were found to be more common in couples after they had had one or two children. We could not find a direct reason for this in our fieldwork, but other literature from South Asia and Nepal (such as Banerjee et al., 2005; Manchanda, 2001; 2004) suggests that alcoholism and GBV are ways for men to give vent to their frustrations. Since after having children there is a pressure on men to provide, financial pressure may be a possible factor in alcoholism and wife beating. Unlike in Doti, the relationship between spouses in Ilam is one of mutual sharing rather than of superiority and control of the wife by the husband. As such, wife beating is not so common in Ilam. As a local female leader in Ilam shared, *'It is rather that, when there is a fight between spouses, both men and women are drunk and hit each other.'*

Another main reason for fights between couples in both Ilam and Doti is related to infidelity. While in Doti women are usually the victims of infidelity, in Ilam men also face this issue. According to KIIs with a female NGO worker working on women's rights and a female officer from the women's police cell in Ilam, there are frequent stories of a migrant or a civil servant's wife eloping, taking all the remittance money and leaving the children behind: *'When the husband goes abroad, the wife comes to town to educate the children, the husband sends money, she sends family photos to him which makes him happy, when he returns he realises that he does not have the money he earned or his wife'* (KII, NGO worker, Ilam). In Doti, the phenomenon of eloping wives was not mentioned; this might be explained by the apparently low status and submissiveness of women in Doti.

As noted in the introduction, women and girls are also subject to gender discrimination resulting from Hindu caste and religious practices. This also translates into GBV and is particularly prevalent in Doti, which has a majority of high-caste Brahmins and Chhetri. In such communities, very high status is given to men just for having been born men rather than because of any personal capacity. Women, on the other hand, are viewed as inferior, to be controlled and dominated by their husband, to work for their husband's family; wife beating is framed as socially acceptable by society. A case study with a girl in Rajpur, Doti, aptly describes the situation: *'Men spend more time playing cards and drinking alcohol. Wife beating is normal in society [...] they say if they don't beat the wife, the wife will dominate them: "Tauko ma tekchhe" [literally, "Stand on men's head", referring to women who will not be submissive to men, e.g, they speak up].'*

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KIIs in Ilam district reported that adolescent girls from the village who go to the towns for education were being lured into sexual relationships for money, leading to exploitation and involvement in sex work; respondents were also concerned that this sex work trend appeared to be increasing. This was confirmed in the local community in IDIs with adolescent girls, with out-of-school girls in particular saying that they were afraid of going to the city because they had heard what had happened to other girls who had gone from the villages to the city. According to one key informant, in the previous two years, many hotel owners had hired adolescent girls for sex through mobile phones, usually girls coming from rural areas to study in colleges in the district: *'At first, brokers make friends with girls who come from rural areas to study in town. They first give bluff calls and later regular talking over the phone till they convince the girl of an established friendship. Then they recharge the mobile phones saying they would like to keep talking to the girls. But nothing comes for free. Then they pressure girls for sexual talks. Girls feel obliged and cannot say no and later this turns out into girls being abused physically. When she has established sexual relations with one person, the brokers force her to work for sex.'* Such cases were not found in Doti.

Additionally, KIIs spoke about girls from Ilam facing physical abuse by their local guardians when studying in urban areas. According to a KII, even if girls are sexually abused, this kind of GBV goes unnoticed and unpunished, because parents have a high regard for the guardians and believe them more than they believe their daughters. According to key informants, this is very much the case in Chhetri and Brahmin communities: there is a greater gap between parents and girls, parents are stricter and, as such, girls cannot complain of abuses. This was confirmed by a police officer from the female cell, who said that, in case of sexual abuse, the perpetrators are in all cases someone the girl victim knows. However, in Doti, such cases were not known of. One possible reason for this could be that parents do not allow girls to stay away from home unless there are immediate family members present.

### **Coping strategies and responses**

Women and girls adopt a range of informal and formal coping strategies to cope with GBV. In terms of formal coping strategies, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has set up a system of safe houses in the district headquarters, with branches in selected villages. Cases of violence come both to the safe house in Doti and to the female police officer cell in Ilam. Both the safe house and the female police cell helps victims and their husbands with legal issues, medical redress and counselling. They also provide spaces for the victim to stay for a short period while their issues are being taken care of. The situation is described in Box 1. Although polygamy is not necessarily GBV, if we take gender-based humiliation as violence our study finds that polygamy deeply humiliates women in Nepal. This was confirmed by interviews with coordinators of safe houses. As women are financially and socially dependent on their husband and their in-laws, women have to adjust and bear the second wife rather than move away. Once there is a second wife, support from the husband towards the first wife and her children often becomes minimal, with reports of first wives being beaten for demanding support.

Informal coping consists of sharing problems with peers or female relatives, or just tolerating it. Analysis of social networks from the IDIs shows that mothers, elder sisters and married friends are the main people adolescent girls share their problems with.

### **Box 1: Gender-based violence – figures from Doti and Ilam**

Between July 2012 and March 2013, 10 cases of rape, 10 of polygamy and 29 of domestic violence were reported in Ilam; in the past three years there have been more than 200 cases of physical abuse in Doti. In Doti, out of 200 cases, 7-10 victims were adolescent girls; in Ilam, out of 10 cases, 2-3 victims were adolescent girls. In both the sites, KIIs confirmed that 9 out of 10 rape perpetrators were people known to the victim, for example neighbours or extended family members. According to KIIs, in Ilam it is mostly husbands who perpetrate domestic violence and in Doti it is mostly husbands and mothers-in-law.

KIIs with the police officer in Ilam and with the coordinator of the safe house in Doti agreed that cases of wife beating were diminishing and GBV is more reported now than previously. *'There is a big change. If we see data of two to three years back and now we can see many more cases reported now than before. It is almost 95% cases for polygamy and rape that are being reported'* (KII, female police officer, ILAM). The opening of services like female cells and safe houses in districts and their sub-offices in villages (e.g. six in Doti) and the provision of child rights officers in each district have, according to our respondents, encouraged reporting to formal mechanisms and hence mean a better chance of redress. However, the number willing to come forward is

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still likely to be far lower than the actual number of cases. Key informants agreed there was a long way to go to ensure that perpetrators were punished and women were adequately protected. In Ilam, according to a KII, five to seven cases out of ten are reported; in Doti it is much lower, according to the coordinator of the safe house: *'There could be hundreds of domestic violence cases each day.'*

KIIs with the information officer in the Local Development Office in Doti and the local community leader (female) in Ilam suggested that most domestic violence cases are not reported because women either do not take this as a violation of their rights or cannot express themselves because they are afraid their husband will leave them. And, since women are mostly financially and socially dependent on their husband, if they left him their future wellbeing, survival, livelihood and security would be put into question.

IDIs supported the idea that women do not like to report GBV. While the married adolescents we interviewed had not experienced GBV, they said that, if they had done, they would not report it to other members of the household or in the community where they live. Reasons for this included lack of trust in formal organisations, fear of losing their home, dependency on the husband and his family and desire to protect their husband's name from being tarnished. According to one adolescent girl, *'I know a young woman whose husband left her with two sons. He repeatedly beat her; once she was beaten severely and thrown in the river. She had gone to several organisations, but no one listened to her. They are here for money and for the rich. Instead of giving justice they humiliated her in public and sent her away from the community as this is a male dominated community.'*

An adolescent boy in Ranagoan (Doti) put the experience of women aptly when giving his opinion on the difficulty local youth clubs face in curbing alcohol use and domestic violence: *'If the woman complains [about domestic violence], the community holds a meeting. In the meeting, they [the community members] discuss and tell the man [who beat his wife] never to repeat it. In the meeting, he [the husband] agrees but after he drinks it is the same story: he beats his wife again.'*

### **6.3.2 Health and lifecycle processes**

This section explores processes, practices and responsibilities linked to bodily functions/changes as well as social institutions as adolescents, particularly girls, move from early through to mid- and late adolescence into childbearing and beyond.

#### **Menstruation: Knowledge, practices, management and support**

By the time girls start menstruation they have already heard about it from their friends or from their sisters, sisters-in-law or other female relatives, for example cousins. Most had started their periods between the ages of 12 and 14 years, and said that, when they started menstruating, their feelings ranged from confusion to sadness to fear. All the girls who participated in the IDIs had informed their mother when they started and she told them what to do, what not to do and what to use. An adolescent girl in Doti said, *'I didn't understand what was happening but then I told my mother and she gave me information about menstruation and asked me to use cloths.'* It was revealed in IDIs and FGDs with adolescent girls that they receive comprehensive information on changes in the body and menstruation from school as part of their reproductive health education, starting in Grade 6. Most girls in Doti do not have enough water and proper bathroom facilities to maintain good hygiene at home (see also Section 6.1.2); some girls wash their cloth pads in the evening after everyone is asleep or in rivers. Although there are separate toilets for girls and boys in all schools in both Ilam and Doti, in Doti, scarcity of water means girls either do not go to school or leave in the middle of their classes to go home to use the toilet when they are menstruating. When their home is not nearby, they use bushes near the school.

Several traditional practices around menstruation continue to affect a large number of adolescent girls. In both Doti and Ilam, menstruating girls have to refrain from touching water and food, entering the kitchen and sleeping in certain areas. Besides this, girls in Doti are very often prevented from eating milk products during menstruation; this is not so common in Ilam, again because of the majority of indigenous ethnic groups in Ilam who do not follow the practices around menstruation so strictly as the Brahmins and Chhetris in Doti. Girls mostly accept these restrictions, but the extent to which they follow them varies, with less educated parents, older people, certain castes (i.e. Brahmins, the Chhetri and Dalits are stricter) and those in the villages in Doti more observant and stricter than in Ilam and in the headquarters of Doti. However, things are also changing. For example, previously, menstruating girls in Doti had to sleep in a separate shed; they now sleep either in the

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house of a neighbourhood friend who is also menstruating, as we saw with an adolescent girl in a case study house in Ranagaon, or in a separate room in their own house.

### **Premarital sex**

Sex before marriage is a taboo in Nepali society and is not discussed openly, although gossip occasionally circulates in the village. Rumours of such relationships are discussed more in Ilam than in Doti, possibly because in Ilam people were more open with the study team. Being in a relationship before marriage is considered bad not only by society but also by adolescent boys and girls themselves. Commenting on another girl, an adolescent girl in Ilam said, *'She goes out with anyone she finds, she sleeps with boys from the tractor, how can such a girl be my friend?'* Thus, being in a premarital relationship is associated with a girl becoming 'spoilt' and bringing disgrace to the family. While not so applicable to boys, girls are continuously reminded at home not to let their parents down by falling in love. Rather, they should spend their time focusing on their studies.

If premarital sex occurs, it happens discreetly; FGDs with older women revealed that festivals and public functions that occur late at night were likely venues for such incidents. As such, girls are often prevented from participating in such events or staying out at night; if they do go they are scrutinised closely.

In both the sites, and as shown in Section 6.5.4, KIIs and IDIs revealed that mobile phones had become very common among adolescent boys and girls, and many key informants were concerned that this was leading to more exposure to pornography, wastage of time on idle chatting and forming love affairs. According to such respondents, boys in particular were using mobile phones to access information about sex through the internet. Similarly, adolescent girls who participated in the IDIs and life histories said they felt love, marriage and eloping had increased owing to the advent of mobile phones.

### **HIV and AIDS**

Awareness on HIV and AIDs was higher among adolescents in Doti compared with those in Ilam. This is because Doti as a district has high prevalence of HIV and AIDS (a total of 218 HIV-positive cases in Doti and 7 in Ilam were reported to the study team),<sup>31</sup> and a considerable number of NGOs are working on it. According to key informants, HIV discrimination continues to exist in communities in Doti, but the school environment has become less discriminatory. According to an adolescent girl working as a volunteer in Doti, *'There were six HIV-positive students in school;'<sup>32</sup> everyone used to encourage and support them at school; unfortunately two committed suicide by drowning in the river as their family did not treat them well.'* HIV is also closely associated with migration to India, according to a KII with a female youth leader in Doti: *'Here, many men go to India and bring it back, people say that those with HIV should be killed, I tell these people that you should not say that they are bad people. We should love them and take them to hospitals. We tell them there are many ways to prevent HIV and there is medicine so we should not stigmatise and discriminate against them.'*

### **Marriage**

The mean age of marriage for girls in Doti, 17.72 (boys 21.43), is similar to the national average (17 for girls, 19 for boys). In Ilam it is much higher: girls 21.72 and boys 24.82 (Mega Publication and Research Centre, 2012). In Ilam, girls who had married earlier, that is, at 17-18 years, were those who had eloped. In terms of marriage decisions, in Doti parental arrangement was accepted and expected. In Ilam, however, both KIIs and IDIs revealed that, although parents prefer arranged marriages, girls expect to have a say in choosing the partner. As an adolescent girl in Ilam shared, *'Yes, I feel that my parents should ask us when they choose a groom for me. It is better, if they ask me. And also if the groom considers my interests.'* Interviews with married adolescent girls in Doti showed that, if they could have chosen, they would have married later, after finishing their education and started earning, as shared in an IDI by a married adolescent: *'I think I would not have married so early. I would have stood on my own two feet, to be able to earn for myself and then marry. I would have completed my studies and been mature enough to deal with various problems that come in life, been able to take decision and chosen someone to marry by myself.'*

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<sup>31</sup> Gender-disaggregated information was not available.

<sup>32</sup> Again, gender-disaggregated information was not provided.

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For some girls in Ilam, marriage is way to continue education and escape poverty if their parents cannot afford for them to keep going to school. Similarly, in Doti, marriage into a family with a house in Dhangadi – the neighbouring more developed/urban district – means increased chances of continuing education.

Girls felt that that, even when they were allowed to continue going to school after marriage, the increase in responsibility that comes with marriage made it difficult to continue education with the same spirit. As a married adolescent girl put in an IDI in Doti, *'It is very different in your parents' house and once you are married. To a married woman, people will say, "This is a daughter-in-law and only studying – she is not doing household work." I was afraid that people would start talking about me, backbiting me.'*

In both sites, girls were expected to marry at an earlier age than boys. There were mixed opinions among parents regarding the age at which their children should marry. Parents who could afford to educate their children were more likely to delay their marriage; those unable to afford education wanted to marry them early. In most cases, 20-25 years was thought to be a reasonable age for girls to marry. However, older people, in both Doti and Ilam, preferred that their daughters/granddaughters marry early, as they feared they would otherwise elope, bringing dishonour to the family. Although dowry is a potentially important issue for understanding issues around gender justice in South Asia in general and in Nepal in particular, our research did not find evidence in either site that dowry was an issue .

Despite several interventions by NGOs and the government in Doti to raise awareness on the benefits of delaying the age of marriage, Doteli society still considers having an unmarried adolescent girl at home a burden. Education can temper this, but still, once preliminary education is completed, a girl needs to marry, as outlined by an adolescent boy in Doti: *'I agree with my parents that my sister needs to marry after she completes [Grade] 12 otherwise people in the village will start talking and accuse us of keeping a grown-up girl at home.'* A female youth leader in Doti shared her frustration with trying to raise awareness on the benefits of delaying marriage in Doti: *'Age at marriage has not decreased [...] When we try to intervene before marriage, the girls will have already been told to say they have married according to her will. They accuse us of interference without understanding the household situation. Later, when they are in trouble, they share the reality, as no matter at what age you marry you have to bear the same hardship.'* Despite this, in Doti, parents negotiate with the groom's family to make sure girls can continue their education after marriage. Girls sometimes stay in their parents' house to continue education if the marriage happens in the middle of a session. Thus, norms around marriage are changing in favour of girls continuing their education. In Ilam, girls can continue their education after marriage if they choose to without any negotiation between the parents. This is probably because of the higher literacy level among the older generation in Ilam: the in-laws themselves are educated and therefore see the value of education.

Another positive change in norms around marriage is the closing age gap between husbands and wives and the increased age of childbearing. An analysis of life histories with old women reveals that, previously, husbands were much older than wives – the largest age gap in our data being 30 years. This was more the case for Brahmins and the Chhetri; the age gap was less in the case of indigenous groups. A possible explanation for this could be that all marriages of Brahmins and the Chhetri happened at a very early age (with the girl around 8-11 years), while for indigenous groups it was a bit later (around 13-15 years). Similarly, analysis of life histories shows that the age of childbearing has increased, the gap between children has increased from an average of 1.5 years to 4 years and the number of children women are expected to give birth to has decreased: previously, women bore an average of five children and now they choose to have two. There was also no evidence of social pressure on young women to have more children.

Despite these changes, girls are still hesitant to talk about marriage and future husbands. None of the girls spoke about being in a relationship, and none was forthcoming about their expected future husband.

### **Polygamy**

While polygamy is decreasing, partly because the law in Nepal forbids it, it still exists. It is justified in the local community, according to an FGD with older women in Doti, when a woman is infertile, which is a great shame and humiliation for here. The law also allows polygamy when there is no child after 10 years of marriage. However, interpretation and practice of the law discriminate against women, since infertility is usually blamed on the woman and no tests are carried out on the man, since this would be an affront to his masculinity. Thus, it

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is only after several marriages that infertility in a man is recognised. *'There is no happiness, my son has married three times and he does not have children. How can we be happy?'* (elderly Dalit woman sharing in FGD, Doti). Thus, polygamy is a reality for many girls, although the practice may vary according to region and ethnic and religious group. Although it was not brought up explicitly as a question, interviews with married adolescents did not suggest that polygamy was a major perceived concern/risk.

### **Pregnancy and child birth**

There was a growing preference to go to the health facility for childbirth to take advantage of the free delivery service as well as the additional travel incentive of Rs1,000 (\$10) provided by the government for women to deliver babies in a health facility. A mother-in-law in Doti regretted her daughter-in-law missing out on the incentive for delivery: *'She had children in India so they did not get money but here they get money.'* Before the incentive, in-laws were the main barriers to girls giving birth at health posts; now in-laws encourage girls to go to the health post. Deliveries in Doti that take place at home are attended in most cases by the mother-in-law; in Ilam, it seems that no women deliver at home. Even though some women deliver babies at home in Doti, they go to the health post for immunisation and other services.

### **Family planning**

Married adolescents and women reported using injectables and oral contraception. Most older women do not use family planning to delay pregnancy but to limit the number of children after having given birth to the desired number, as they understood the economic burden of raising more children. Our analysis of life histories shows that older women generally start using contraceptives at around 45 years of age, while young mothers use contraceptives to space births.

Women mostly rely on their husbands to make the final decision on family planning, although they are consulted: *'My husband says I am too young to have babies, I also do not want to have child right now'* (IDI, married adolescent, Doti). In terms of number of children, girls ideally wanted two – a girl and a boy – being keenly aware that the family expects them to have at least one son. As shown above, there has been an increase in the gap between children, and the childbearing age has increased from 13 years to an average of 19 years, which has changed women's lives significantly.

Those who have gone to school are taught about contraception there but not everyone knows the different methods; they mostly know about condoms and injections. They know where they can get the services and who to ask for information; however, despite this knowledge, unmarried girls, particularly in Doti, do not dare seek information for fear of stigma/taboo. According to an unmarried adolescent girl in Doti, *'If we go to seek family planning services they will throw us out of the bazaar, they will not allow us to live here. They will say how can an unmarried girl buy family planning. They will create chaos.'* Additionally, in Doti, pressure to have a son often outweighs any education or awareness received on family planning. According to a KII with a youth volunteer in Doti, *'Everyone knows two children are god's gift, but if they have a daughter, they keep on having children. What is the use of education?'* However, in Ilam, there is no evidence of son preference, as shown by IDIs with older women: *'Even if they have two daughters they are satisfied. They say if a son can do anything daughters can also do it.'*

### **Abortion**

Abortion is generally not talked about openly in the community, and in the case of an unmarried girl it is a taboo. Nevertheless, rumours of unmarried adolescents having abortions were heard, albeit less in Doti than in Ilam. As a health post worker in Ilam said, *'Around three or four unmarried girls come for a urine test in a year [who turn out to be pregnant]; we suggest they marry the person who made them pregnant. If not, we suggest they go and seek abortion services.'*

In Barbote in Ilam, Dalit girls in particular were singled out as having illegal affairs and subsequent abortions. According to one non-Dalit adolescent girl, *'The whole village [referring to the Dalit village nearby] is like that, the whole bunch of them they get pregnant and abort babies.'* In an informal interview with the local female leader in Ilam, we heard that one of our adolescent girl respondents had aborted twice before she got married to an Indian across the border. In Doti, KII respondents did not talk directly about unmarried girls going for pregnancy tests or abortions. However, adolescent girls in FGDs and IDIs did mention cases of unmarried girls committing suicide after an abortion or dying after a failed abortion.

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Abortion is practised by women after the failure of family planning, according to a 42-year-old Dalit women with seven children in Doti: *'I did not know family planning business before so did not use it. Before I had the last child (five years now) the doctor suggested I use it when I took my child for immunisation. But still I got pregnant, then I tried to spoil [abort] the pregnancy in a private clinic but it did not work.'* In Doti, married people usually go to Dhangadi – the neighbouring district – for abortions.

According to respondents in Ilam, girls who had been forcibly recruited into the Maoist army and got pregnant by Maoist cadres had to abort their children, as they would not have been accepted back by their community. Such girls were left in the forest; their family members collected them and arranged the abortion and marriage in India with the help of extended family members.

It was not clear whether sex-selective abortion was happening, though it was mentioned by two adolescents interviewed in Doti when speaking about a married woman: apparently, they (the couple) went to India or Dhangadi to seek services even though it was very costly: *'They wanted a son, they had gone to a hospital in Paliya in India to know if the child was boy or a girl. If it was a girl they wanted to abort but the doctor refused, saying that she [the mother] was weak. Rs20-30,000 was spent just like that.'* In Ilam, when asked about it, people said son preference was not so strong, so this was not very common.

### **6.3.3 Access to health services**

Interviews with service providers and the community mapping exercise shows that services are similar in both sites, are provided through both the public and the private sector and include basic medical examination, treatment, family planning services, reproductive health services and health education. Female community health volunteers (FCHVs), from within the government health system, are the most active in connecting women to health services. There is one FCHV per ward; in highly populated wards there may be more than one. The role of the FCHV is to promote safe motherhood, child health and family planning (distribution of pills, condoms), as well as other community-based health services. As such, they ensure pregnant women go to the health facility at least for four check-ups and get a regular supply of iron tablets. FCHVs also work on health education and link women to other health services.

Currently, there are more than 48,000 FCHVs in Nepal. They are attached to health-related organisations in their respective VDC and are supervised and mentored by health workers. They are volunteers, but receive a daily allowance of Rs200 during trainings and other programmes. Additionally, in districts where there is community-based new-born care package (such as in Doti) – which includes close follow-up by the FCHV of pregnant women during antenatal care (four visits), childbirth (assisted by a health worker) and new-born care (three visits) – a FCHV who is able to ensure all these visits gets an incentive for her work. Finally, FCHVs have access to an endowment fund, from which they obtain get loans after retirement.

Thus, check-ups and consultations during pregnancy are available at the health posts or during outreach clinics. Check-ups include taking blood pressure, tetanus immunisation, providing iron and folic acid, counselling on rest and the need for a nutritious diet, screening for complications and planning for delivery. In both districts, services for normal delivery are available, but facilities for caesarean delivery are only at the district headquarters.

In terms of contraception, it was felt that women have generally become more aware as a result of ongoing campaigning by both the government and organisations like the Family Planning Association of Nepal, and contraceptives are easily available in both sites. The main sources of information and provision are the FCHVs, health posts and NGOs. Safe abortion services are also available in the districts, and all girls in both sites have some knowledge about such facilities. KIIs suggested that unmarried adolescents prefer services run by NGOs such as Marie Stopes and the Family Planning Association, since they felt these stigmatised them less than the government hospital would.

Despite the existence of these services for women, according to key informants it was shyness on the part of adolescent girls that meant they could not take full advantage of them: *'The good thing is that the health post has at least one female service provider, but even then in these parts it is still difficult for the girls to talk openly about their problems, they are shy'* (KII, headmaster, Doti). Many people prefer to go to private clinics, even though government hospitals provide free/cheaper services, because they see the former as better/higher quality.

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An adult Dalit women in Doti said, *'I spent Rs2,000 there just like that, I did not get well so I went to a private clinic. It [the government hospital] is useless, it is always crowded.'* In Doti, those who have family members in India prefer to go there, since again there is the perception that health services are better there. Similarly, in Ilam, for major illnesses, people prefer to go to adjacent districts in the plains or to India. People in Ranagaon in Doti and Jamuna in Ilam rely mostly on health posts. In Ilam, people are very satisfied with community health workers: local people who provide services, who were said to be available at any time and to go from house to house inquiring about people's health in their free time. They also have a pharmacy of their own in the community.

While there are still people who seek out the services of traditional healers for some ailments, the trend is decreasing because of awareness and education, according to KIIs with local leaders in Doti and Ilam.

However, despite indications in the literature, our fieldwork did not find evidence of discrimination between sons and daughters in health care and nutrition. We did not find any instances of son bias in food allocation or medical attention, only in relation to schooling, as mentioned previously.

To summarise this section briefly, GBV is usually carried out by people who are in regular contact with the victim and usually takes the form of beating, sexual assault and humiliation. Alcohol, women's inability to work and infidelity are the main causes of GBV. For the most part, women just bear GBV, but increasing numbers are taking formal redress methods. Restrictions around menstruation persist, and premarital sex and abortion among adolescents remain uncommon. Changes are occurring, though: son bias in health and nurture was not found, age of marriage is increasing, incidence of polygamy is decreasing, the number of children a woman bears is reducing and women are opting more and more for medical care during pregnancy and childbirth. Finally, access to and use of formal health services are also increasing.

## 6.4 Psychosocial domain

This domain explores expected gendered behaviour, the gendered nature of movement and mobility, sexuality and interactions with the opposite sex and personal and psycho-emotional wellbeing.

### 6.4.1 Expected gender behaviour

Besides particular social norms that affect girls differently, for example marriage and education, as described above, other norms or expected behaviours exist for girls and influence their daily practices, aspirations and orientations for livelihood and life in general. Girls are expected to be submissive, docile and shy, and not to be outspoken, opinionated and mischievous. Similarly, as discussed above, girls' behaviour is closely linked to notions of honour and prestige and 'good' and 'bad', with girls feeling they are under the close and continued scrutiny of society. On the other hand, there is the notion that boys can do what they like at school, at home and in the broader community; they can be mischievous and can, and are expected to, tease girls – but only those who are not 'honourable'.

KIIs showed that existing gender norms that are discriminatory towards girls have potential psychosocial effects. According to such respondents, girls are more closely scrutinised than boys, since ideas of shame and honour are directed more towards girls. This results in, among other things, a girl being constantly under pressure to think about the family name and honour in her daily life (ranging from the clothes she wears to the way she behaves in public); this is not the case for boys from the same family. This is likely to have an impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of girls. However, key informants also noted changes in these discriminatory norms, mostly because of increased education and awareness within the wider Nepali society. The changing national history (e.g. the post-war context, adoption of new laws) and international influences (globalisation, communication) have also had a positive effect on adolescent girls, especially around perceptions of and approaches to their own future. It was said that girls could now aspire to an education and a career, and had more freedom of mobility, unlike previously.

The following narrative by an adolescent girl in Doti shows the differences between expected behaviours of boys and girls: *'They [society] treat girls badly – with contempt. Everyone is always judging your behaviour if you are a girl. Boys are allowed to do everything. They say if boys do anything, it is ok. They are allowed to*

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*... speak as they like. But if a girl does anything unconventional, the whole community will make it an issue and backbite the girl and her family [...] For example, boys can go to melas [fairs] and there they tease girls. If we come and tell our mothers or brothers and sisters-in-law about it – that this boy did this – they rebuke us in return. For boys, they will take it as normal and say of course boys will tease girls. “But why did he tease you particularly and not the others – you must have done something – you have to be good yourself, you are bad, that is why he chose you to tease. If you had been good, they would not tease you. Why do you have to go to melas and all? Why can’t you just sit at home – how can they tease you if you are home?”*

Similarly, according to a KII with a school headmaster, ‘Boys are more mischievous and create problems so they need to be punished more often; otherwise, with regard to education there is no bias. Girls are by nature or behaviour not mischievous.’ The same headmaster talked of difference in the upbringing of girls and boys: ‘We ask the girls to behave well and we ask them not to sit this way, do this do not do that, you should not be like boys so the learning pattern is different.’

Respondents also spoke of pressure on girls to have a certain appearance and not dress fashionably. Girls should not dress up as they are viewed then as being provocative: ‘Girls wearing a sexy dress would be harassed by boys’ (IDI, adolescent girl, Ilam). Being fashionable was associated with a girl being spoilt and having a loose character. Given these connotations, girls therefore tend to forgo being at least outwardly fashionable, wearing discreet and ‘accepted’ clothing. However, the study found examples of girls going to beauty parlours, although they did this discreetly.

Similarly, staying overnight in a friend’s house is not considered appropriate behaviour for girls, since this, or generally going out, is linked with the possibility of them having affairs with boys. And if a girl has affairs, she is ‘spoilt’ and she and her whole family face shame and dishonour. The following narrative from an IDI with an adolescent in Ilam illustrates how these issues interplay with each other:

*A: Yes, they say women shouldn’t be outside when it is dark. I think they are right. I don’t like to go. I also don’t allow my sisters. All my sisters also ask me for permission but I don’t let them go and stay at someone’s house at night.*

*Q: What do you think will happen if you go?*

*A: If they go, I feel they will take the wrong path – they will start doing chhatyai batthayai [telling lies, being too clever – mostly relates to having love affairs]. If they take the wrong path, they will get spoiled and they will lose chastity, honour.*

*Q: What happens if you lose honour?*

*A: If we lost honour, nothing will remain with us.*

*Q: Why do you need honour?*

*A: We need it. We live in a society. We need it also for our parent’s prestige. Co-villagers will look down upon us, they will hate us. They will spit on us.*

Leisure time is also gendered and is not unrelated to the gendered division of tasks (see Section 6.2.1). Thus, when asked what they did during their leisure time, older adolescent girls often said they cleaned and decorated the house, washed clothes and did flower gardening (which are all in a sense still related to work). Older adolescent boys, on the other hand, said they met friends and talked and roamed around the market or played. The gender stereotyping of leisure activity usually begins during older adolescence, with younger boys and girls relatively free. Pressure to adhere to expected gender norms is perhaps higher for married adolescent girls, as shown by the following narrative by a married adolescent girl in Doti:

*Yes, there is difference. There is a lot of difference. When one is married, one cannot act on one’s own will. One is caught up in a kind of bondage, one is not free. If one walks around like other girls, speaks and discusses openly with friends like unmarried girls, spends time going around like them, people will say, “Look, she is a woman and yet she does not have any sense, she is just dancing around with girls.” They will say, “Look at her way of speaking and way of walking.” They mock us, they criticise us. We have to be very careful in speaking, sitting, getting up, everything. I feel we have to be very conscious when we are married. After being married, there are a lot of differences.*

Fear of being ostracised from society is the main reason girls do not challenge established norms, although this does not stop them from criticising the norms and also questioning themselves, as the following narrative from the same adolescent girl in Doti shows:

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*Q: What happens if people backbite?*

*A: People who do not like you would backbite you anyway?*

*Q: So why are you so self-conscious?*

*A: We have to be very alert. If someone backbites us, people in society will not believe in you. So and so was telling such bad things about her – maybe that women is like that – they will say. When society does not believe in this way, we will be apart from society. So we fear society – what would society say to us in days to come, how would it behaves towards us. We have to think about that. We should live how other people have lived in society. This is what I understood – it is different after marriage. It is not the same as before marriage, even though girls also face such issues. But after marriage it is much more. There is a lot of difference after marriage.*

#### **6.4.2 Gendered nature of mobility/movement**

Our study suggests norms related to mobility are one of the most important aspects with a negative effect on the capability and prospects for capacity building and broader development of girls. Mobility is very much encouraged for boys, and in Doti was seen as a natural process of attaining adulthood and being responsible in society, but remains much restricted for girls:

*The concept of the parents and society is boys have to go outside to read and write and go away from home, work outside and earn to bring home money [...] they think boys are good if they go out, they should go out to learn and earn. Society thinks girls are good when they are inside the house, boys are good when they have travelled as much as possible and earned (IDI, older adolescent girl, Doti).*

Parents and adult family members constantly remind girls they should not be mobile. We found that girls accept this censorship in mobility and inculcate it in their behaviour and habits. For example, when asked how they would like to spend their leisure, girls often said they did not like to play or go out. While both boys and girls need permission to go out of the house, daughters are not allowed to go far and sons can afford to be disobedient: ‘Boys – they go wherever they want – they ask but do not necessarily obey the parents and parents are also not so strict with them as they are with us’ (FGD, adolescent girls, Doti).

Besides this, our findings from the mobility diagram with boys and girls show that, while for boys playgrounds are the most visited places during both school time and leisure time, for girls they are among the least visited places. Similarly, in Doti, there are places like community grounds, the open area near the water reservoir and local shops where boys spend most of their time; girls are not allowed to go to such places precisely because there are boys there. The situation is not so strict for girls in Ilam.

This not only applies to spatial mobility but also to bodily movements like dancing, jumping, running and playing. Mostly, older adolescent girls will not do these things. When asked about playing in leisure, the general response of older adolescent girls was, ‘Girls here do not play games.’

#### **6.4.3 Sexuality and interaction with the opposite sex**

While findings from our study show sex and sexuality is a taboo in general, there is an inherent acceptance that boys are curious about sex and are sexually active. Thus, while boys can express their sexuality and sexual curiosity, for girls there is a great pressure to cover any form of activities that could possibly show they are interested in knowing about sex, sexual activity or sexual appeal.

In interviews, girls were often hesitant to talk about sex and reproductive health openly. They often said they had no knowledge about it and could not ask anyone about it because it was not proper to do so. Discussion about sex and reproductive health is difficult even with their married peers, according to these girls. When they talk about sex, they refer to it as ‘such an issue’ rather than saying the word ‘sex’ itself. The following narrative from an IDI with older adolescent girls in Ilam exemplifies this situation:

*Q: Do you know about family planning and AIDS?*

*A: No.*

*Q: Do your parents tell these things?*

*A: No. Only they say don't get spoilt.*

*Q: Do you know about how a girl gets pregnant? –*

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A: No.

Q: Do you think your married friends are aware of sex and HIV?

A: Yes but they don't talk with us on such issues.

Q: Don't you want to know about it?

A: No, it is a shame.

Q: Why? Don't you feel if you know it is useful for you?

A: Yes, if we know, it is good for us. For our security. But we never ask, we feel shy, neither do our friends share.

As mentioned above, interaction with members of the opposite sex is more restricted for girls because it is associated with 'getting spoilt' and bringing disgrace and dishonour to the family name. Family members, especially the mother or female guardian (e.g. a grown up elder sister), and next the father, often pressure girls not to tarnish the honour of the family. In Ilam, where there is a majority of indigenous groups, older adolescents girls are allowed to talk to boys from the same neighbourhood but not to friends from other villages who go to the same school. In villages in Doti, girls are not supposed to talk to boys at all, as shared in the following FGD with adolescent girls in Doti: *'We cannot even talk to anyone, if they see us talking they will gossip saying that she is a spoilt one, from the next day it will not be possible for you to walk on the way even to school as they will start teasing you. You cannot even talk to your friends or your brothers. They will view this negatively. We want to walk holding hands with our brothers to laugh and crack jokes with them but that is not possible.'* Similarly, the community mapping and village mobility diagram in Doti showed there are places like local shops where girls are not allowed because they are gathering places for boys.

Thus, having a boyfriend or an interest in boys is taboo and girls cannot even discuss this openly with most of their peers. Also, when asked about their interest in boys, girls often giggled or turned red, mostly saying it was bad and they should not have an interest in boys. Additionally, parents continuously warn their daughters about such matters, whereas their sons are freer. The following excerpt from an IDI with an adolescent girl in Doti shows this dynamic clearly:

Q: Do you have a boyfriend?

A: No.

Q: Do you like any of the boys?

A: No.

Q: What about boys (do they like girls/have girlfriends)?

A: Yes, it is more common with boys.

Q: What do they do?

A: They write love letters.

Q: Why isn't it with girls?

A: I do not know why, I don't know about all girls.

Q: Could it be like you are afraid or you are worried about what society would say or do?

A: Yes, because at home they keep reminding us that you should not do this you should not do that.

Q: Don't they do the same to the boys?

A: They do but not to the same extent that they do us.

Q: Who reminds you?

A: Mummy and my aunty (father's sister).

Q: What do they say?

A: They tell me that girls should not talk much and do those kind of things.

#### **6.4.4 Personal and psycho emotional wellbeing**

The increase in access to education, among other things, has resulted in increased personal growth and wellbeing for adolescent girls in comparison with women of their mothers' and grandmothers' generations. Meanwhile, wishes for the future, and definitions of happy and sad moments, wellbeing, capacity to reflect and aspirations in life, varied widely between old women of the same age in Ilam and Doti. However, this gap has gone when we compare adolescents in Ilam and Doti now.

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Women in Ilam could easily separate happy and sad moments and relate them to a particular age. They were aware of certain local and national events happening in their life, wished to travel and learn new things, explicitly expressed a desire to see the wellbeing of their grandchildren and did not complain about their sons and daughters-in-law. Women of the same age from Doti, however, often found it hard to describe happy and sad moments, could not say what specific events had happened at what age and did not speak of any national and local events. They were miserable in their appearance (for example their hair was unkempt and their clothes were dirty) as well as in their demeanour and often complained about the younger generation and their sons and daughters-in-law. Their typical response would be, *'What is there to be happy about in life? It is all sad – we have to work hard throughout our life.'* Even when discussing doing the same kind of manual work, those in Ilam were generally satisfied with their life and cheerful while those in Doti were gloomy and dissatisfied.

Although we could not clearly identify the reasons for this difference between Ilam and Doti, one possible explanation may be the exposure of women in Ilam to the outside world, their lesser workload and the relative ease brought about by technological innovation. For example, all the old women we interviewed in Ilam used modern technology in their household work, like grinding mills for making rice and flour. In Doti, women spent a significant time each day at the grinding stone removing husks from rice or grinding buckwheat. Televisions were also less common; in the case study household young people watched television but the older women did not. Similarly, as most of the men in Doti have migrated, women are alone in the house and have a larger work burden. Besides this, even when men are present, women do most of the household work in Doti. In Ilam, men work alongside women inside the house.

However, when comparing present-day adolescent girls in both sites, the gap has narrowed. Girls have similar aspirations for education and careers, and their wishes and understandings of the circumstances are almost the same. This narrowing of the gap between Ilam, which as a district has some of the highest levels of gender equality in Nepal, and Doti, which has Nepal's lowest level of gender equality, shows there has been a significant improvement in the lives of women in the past 50-55 years.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, parent–adolescent interaction also appears to be more liberal than before, although this varies according to geography and caste. And perhaps most importantly, while there is still a distance in father–daughter relationships in terms of, among other things, emotional support, this too appears to be opening up: once autocratic fathers are becoming more interactive and engaged with their daughters. Similarly, in the majority of social network mapping we carried out during the IDIs, mothers were identified as the most important form of social support to adolescent girls in all kinds of crisis and dilemmas, ranging from financial problems to wishes and managing physical changes in adolescence such as menstruation.

To briefly summarise this section – bearing in mind there are notable differences according to site, caste and rural/urban location – adolescent girls' psychosocial wellbeing is affected by a range of restrictive behaviours they are expected to demonstrate, relating to the way they dress, their manners, how they interact with the opposite sex and their mobility. Nevertheless, compared with their mothers' and grandmothers' generations, while restrictions are not necessarily reducing, girls are becoming more empowered through increased education and exposure, and interaction between children and parents is opening up. One manifestation of this increasing empowerment is girls' increasing ability to have future aspirations and negotiate these with their parents, which was evident in both of the study sites.

## 6.5 Political/participation domain

This section presents findings on the capability of girls to participate in terms of decision-making processes or being given/allowed a voice in the school environment, within the household and within the community. It also explores the role technology may be playing in broader participation and networking.

### 6.5.1 Participation and voice in school

Our study finds that the only space available for girls to share their views openly, publicly and beyond the household domain is in school. Teachers encourage girls to talk and respect their opinion, but how much they

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<sup>33</sup> We say past 50-55 years based on the age gap between the older women and the adolescent girls sampled for the life histories.

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interact and participate, according to study respondents, depends on how good they are in their studies: *'Teachers used to answer my questions and explain and I did not notice any discrimination or preferential treatment for being a girl. But I noticed they gave more attention to smart students as weaker students would not participate much in class'* (IDI, adolescent girl, Doti). Reasons for not participating actively include fear of talking in class or being teased by peers. According to an adolescent boy in Doti, *'Girls here are not forward as in other developed places, this is a remote place, they are of shy nature and are not active in extra curriculum activity.'* Similarly, according to an adolescent girl in Ilam, *'I am a bit hesitant. I do not have courage to talk in front of teachers; one of our friends has repeated Grade 8 three times so she knows all the teachers so she asks questions on behalf of the other girls.'* Thus, girls tend to limit the already limited interaction they have with teachers.

A different perspective was provided by an adolescent girl in Doti during a body mapping, where she pointed out that, while she felt fine about talking to her teachers, she thought they were not really listened to because of their young age: *'I talk to my teachers about whatever I feel like, I am not afraid, people may not listen to us, even when we are 100% correct, they say you are young so they do not value what we say.'* Another girl in Doti was on friendly terms and shared her problems with a male teacher, but this later became a cause of distress for her as her friends and boys started teasing her, suggesting she was having an affair with him. Thus, being open with teachers and participating does not necessarily always have positive results, or result in girls having more of a public voice, even within the boundaries of the school.

Some girls in Ilam said they could take part in extracurricular activities, through which they could potentially gain a voice beyond their immediate family. Thus, for instance, guided both by teachers and by the organisation, some girls had assumed such positions as executive members of the junior Red Cross.

### **6.5.2 Participation and voice in the family/household**

Participation by girls within the household differs in the two study locations. In Doti, girls' role consists mostly of quietly assisting the mother in household-related work, and they can voice their opinions only on minor household matters such as cooking, cleaning and so on. Boys, on the other hand, are included in discussion on financial matters and business. However, this also varies according to age: only older girls/boys are included in decisions. Thus, according to an adolescent girl in Doti, *'Parents consider us small, and they do not discuss with us important matters. They always tell us to study well, to not let them down, "Do not cut our nose" [bring disgrace], to do the household work properly, to not go astray.'*

In Ilam the situation was quite different: girls are not likely to submit to household work quietly, even though they have a disproportionate workload. They have the courage to complain about it, even if the work does not impinge on their study time as much as it does in Doti. However, again, only older adolescent girls<sup>34</sup> are asked for their opinion or given a voice. Being able to complain and being asked for an opinion/given a voice show very different levels of involvement in decision making.

Education is also related to participation in family decisions. Girls in higher education, that is, those above the School Leaving Certificate class, are likely to be listened to more than girls in lower classes. They are consulted about their studies and listened to regarding opinions about teachers and the school, but also on household matters, such as in relation to buying things for the house and other management issues, like borrowing or lending money. However, parents still make the majority of decisions related to them. In some cases, girls are just informed of the decision or are audiences to the discussion; in other cases, their viewpoints are asked. There are no differences between Ilam and Doti in this regard.

Married girls living alone with their husband can assume a greater role in decision making around issues such as where to spend money, buying and selling assets and so on. Even if a married girl is living in an extended family, if she has more education than other members of the family she is more likely to be listened to. In Doti, according to one respondent, investing in a daughter-in-law (e.g. education, land or a savings account in her name) by in-laws is preferred to investing in daughters, as it will ensure property remains in the family. Similarly, according to this respondent, girls are more likely to voice their interest/opinion after a brother

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<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, this importance given to the girl's voice relates perhaps more to education and responsibility than to age. A girl's opinion is heard when she has completed her School Leaving Certificate exam (passed grade 10) or, in the case of a school dropout, when she takes on the responsibilities of a mother. The average age in such cases is from 16-19.

marries since the presence of a vocal sister-in-law both gives them courage to speak and represents an important support system.

### 6.5.3 Voice and participation in the community



Picture 14: Boy putting posters given by an NGO in Doti, Source: Study Team, 2013

We found that participation in political and civic life by adolescent girls is very much influenced by the presence of NGOs. Many NGOs are present in Doti, and many have formed clubs for adolescent girls; the presence of these NGOs and their mandate to involve girls in programmes to some extent ensures the participation of girls at community level. However, as pointed out by an NGO worker in Doti, *'There is equal participation of girls in our programme, but in normal community settings and at home it is possible that girls are less heard.'* Adolescent boys further elaborated in an FGD that, *'Even in these programmes it is just the facilitators who respect what the girls say but other participants and those who are watching it may not.'* So in a sense, this is not 'real' participation or, therefore, empowerment. Meanwhile, in a KII, a local youth leader in Ilam suggested that difficulties with overnight stays and mobility in general for women were one of the causes of low political participation of women in political and macro-level structures.

Besides participation through NGOs, in Doti adolescents are now also called to attend VDC-level meetings. This was not found to be happening in Ilam. This may be partly because migration of older men is high in Doti, unlike in Ilam. Nevertheless, it is still mostly older adolescent boys who go to such meetings, and, in any case, attendance does not necessarily translate into active participation and being listened to.

More broadly, social norms around gender both affect the way girls behave in groups and are a barrier to their participation, in both study locations, but more so in Doti. An adolescent boy in Doti justified poor participation of girls by saying, *'If girls make small mistakes, the community will make it a big issue, while even a big mistake by a boy is taken as normal, which is indirect discrimination for girls. So girls do not like to participate and are less confident to talk.'* A female youth leader in Doti said it was important to establish credibility in the community for adolescents to be heard: *'I have worked as a volunteer for many years so they call me in community meetings and encourage me to give my views, saying they should hear from young people as ideas come from them. But they will not listen to fresh adolescents and they will say how can we rely on immature people?'* This is the case for both boys and girls, but particularly for girls

### 6.5.4 Communication, technology and changes in life

We found that technological change had led to a great improvement in the quality of life of girls and women. The most important technological advancements are mobile phones, rice mills and electricity. While there may be a gendered trend in access to certain gadgets like mobile phones – that is, girls usually get them much later than boys and after more difficult negotiations with parents – we found that more and more girls have access to them, and KIIs and IDIs in each site confirmed that mobile phones had become common in the previous three years. All the older adolescents we interviewed had personal mobile phones; in Ilam, a large majority of young adolescents also had mobile phones.

Regarding the impact of mobile phones, there were mixed reactions. The majority of adults thought adolescents were wasting their time and money as, according to them, they use the phones for 'unnecessary and unhealthy

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purposes' such as watching films, chatting and sometimes even sex work. As we have seen, people (mostly in Ilam) fear that girls going to study in urban areas will be trapped by pimps or brokers using mobile phones. Adolescents themselves also reflected that mobile phones increased the occurrence of love affairs and eloping, adding that mobile phones meant they did not know about their friends' love affairs and so could not protect them if they were being cheated.

However, despite these potentially negative consequences, or fear of others, we found that mobile phones have generally allowed adolescents to become more connected to their support system. Thus, for instance, while in the past marriage often meant the loss of the support system/network at the girl's maternal home, mobile phones have helped them stay connected and helped girls solve their daily problems after marriage.

The second most important technological innovation is the mill for grinding rice, wheat and maize. Life histories with older women showed that a large amount of time and energy used to be spent removing husks from rice and grinding maize and wheat for food – and this was exclusively women's work. The mills have saved women from this hard work and given them time for other activities. However, in rural areas of Doti, women were suspicious of and dissatisfied with the miller. They feared that, if they took grains to the mill, the miller would hide part of the flour in the machine and thus steal the flour from them. As such, they do not use the grinding mills and adolescent girls still have to spend a great deal of time husking paddy and grinding millet. Additionally, and linked to this, availability of services and infrastructure such as electricity, roads and means of transport has made life easier for girls and women and given them time to invest in self-development, such as through education and extracurricular activities. These new technologies have made adolescent girls happier and more connected than their grandmothers, and they also have broader vision and confidence to use them and indeed other technologies that may arrive in their communities.

To briefly summarise this section, participation of girls in schools (the main location where participation might be expected) is limited. While girls in Ilam have more of a voice in Ilam, and more educated and older girls tend to be listened to more, along with married girls living alone with their husband, generally girls have little voice both within the household and in the community. Even when there are NGOs present working to support adolescent girls, this does not really increase their broader participation within the community. Nevertheless, technological innovations, particularly mobile phones, have brought remarkable changes in the form of increased connectedness, happiness and confidence for adolescent girls.

## 7 Conclusion and potential policy and research implications

### 7.1 Conclusions

While looking at the capabilities of adolescent girls and young women, we cannot ignore the obvious change that has come in a short span of time; that is, in the past 50 years or so, the lives and livelihoods of adolescent girls and young women have changed radically, and mostly for the better. Several factors have brought about this change, including advancements in technology, the Maoist conflict, forces of globalisation and both governmental and non-governmental programmes and policies. Changes were seen in all domains in all sectors. However, there still exist differences between girls in Ilam and Doti, as Table 12 shows. And while there has been progress in each domain, a great deal remains to be done in order to achieve gender justice in Nepal.

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## Differences between girls in Ilam and girls in Doti

Girls in Ilam ...	Girls in Doti ...
Can continue education without having to drop out owing to marriage. They can go to college, which requires them to leave their house and stay in urban areas, either renting or with local guardians.	Fear having to discontinue education owing to marriage. Cannot go to college if it requires them to leave their house or stay elsewhere.
Think they can earn while studying and many of them do so. So they do not necessarily have to depend on their parents for pocket money or to fulfil small wishes including buying dresses they like or educational materials like paper and pens.	Do not have the concept of earning while studying, so have to depend on parents for everything.
Are more mobile: parents are cautious about them coming in late in the evening but there is no restriction on particular places.	Have very restricted mobility: do not go to certain places such as nearby shops in the village that are places that boys hang out.
Do not have much restriction, such as on food, and can stay in their own house during menstruation.	Have restrictions on food and have to stay in segregated places alone or with other girls who are menstruating.
Are personally more brave and critically reflect and challenge traditional norms that discriminate against women and girls.	Are less confident and meek and, though they know norms are discriminatory, tend to accept them and fear challenging them because they feel it will dishonour the family name.

In education, Nepal has achieved its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of gender parity in enrolment of girl children at primary education. Parents are aware of the value of education and enrolment in school, and quality of education has improved significantly, even in rural areas. We found that, even in rural areas, schools are increasingly upgrading their standards in terms of grade (e.g. from lower-secondary to higher-secondary) as well as quality of education (e.g. most schools in rural areas of Doti run classes up to Grade 12 now). This means that, while distance used to be a barrier to girls, they now have greater opportunity to continue their education. Similarly, we found that, while there used to be a great difference between government-run medium schools and privately run English medium schools, efforts made largely by the community and teachers mean government schools are now providing English medium education at a much lower cost. This means English-based education is becoming available to more people. Generally, there has been increasing realisation of the value of educating female children and, as such, many of the gender barriers to receiving this education have diminished. Career and education are increasingly becoming priorities, and this is particularly evident when considering the life histories of older women, whose daily lives and livelihoods were restricted to household work, vastly different to those of girls of today, many of whom aspire to higher education, employment and careers.

However, many challenges remain. There is a large gender gap in adolescent girls' ability to continue education. Expected household work responsibilities were found to render girls unable to go to school; this added responsibility of care and management inside the house leads to dropout of more adolescent girls than boys. Distance remains a barrier, not for enrolment in primary school, as there are primary schools in each community, but for higher education – mostly post-secondary education, as such institutions are not so abundant in the communities. Early marriage and related childbirth still have more of an impact on girls than on boys. And while marriage is slowly phasing out as a barrier, childbirth will likely continue to stop girls continuing their education.

In employment, positive changes have been seen in terms of opening up of wages and access to employment opportunities for young women. However, employment opportunities that require long distance travel or staying away from home are still less possible for girls. On the one hand, existing restrictions on mobility and migration have kept girls from venturing out for employment, thus narrowing their chances of a better job environment; on the other hand, when mobility is not restricted and girls are allowed to go out to work alone, their safety has been compromised.

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In the physical domain, positive changes have been felt in accessing both health services and nurture and care. Our respondents did not refer to son bias and bias in care and nurture, which have thus arguably reduced. There are fewer childbirths and larger gaps between children, and the age at which a woman gives birth has increased. This has helped postpone the financial, physical and psychological burden of child care and motherhood, which used to land on girls at as early as 13 years of age. However, although this is very different from the burden of motherhood, girls still care for younger siblings in their natal families.

Support networks have extended greatly: now peers from both schools and faraway neighbourhoods are important for girls' emotional wellbeing and personal growth; life histories with older women showed such networks were more limited in the past. This has been facilitated by increased connectivity and – critically – mobile phones.

Spousal relationships also appear to have become more interactive, largely because of the diminishing age gap (which used to be as much as 30 years) between husbands and wives. Age gaps used to lead to unequal power relations in decision making and authority, and differences in knowledge and thinking, among other things. As such, conjugal life did not promote equality, and the interaction between men and women was more autocratic. With the age gap diminishing, positive changes and increased equity in terms of authority and decision-making power are being seen. Our analysis of the life histories of older women and adolescent girls shows that early marriage meant responsibilities used to start very early for women and, because husbands were much older in Brahmin and Chhetri families, they died much earlier. Since widow marriage is not common, all household responsibilities then had to be borne by the women until any son grew up. If there was no son it was even more difficult, as it was expected that daughters would be married off early. The decrease in age gap between spouses means this situation has improved significantly. Meanwhile, communications between parents and adolescent girls are also opening up.

In the psychosocial domain, awareness in terms of issues around rights, class, caste, age, ethnicity and gender has increased. Social norms around harmful practices that were mostly detrimental to women have reduced to some extent. However, social norms still remain highly gendered, and there have been only a few changes in the ability of girls to deal with them. As such, much of this awareness raising has not yet been internalised, and inequitable gendered norms around expected behaviours and attitudes persist.

Adolescent girls still do not have access to political space. Associations for adolescent girls and young women are few compared with those for adolescent boys. For example, when there are clubs, boys participate more in sport activities. Also, in Doti, boys are freer to hang around and make friends, while mobility is restricted for girls. In Ilam, though, there is less restriction on girls, although girls were not found to be hanging out in public spaces; rather, they spend their time watching television at home or gardening and cleaning the house. Meanwhile, marriage does not change boys' friendship networks, while girls have to move from their parental house into a new location, meaning previous associations and social networks with friends are broken. This was the case for all ethnic groups in the study sites. However, women are more aware of discrimination and rights and are able to assert their rights in certain sectors, like education. However, interventions focused on raising the capability of adolescents in the political domain are still few when compared with other domains like education and health. For example, there are many government and non-government programmes on health and education, but no programme to help adolescent girls and boys improve their political capability.

## **7.2 Policy recommendations**

As part of the fieldwork, a set of questions was part of all the instruments (KIIs, IDIs, FGDs, community and institutional mapping) related to going forward, particularly for adolescent girls: what is the most important in terms of both programmes and policy? Below, we present our findings according to the highest number of responses for each issue.

**Table 12: Most favoured policy responses**

Policy response
Interventions in education and careers: Provision of scholarships, career counselling, bridge courses (short courses in between two grades, especially after Grade 10 and before joining college, which help students prepare themselves for the upper grades), access to skills training including English language, computers and dance
Interventions in self-employment: Training, guidance and counselling in employment options and opportunities and training on tailoring, being beauticians, cooking, mobile mechanics, business management and agriculture, access to microcredit to run own business
Interventions in personal development: Dealing with life challenges, managing changing relationships and responsibilities, sports, sports materials, adolescent clubs for saving, social activities, leadership, public library
Interventions in safety and parent–adolescent interaction: Programmes to increase awareness for parents and adolescents on GBV, traffic rules, drug use, law and justice, personal rights
Access to health information, psychosocial counselling on how to handle relationships with the opposite sex and with in-laws after marriage

### 7.2.1 Five main worries

When devising policy responses for adolescent girls, it is important to understand their main worries or concerns. Again, the field instruments asked a set of questions around these issues. We present below our findings, which were different for school-going girls and out-of-school girls.

**Table 13: Five main worries among in-school and out-of-school adolescent girls**

For in-school adolescent girls	For out-of-school adolescent girls
Future: Employment opportunity	Future: Not getting education, employment opportunities
Education and results	Workload
Marriage and would-be family-in-law (Doti) Parent' economic condition: Poverty (Ilam)	Marriage and would-be family-in-law
Workload	Parents' economic condition: Poverty
Family and friends relationships	Fighting between parents

### 7.2.2 Five main wishes/aspirations for future

To understand their future aspirations and psycho-emotional wellbeing, we tried to look at what girls aspired to in future. This is again important in in devising policy and programmes for them. We present here our findings, which were different for school-going girls and those who were out of school.

**Table 14: Five main wishes and aspirations among in-school and out-of-school adolescent girls**

For in-school adolescent girls	For out-of-school adolescent girls
To get a higher education	Educational opportunities for out-of-school people and English language
Good jobs (teacher/nurse)	Self employed through vocational training
Society without caste and gender discrimination	Club for saving money, providing information services and learning new skills
Adults understanding and respecting adolescents' behaviour and opinions	Adults understanding and respect adolescents' behaviour and opinions

Our findings from the field suggests gender injustice occurs simultaneously across many domains, and thus there is a need for a range of interventions, programmes and policies that address the root causes of these injustices, which are mostly related to discriminatory social norms. As our findings show, since there are large differences between sites depending on caste, class, ethnicity and rural/urban situation, any programmes need to be targeted to specific adolescents. Furthermore, because of the crucial role parents and other adults play in the lives of adolescents, interventions also need to target these actors. As such, there is no magic bullet, and it will take ongoing nuanced and carefully thought-through programmes and policy work before existing beliefs, norms and values in society towards adolescent girls are at par with those related to adolescent boys.

Tables 13, 14 and 15 summarise adolescent girls' desired policy responses, worries and concerns and wishes and aspirations. Based on these, we present below specific programmes that could help address their immediate needs:

1. An educational package that provides English language courses, courses on how to look for scholarships and counselling on a range of opportunities and subjects available for study when girls pass out of school;
2. Skills development for out-of-school adolescents, including programmes on managing a business and entrepreneurship, vocational training on entrepreneurship and computer and accountancy skills training;
3. Life and relationship management skills: programmes on managing new relationships and responsibilities that come with adolescence, and effective communication and interaction with adults.

In addition, we propose that psychosocial elements be crosscutting issues for enhancing the capability of girls across all domains. Such elements tend to be missing in current government and non-governmental policy and programming. While it is likely that many programmes have an indirect impact on these issues, a specific focus on psychosocial issues would clearly be beneficial to adolescent girls. For example, the government and the international community are attempting to increase the literacy rate among girls, but without understanding the underlying reasons why parents do not want to send girl children to school, these programmes cannot address the root cause of low literacy among girls. A study that focuses on psychosocial issues would be an important way of informing development programmes that work towards empowering women and girls.

Nepal is in a post-conflict transformation phase. This is a critical time to address its past shortcomings, and gender justice is one crucial aspect of this. Although issues related to female children and women are beginning to be discussed, those pertaining specifically to adolescent girls remain largely ignored. Thus, adolescents often remain a missing population in the development vision. A focus on adolescent girls and gender justice is critical if the country is to meet its development goals and also ensure the wellbeing of its population.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: List of respondents (names in short abbreviations for anonymity)

### Number of Community Mappings:

1. 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
2. 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
3. 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
4. 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam

(Note: Name of the respondents has been used in short form.)

### Respondents for In-Depth Interview:

1. ZP, older ado girl, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Jamuna, Illam
2. PLS, married youth woman, out of school, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
3. MR, older woman, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, Jamuna, Illam
4. YS, younger ado girl, out of school, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
5. PR, older ado girl, out of school, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
6. SK, older ado girl, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Jamuna, Illam
7. MR, older ado boy, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
8. BD, older ado girl, out of school, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
9. SN, older ado boy, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
10. RA, married ado girl, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
11. AS, older ado boy, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
12. SR, older ado girl, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
13. BB, married older ado girl, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
14. KG, older ado girl, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
15. NN, older ado boy, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
16. DK, older woman, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
17. SK, younger ado girl, out of school, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
18. NJ, married older ado girl, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
19. SB, older ado girl, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
20. SK, older ado girl, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
21. SN, younger ado girl, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
22. BR, older ado girl, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
23. BDM, married youth, out of school, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
24. KP, married, older ado girl, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
25. RB, older ado boy, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
26. YR, older ado boy, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
27. CR, younger ado girl, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
28. LJ, older ado girl, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
29. NB, older ado boy, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
30. RK, older ado boy, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
31. SS, older ado girl, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
32. KB, married, older ado girl, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
33. PB, older woman, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti

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### **Respondents for Key Informants Interview:**

1. KKA, female police officer, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
2. TND, public health officer, DHOS, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
3. PPP, NGO representative, Mahila Jagaran, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
4. AY, female youth volunteer, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
5. IP, district education officer, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
6. KS, local Maoist leader, 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Illam
7. UG and BB, media persons, 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Illam
8. MB and RP, social mobilizers, 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Illam
9. MB, female media person, 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Illam
10. GD, youth volunteer, 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Illam
11. PA, NGO representative, PAG, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
12. KS, Supervisor, FPAN, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
13. P head teacher, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
14. TKL, female teacher, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
15. HG, female local leader, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Illam
16. PS, warden, government girl's hostel, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Illam
17. US, local employer, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
18. PR, NGO representative, Sungava, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Illam
19. RB Representative, district sport officer, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Illam
20. DDK, FCHV, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Illam
21. DG and SG, local youth leaders, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Jamuna, Illam
22. CBR, head master of local school, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, Jamuna, Illam
23. MBK, head master of local school, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
24. HS, female youth volunteer, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
25. KB, NGO representative, CDC, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
26. JDP, vice principal, Seti Technical School, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
27. SMG, women development officer, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
28. MR, head master, community school, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
29. SK, information officer, DDC, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
30. MA, safe house coordinator, MWCS, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
31. HB, FCHV, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
32. BT, local employer, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
33. DO, UML district vice president, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti

### **Respondents for Intra Household Case Study:**

1. LR, older ado girl, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
2. KB, married older ado girl, out of school, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
3. RB, older ado girl, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> April, Jamuna, Illam
4. MD, older ado girl, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam

### **Respondents for Life History and Generational Pairing:**

1. BG, older women, indigenous, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
2. KDK, older women, Brahmin, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Jamuna, Illam
3. NB, older ado girl, Brahmin, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
4. SK, mother of NB, older woman, Brahmin, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
5. DMD, older woman, Brahmin 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
6. PBK, older women, Dalit, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
7. KBK, married ado girl, Dalit, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
8. HDR, older woman, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Doti
9. DJ, older ado girl, Brahmin, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
10. DBK, older woman, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
11. CB, youth, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti

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12. MBK and CKK, two older women, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
  13. PB and R B, and DB,-grandmother, mother and older adol girl 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, Jamuna,Illam
  14. PBK, older woman, Dalit, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
  15. IR and KR, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
  16. BK, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti

**Respondents for FGD:**

1. Older ado girl, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Rajpur, Doti
2. Younger ado girl, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Rajpur Doti
3. Younger ado boy, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, Silgadi, Doti
4. Older women, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
5. Older ado girl, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Ranagaon, Doti
6. Younger mixed, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
7. Older ado girl, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
8. Older women, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Jamuna, Illam
9. Older ado boy, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
10. Younger ado girl, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
11. Youth boys, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, Barbote, Illam
12. Older ado girl, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam
13. Older women, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Barbote, Illam

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## **Annex 2: Focus group discussion research instruments**

2 parts – body mapping general discussion

### **Body mapping**

The body mapping tool was used to explore how and their experiences, views and feelings on a particular issue.

We got participants to draw a picture of an adolescent girl; divide into two halves – vulnerabilities/ challenges on left; solutions/ coping responses/ capabilities on the right.

*Body part probes were as follows:*

**Arms and hands:** What kinds of activities are young people involved in? (leisure, work within the home, external work, education, etc.). Are there things you would like to be doing but can't? If so, what are these and what are the barriers?

**Legs and feet:** Are there any restrictions on adolescent mobility and time use? For example, for work, study or income generation? Is this the same for boys and girls?

**Head:** What are the main things you think about? How do you learn and from whom? Do you think there are differences in this regard between boys and girls?

**Eyes:** How do adults view adolescents? Are there differences in thinking vis-à-vis males vs females? How have these perceptions affected your own views of the world?

**Ears:** How do community members listen to young people; or young people listen to adults?

**Mouth:** How do adults communicate with young people and/or the way young people communicate with one another?

**Main body:** What particular health issues are relevant to adolescents? Is there adequate protection from different forms of abuse or exploitation?

**Heart:** What are some of the feelings that young people have to deal with? Who do you get support from in times of need? Mental/ emotional health?

Probes were based on: gender age, ethnicity geography, socio-economic background, socio-political context, living context (for example, internal displacement from homes and communities); positive, as well as negative impacts.

### **Follow up discussion questions**

How do you define adolescence? What is unique about adolescence compared to childhood or adulthood?

What do adolescents in this community value and why?

What are the challenges for achieving this understanding of wellbeing/ social justice? What are the gender dimensions? How have these changed over time and why?

What are the key coping strategies and sources of resilience? (Migration, transactional sex, drug use/alcohol, violence, religious guidance etc.). Are there gender differences?

What are the key opportunities for overcoming these vulnerabilities?

### **Policy Response**

Asking girls and boys to rank top 5 key responses and 2 that would not work in this context and why:

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Hints for Policy Response;

Safe spaces for girls

Clubs – providing leisure activities, information services, mentors

Information stalls at market places

Access to micro-credit

Night or weekend classes for school dropouts

More tailored vocational training

Extra-school language classes

Bilingual teachers/ service providers

Mobile phone-based information

Tv or radio programmes with relevant information re changing gender roles

Community-based crèches to take care of younger siblings to free up girls' time

Mobile reproductive health clinics

School-based counsellors/NGO-based counsellors

Guidance counselling re employment options and opportunities

Helplines – e.g. for gender-based violence, marriage by capture

**5 Main worries,**

**5 Aspirations and wishes**

### Annex 3: Case Study

Tools to use	Entry point for talking about the following themes	Sub-themes to probe	With whom
1. House/ village mobility diagram	Household chores; Livelihoods; Permission to move about; Safety	Differences between boys and girls Differences between married and unmarried girls  Safety esp. vis-à-vis risk of violence/ sexual violence/ trafficking	Girl Brother
2. Family drawing	Intra-household decision-making power Relative work load Domestic violence	Key decision-maker? Who makes what decisions especially about children? Are there different expectations of boys vs girls? Who works the hardest and why? Tensions between parents; parents and children? What happens? Why? How do you cope?	Girl Mother
3. Time use diary	Education  Leisure activities	School experience Interest in content? Relationships with teachers? (how are they treated?) Relationships with other students? (friends; but also problems, bullying) Free time? What do they do? What do they wish they could do? (TV, reading, spending time with friends, clubs, sport)	Girl
4. Bubble diagram	Social capital;  Emotional wellbeing;  Role models; Access to communication	Key sources of support/ advice People in authority they would feel comfortable seeking support from? Relationship between mother and daughter – what can/can't they talk about? Why? Relationships with friends? What can/can't they talk about? Why? Who else can they confide in? Is this adequate? Is there anyone they particularly admire/ look up to as guidance for their future life? How do they communicate with key people in their lives (identified in diagram)	Girl
5. 5 main worries/ concerns	Future employment / vocational training / migration;  Access to justice;  Reproductive/ sexual health;  Forming adult relationships	Hopes and concerns about employment Access to vocational training Thoughts on/ opportunities for migration If a victim of a crime (e.g. sexual violence or domestic violence) what would you do? Is there someone in authority or an organization you would feel confident to approach? Understanding of reproductive/ sexual health, including menstruation, family planning, HIV, STDs; source of information/ advice Hopes and fears for finding and living with a marriage partner (including early marriage, marriage by kidnapping)	Girl Brother  Mother but about her daughter  Father but about his daughter

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## Annex 4: Key informant interview

### Impact of social institutions on adolescent girls capabilities

The following guide for key informant interviews is a general set of questions for the different types of key informants to be interviewed. Proposed interviewees:

Capability Domain	Key Informant
All Domains	Programme implementers Local government officials in health and education planning Local/Regional Social welfare Officers NGO leaders Youth workers Local leaders Religious leaders Academic analysts Head teacher of local secondary school Health workers (sexual and reproductive health) Leaders of youth-led groups and organisations Women's group leaders
Specific focus areas KIs	
Educational	Headteacher of local secondary school Local Education Officer
Economic	Vocational training provider Local employer
Physical	Health workers (sexual and reproductive health)
Psycho-social	Leaders of social support NGOs Religious leaders Counsellors/Psychologists Social workers
Political	Leaders of youth-led groups and organisations Judiciary/legislators/community justice implementers

Prior to the interviews, a selection of questions will be chosen (and perhaps additional specific questions added) that correspond to the individual to be interviewed.

#### 1. Historical time-line/ trend : to find out changes over time

\*\* differences between girls vs boys

\*\* differences among ethnic minority vs mixed communes

#### 2. Policy Response(Hints as in Annex 2)

Checklist and Possible Questions for Key Informant Interviews.

Indicators	Questions	Capability
Employment/ Economic Activities		
Young people's relationship with employment	<p>At what age do young people start working in paid employment in this community? Are there gender differences?</p> <p>What kinds of roles do young people undertake in paid employment? Are there gender differences? Are there expectations as to the kinds of roles that girls and boys should undertake?</p> <p>Do young people work in unpaid roles within this community? Are there gender differences?</p> <p>Are there differences in wages between young women and young men?</p> <p>Do you believe there is a problem with youth unemployment in this community / how does this relate to youth unemployment at the national level? Is this a recent or long-term problem?</p> <p>What has been the government's response to the problem of youth unemployment? Has there been a different response to the situation of young women and men? Has this response been effective? In what ways?</p> <p>Are there NGO/community based organizations/ private businesses supporting youth employment? Who are programmes targeted to? How do they aim to help young people?</p>	Economic
<p>Young people working without contracts</p> <p>Young people working extended hours</p> <p>Young people working in dangerous conditions</p> <p>Young people experiencing greater pressure/ harshness from employers</p> <p>Perceptions of job insecurity</p> <p>Sexual harassment at work</p>	<p>What kinds of work do young people do? Are there gender differences?</p> <p>What are some of the challenges to gaining access to employment? Both informal and formal? For girls, and for boys?</p> <p>What are some of the work-related risks young people face in the country or community (such as informality, long hours without compensation, dangerous conditions, harshness from employers, job insecurity)? Are there differences between boys and girls?</p> <p>Are there any public, NGO or private interventions in place to improve the conditions of working youth? When did these interventions start? Are there differences between boys and girls?</p> <p>Is there any evidence of cases of sexual harassment for young women at work? Has it changed in the past two years?</p>	Economic
<p>Main geographical sources &amp; destination areas of young migrants</p> <p>Migrant youth unable to access key services</p>	<p>Do youth migrate in this community/country/district? Gender/age difference? Where do youth migrate from and to?</p> <p>What are the main reasons for youth migration? Gender differences?</p> <p>Are young migrants able to access key services in the same way as local youth? (for example, health, education, water/ sanitation, housing, utilities, government support or benefits)?</p> <p>Where/how do young migrants access social networks and support?</p> <p>What challenges do youth migrants face? Are there gender differences, age differences?</p>	Economic
<p>Limitations on young caregivers economic independence and education</p>	<p>What responsibilities do young people hold for household and care work? E.g. Caring for dependents including young children, those with chronic illness and the elderly – and household tasks such as collecting water/firewood, cleaning etc. Are there gender differences or age differences?</p> <p>For those who do have care work/household responsibilities do you think that combining these with work responsibilities poses a particular challenge to young people?</p> <p>Do you think that there are gendered differences?</p> <p>If so, how does it affect their capacity to continue working and/or going to school?</p>	Economic

Young people accessing and attending education	<p>Is education a priority for young people in this community? Is there a difference between young women and men?</p> <p>Do the importance people in this community place on participating in formal education differ for young men and young women?</p> <p>What are the main reasons for adolescents not attending school, or dropping out of school early?</p> <p>Are there any programmes to help young people stay at secondary school/ college?</p> <p>Are they run by the government or by NGOs?</p> <p>Are there differences between experiences in local vs boarding schools?</p>	Education
Gendered norms in the learning environment	<p>Are there any differences between the education that girls and boys receive?</p> <p>Do teachers treat young men and women differently within the classroom? If so, why do you think this is?</p> <p>Do teachers in this community receive any training, or resources on understanding gender differences in teaching? From where? If so, what has been the effect/ response?</p>	Education
Opportunities to learn skills valued in labour market – eg English	<p>Have any measures been taken to increase the availability of technical training, particularly including areas that can increase young people's employability? If so, what have been these measures? Are they government, NGO or private sector led?</p> <p>Are there different programmes for young men and young women? If so, what is the rationale for this?</p>	Education
<b>Health</b>		
Young people's access to and the youth-friendliness of health services	<p>There is a gap in most health systems between health care for under six (Vietnam specific) and then healthcare for adults. Are providers aware of this gap? Are they trying to address it?</p> <p>Reproductive health? Safe sex? Family planning? Abortion?</p> <p>Are they adequately tailored towards adolescences? If so, how?</p>	Health
<b>Psycho-social wellbeing</b>		
Psycho-social / emotional impact of different wellbeing issues	<p>Are you aware of any emotional/psycho-social wellbeing issues within this community/nationally? Such as unemployment, lack of opportunities, limited schooling, isolation and lack of friendship - causing stress, depression, anxiety, fear etc.</p> <p>Has the consumption of drugs / alcohol by young people ever been a problem in the community? Are there differences between girls and boys? Why do you think these changes are happening?</p> <p>Are there any mental health services? For, example, counseling services provided by government or NGOs to youth?</p>	Psycho-social
<b>Physical security</b>		
Vulnerability of young people to different crimes	<p>Is violence, crimes, etc. an issue in this community? Are there differences in the gender of perpetrators and victims? Which kinds of crime?</p> <p>Are measures being put in place by government or NGOs to reduce the incidence of violence? If so, are any of these measures focused specifically on youth? What are they? Are these measures gender-sensitive?</p>	Physical
Treatment of suspects by police/ justice system	<p>Is there a specific treatment for youth offenders? Are there different justice systems, how do they work? Do they take gender differences into account?</p> <p>Are young people aware of their relationship with the justice system and their rights?</p>	Physical

Intra-household violence Perceptions of domestic violence	<p>What is the prevalence of domestic violence in this community/nationally?          What kinds of relationship is this most prevalent? Between couples? Between generations?          In what kind of households is violence prevalent? E.g. Older couples, younger couples, early marriage          If domestic violence is perceived to be present, are there any measures being taken to reduce its incidence?          Is domestic violence viewed as a crime justiciable by the state?</p>	Physical
Intra-household violence Perceptions of domestic violence	<p>What is the prevalence of domestic violence in this community/nationally?          What kinds of relationship is this most prevalent? Between couples? Between generations?          In what kind of households is violence prevalent? E.g. Older couples, younger couples, early marriage          If domestic violence is perceived to be present, are there any measures being taken to reduce its incidence?          Is domestic violence viewed as a crime justiciable by the state?</p>	Physical
Participation and social connectedness		
Young people involved in local decision-making structures	<p>Are there opportunities for young people to participate in local decision making?          Have the voices of young people been heard in discussing ways to promote social change in any specific goal areas? E.g. economic recovery, HIV/AIDS programming, child friendly education services? Has the data been disaggregated by gender?          If so, through what mechanisms?</p>	All
Social networks	<p>Are there many groups or club (at school, in the community) for young people to participate in? Are there differences between girls and boys? If so, when, where, what? Why do you think young people participate in these groups?</p>	All
Use of phones (landline or mobile) Use of internet	<p>Are there any actions being taken to promote the use of information technology by young people? Is there a gender gap?          If so, what is the purpose of this?</p>	All
Policy responses		
Programming impacting young people	<p>What youth programmes are in place (by government or NGOs?) (mention all, across sectors)          What is the youth population targeted by these programmes? (all youth / vulnerable youth / females / males)          How effective have these programmes been? (Impacts?)          Are there any plans for future programming?</p>	All

## Annex 5: Life history

**Tools:** Life history tools, Policy response, 5 main worries, 5 wishes, and for adolescents where they see themselves in 5 years.

### Notes for things to be careful about:

- Do not ask about happy and sad event- just ask about events (note: probe around the domains)
- Generational Pairing: Take respondents separately and take older adolescents
- In life history with older women, focus on age group above 50 below 70 yrs of age. Probe on changes (technological and other changes) they experience and how it affects them and how they feel it has affected younger generation. Probe around gender differences in their time and their reflection of gender differences now.
- Give the respondents some time to reflect at beginning, use examples, etc to make people understand the tool
- Note down details in the chart paper.

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## The impact of social institutions on adolescent girls' capabilities

### Notes for Preparation:

- Once oral consent is taken, the Life History will be recorded and then translated and transcribed verbatim
- Additional notes, observations, will be noted by the researcher
- A sheet of paper and pens need to be brought to the interview

Please be prepared that in some cases a LH will not work so if after around 10 minutes the researcher feels that it is not working either they should bring the interview to an end politely, or convert the conversation into an IDI. This may be especially the case with youth who have shorter histories to be reflected on and probably less experience at articulating their life story. Note working with older people can also take time – needs to be built in as stories and memories are often important sources of information – may be same for persons with disabilities

Please also be prepared that people who have suffered various tragedies may not want to speak in any detail about these and researchers need to be sensitive as to whether they should continue the discussion, give the person the option for a short break, or whether being a sympathetic ear is in fact of value.

### Notes for taking Life history

Introduce the project and its purpose.

Explain the objective of the life history interview and its format: you want the person to tell us about their life, and you will prompt them with some questions related to special areas of interest for the research. The interview will take from 60 to 90 minutes. Reiterate that all comments will remain confidential. The key point of inquiry is understanding change over time.

1. First, collect **basic background information**(age, place of birth, living arrangements, position in the household)

Interviewer then draws key events on a timeline from birth, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, adulthood, older age, and depict positive events above the line and negative events below the line.

2. Then, ask the following questions about the **individual's recent past**

- Can you tell us about any major life events that have happened over the past three to five years?
- Can you tell about any particularly happy moments or milestones within this three to five year period?
  - Do you feel in control of these happy events?
  - What decisions did you make building up to these events?

(For example, education, economic opportunities, family events such as marriage, childbirth, social interactions)

- Can you tell us about any difficulties / challenges that have happened in your life over the past five years?

(For example, with regard to getting enough money, employment or work opportunities, education, health, social interactions (e.g. staying in touch with, being able to communicate with others), security, participation in the community)

- What can you tell us about the cause of these challenges? Can you explain why you think you have faced these challenges?
- Have you / your family tried to overcome these challenges? What strategies have you used? How well have these strategies worked? How important have your family resources / networks been in assisting you overcome challenges? Have they changed, deteriorated, improved, etc. over time, then, now?
- How do you think your options / strategies have been similar or different to those from adults?
- How do you think your options / strategies have been similar or different from girls/boys of the same age?
- In particular, have there been any government programmes or services that have helped you overcome these challenges? What about any programmes or services provided by NGOs?
- Who else has helped you overcome problems? (family, relatives, peer group, etc)

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### **3. Probe about the individual's longer past**

- Thinking back to your life since you were a child until now, can you tell us what have been the key events (positive and negative) that have marked your life? This includes thinking about things that have happened to you that have influenced the type of choices you have made or the alternatives you have had since you were a child until now as a young person?
  - at individual level (e.g. schooling, work, health, engaging in early sexual activity, deciding to get married/ have child (if relevant))
  - household level (e.g. livelihood opportunities; available household resources; decisions in the household to spend on schooling, your health or that of other members; changes in the family (birth, death, marriage, divorce etc)
  - community level (e.g. participation in community activities or discrimination/exclusion from community activities; participation or exclusion from participating in community decision making, situations of security / violence)

### **4. Probe about the individual's future plans**

- Given your present circumstances what are your plans in the next one or two years? What about your longer term plans?
- Have these plans changed with respect to the plans you had five years ago?
- Do you know if there are any youth programs in the community? (to promote employment opportunities, education, health, participation, etc) Have you ever made use of any of these? If so, how do you think that youth programs in this community can be improved to better meet your needs?

#### **5. 5 main worries**

#### **6. 5 main wishes**

#### **7. 5 policy response**

### **5. Generational pairing**

Focus on 10-19 years only

Pick two 18 yr olds; and their mothers and grandmothers. Aim to select girls of positive deviance/ good news stories.

Undertake each interview separately (due to sensitivities/ greater likelihood of being frank in absence of parents) but ensure that the three interviews are undertaken by the same researcher.

Ask to reflect on key capability dimensions and what made a difference? Was their experience gendered? If so, what made them realise these gender differences (e.g. restrictions on mobility, dress code, different levels of hh chores, etc.).

- Economic opportunities
- Education experience
- Relationships within the family
- Observations about parents' interactions
- Social connect-ness
- Cultural/ decision-making
- Reproductive / health
- Bodies
- Time use
- Physical security
- Mental health

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## Annex 6: In depth interview with adolescent girls and boys

### Notes for carrying out IDI

1. Explain the purpose of the research and what you will be using your answers for
2. Explain you will ask the interviewee questions and they can respond what they think and what they know (not only yes or no answers); they can also reply that they don't know when it is the case

**Basic demographic information: gender, age, ethnicity, religion, type of respondent, community name, date, etc.**

### Probes throughout

- Gender differences
- Ethnic minority or caste differences
- Traditional institutions and cultural norms
- Power dynamics within households, peers, communities

Probes: why, what, where, how, when, how often...

- Keep the focus of the questions on the interviewee, their life and reality as opposed to other adolescent girls as this will be covered in the FGDs
- Probing sentences:
  - Tell me more about it...
  - What do you mean by that ...
  - Can you explain better / more ....
  - Give me examples...
  - How is that / how /what do you mean....

### Questioning matrix

- The coloured columns on the right hand side reflect the capability domains that each question relates to. One question may produce responses relevant to one, or all five capability domains.
- The scoring of '1' in each column is simply to enable counting of numbers of questions asked per domain
- The 'Time' column, shows where questions engage with trying to understand 'change over time'

### Additional participatory instruments for IDIs

#### 1. *Your family*

Who is in your family? (draw stick figures to represent each key family member) Who has the most influence over decisions about your life in the family (rank the most important members 1-4)? Who does what type of activities in your family? Who works the hardest? (rank from most important to least important – a, b, c, d....)

#### Tools used:

- a. Family stick drawing
  - b.
- #### 2. *Main worries*

Rank the 5 most important using \*\*\*\*\*

For in-school adolescents	For out-of-school adolescents
Not enough leisure time	Not enough leisure time
Too much homework	Too many chores around the house, including taking care of siblings
Weak grades in school	Risk of early marriage/ captured/ kidnapped for marriage
Dropout of school	Feeling unsafe
Being scolded by teacher	Can't find a good job
Too many chores around the house, including taking care of siblings	No one to share problems with
Risk of early marriage/ captured/ kidnapped for marriage	Going hungry
Parents quarrelling	Not making enough income
Feeling unsafe	Parents/ husband (if married) quarrelling
Can't find a good job	Not knowing how to take care of infants/ children
No one to share problems with	
Going hungry	

### 3. Main 5 preferences (policy response)

Asking girls and boys to rank top 5 key responses and 2 that would not work in this context and why:

- Safe spaces for girls
- Clubs – providing leisure activities, information services, mentors
- Information stalls at market places
- Access to micro-credit
- Night or weekend classes for school dropouts
- More tailored vocational training
- Extra-school language classes
- Bilingual teachers/ service providers
- Mobile phone-based information
- Tv or radio programmes with relevant information re changing gender roles
- Community-based crèches to take care of younger siblings to free up girls' time
- Mobile reproductive health clinics
- School-based counsellors/ngo-based counsellors
- Guidance counselling re employment options and opportunities
- Helplines – e.g. for gender-based violence, marriage by capture

### 4. Main 5 aspirations in future- their wishes and what they see might happen in reality

5.

Notes:

- Select out of school women and girls: (probe around household helps/maids/ out of school adolescent and daughter- in -laws.
- If the girls/boys do not speak, end the interview courteously and select other respondents.
- Modify questions- compare when doing KII with boys and older women.

### 6. Social capital

- a. Who can you talk with? Get advice from? (draw bubble diagram about most important, and physically closest relationship)
  - i. Family, friends, teacher, mass organisation, community leader, health clinic, neighbour, relative

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7. 5 main wishes rank the top 5 with \*\*\*\*\*)

**For in-school adolescents**

Vocational training  
How to persuade my parents to avoid early marriage  
Menstruation relief  
How to solve a quarrel with my friends  
How to have a small family when I get older  
How to help my mother when she has a hard time with my father  
How to enter university  
How to cope with another student who is bullying me

**For out-of-school adolescents**

Vocational training  
How to persuade my parents to avoid early marriage  
Menstruation relief  
How to solve a quarrel with my friends  
How to have a small family when I get older  
How to help my mother when she has a hard time with my father  
How to earn more income  
How to deal with health problems

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**8. Role Models**

**9. Questions for interview**

**1. Family status and living arrangements**

- Are you single, married, divorced, widowed?
- Who do you live with (numbers of people in the household)? Who is the head of the household (age, gender and relationship to them)? Since when have you lived with them?
- How many siblings do you have? Younger? Older? Gender?
- **If a mother:** How many children do you have, number of other dependents (e.g. older family members, members living with a disability or illness)? How old were you when you had your first child?
- How old would you like to be/have liked to have been when you had your first child?
- Do all your children live with you? If no, where do they live, since when, why? Who is the primary care-giver in your household? (in terms of caring for others)

**2. Intra-household Decision-making**

- For what things do you have to ask permission? And from whom?
- Do you feel that you have a voice in decision-making within your household?
- If you don't feel you have a voice/decision making power in the household, why is this the case?
- If yes, what kinds of decisions can you make now? Money, asset/land ownership, health, education, labour, employment, time-use, marriage, expenditure, income?
- How is it different for male and female young people within your household?
- What are your main activities inside the household (household chores; child care)? How long does it take you to do these?
- Are these different from other members of your household?
- Who decides on who does what? Why?

**3. Education and vocation**

- Do you go to school/college? If yes, what school/college do you go to? What costs do you incur going to school? Who pays for you? If not in school, at what age did you leave? Please tell us why you left. If you never went to school, please explain why.
- What do you require to go to school? (uniform, books, bag, shoes, transport money, etc.) Who provides you with these items/supplies? Is it the same for girls/boys?
- How was the school/college selected? Why, by whom, etc.?...
- What do you like about your school?
- What do you not like about your school?
- Do your parents encourage your education/to go to school? If so, how? Do they encourage your siblings the same? If not, why not?
- If at school) Are you ever consulted at school / by teachers about your opinions (about the school, about your ideas, plans, home situation, concerns, etc.? ). Is it the same for your

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siblings?

Are you able to express your thoughts / concerns to teachers if you have any? If not, why do you think not?

- How are you treated at school? In the classroom, in the school yard, on the way to and from school? (comfortable, uncomfortable, under pressure, happy, etc.) By peers, by teachers...
- Is there anyone you can talk to when you have concerns at school? Do you have / would you have access to vocational training if you chose to continue learning after school? If so, what are the processes offered? Do you think they are useful? If not, would you do them anyway?
- If so, what are the courses offered? Do you think they are useful?
- Is there a cost for attending? If so, are you/your family able to pay for it?
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#### 4. **Leisure time**

- What types of leisure / recreational activities do you do? Extra-curricular; not linked to school – church, clubs, sports, bars, informal community, etc.
- Is it the same for your siblings? (gender and age differences)
- Have your leisure activities changed over time? If so how?
- Has the amount of time you spend on them changed over time? More or less leisure time...

#### 5. **Livelihood strategies**

- Do you have a source of income? how, where, when, how often?  
When did you start having a paid activity?  
Why did you start? (What is your family's economic situation like? How many meals do you have per day? Are there some hungry months? Have you ever felt hungry with nothing to eat?)
- Who else makes money in your household? How did you make the decision to do so? Who was involved in that decision?
- What do you do with the money you make? Save, give to someone, spend.. If you had more money for yourself what would you spend it on?  
(If interviewee does work)
- Do you feel safe at work?
- Is there anything that makes you feel very good or very bad at work?  
Have there been any specific changes/incidents at work that have caused this feeling?
- What difficulties/challenges, etc. do you face in meeting yours and your family's needs/securing a livelihood? When your livelihood is in difficulty/you face economic security what do you do?  
What are your coping strategies? (Economic / social – include issues around risky behaviours: commercial sex, substance abuse, others). How effective are these/each coping strategy (after each coping strategy ask how effective is it...)?

#### 6. **Migration**

- Have any of your friends migrated? What do you know about this experience? Why did they migrate?

#### 7. **Forming adult relationships (marriage, co-habitation, divorce) [for married girls only]**

- Are you in a relationship?
- At what age did you separate from your parents (either to marry, to go live on their own, to live with a partner)? Why?
- How did you feel about the age that you got married?
- How would your life have been different if you had not married?
- If you are not married, at what age would you like to marry? Why?
- Who decided when you should separate from your parents? How did you feel about that decision?
- How do you feel about the relationship you are in?

#### 8. **Reproductive and Sexual Health**

- Do you have any current health issues/concerns? How do you deal with them?
- Do you receive any reproductive health education at school? If so, what were you taught about? (family planning, menstruation, abortion etc.). Where else do you access health

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information/education, in particular reproductive health information or advice from? Probe: Family, religious leaders, local health services, radio, TV, mobile phone, leaflets, NGOs, husband/wife, peers, siblings, health extension workers, etc.?

- Where you satisfied with what you were taught, they way you were taught, etc.? Do you still have questions? Which?

*{When get to this stage say that is sensitive, reiterate that it is confidential, if they don't want to answer it's fine, etc. It would be useful for us to know. }*

- What did you feel when you first starting menstruating? What are your experiences with menstruation (including when at school – somewhere to dispose menstruation towels etc.)? What do you use when you menstruate? Where do you get it from? How did people react to you? Did it restrict your mobility?
- Do you use family planning methods? (pill, injectables, condoms, iuds). If so, which, where get from, how did you decide, what is your experience of using these methods? Who knows about this? How do people react to you if they know? What do you feel about using them?
- Sometimes girls Have you ever had an unwanted/unexpected pregnancy? How did you deal with it? If you had a termination/abortion, how, when, who helped you with it, what did you feel about it? Who else knew about it?
- What do you know about HIV/AIDS and STDs? From where did you get this information?

#### 9. **Violence**

- **For married girls:** In some households husbands beat their wives. Does this happen much in this village (e.g. people facing many difficulties..e.g. economic problems, educational problems? When does this type of violence tend to happen? Do women complain or just tolerate this situation? What about you?
- **For unmarried girls:** We know that sometimes girls face violence in their house or in school or the way to school? Do you know whether this happens in your village? What usually happens when this type of problem emerges? What about you? Have you ever faced any violence? Or Has anyone in the household/ school / community ever: (can range from physical (beating, hitting), psychological (insults; pressure; shouting, verbal abuse; prevented you from seeing friends, relatives, taking part in activities, etc; denying food, water, clothing), sexual (unwanted sexual contact), etc. violence - Prevented you from seeing friends/relatives/from leaving the house?
- What did you do about this? What sources of support, if any, could you access?
- Have you ever felt pressured in relation to a sexual experience? (Probe, expectation from husband, peer pressure, loneliness, transactional sex etc.)

#### 10. **Self-esteem and mental health**

- Adolescence is a difficult time – lots of changes – in your bodies, in the way you think etc. Do you ever feel sad, disappointed, upset, angry?? {link back to specific situation that they told us about earlier in the interview}. How do you cope when you face these difficulties? Who do you turn to and why?
- Do you have any worries about the future?
- What type of support do you receive and do you think it is adequate?
- Sometimes young people who are stressed or depressed find it useful to have counselling services, to talk to, or help from psychologists. Have you ever used services of this kind? Why/why not? Do you think the services were adequate?
- Have you ever been involved in taking drugs or consuming alcohol? If so what have been the reasons for this? (Probe, social activity, escaping reality, peer pressure, depression)?
- What were the effects on you when taking drugs/stimulants or alcohol? Are you aware of any services to support you if you have concerns about drug and alcohol-related activities/behaviour? If you have used these services, were they adequate?
- What types of responses / interventions do you think could help young girls like you?

#### 11. **Well-being and social connectedness**

- Do you have friends in this community? How often do you meet with them? What do you do? Where do you go? (e.g. doing chores
- such as fetching water, safe spaces)? Do you have to ask permission from someone to meet your friends, if so who? Have your interactions with friends changed over time? (as you became an adolescent) etc.

#### **Horizontal social capital**

- If you are in trouble, e.g. need support at school, financial support, feeling sad, etc., what do you do? (Where do you go? Who do you turn to? What kind of help do you receive (focus on wellbeing and relationships)? Has this changed as you entered adolescence?
- Are you a member of any group or
- club (at school, in your neighbourhood, youth groups)? If so, since when, where/which (social or political)? What do you do in the group? How many members are there? How do you become a member? How often do you meet? What benefits do you get from belonging to the group? If you're not a member of a group or club, why?

#### **Vertical social capital**

##### **Engagement in decision-making structures**

- Are there spaces for you to participate in community decision-making (including political)? (for example, discussing with assemblyman/woman or other members of the assembly; participation in town-council meetings or equivalent?
- If 18-19 yrs: Do you vote (if you are old enough/ elections of any type)? Why/why not? How do you decide?
- Are you aware of how to participate in the existing mechanisms / channels for civic participation?
- Have you ever participated? If so when, why, how? What happened?

#### **12. Access to communications**

- Who do you communicate with on a regular basis and how? Are there other people you would like to communicate with but are unable to, why?
- Do you have access to a mobile phone and use the internet? If no, would you like to have access to these types of communication technologies?
- Has your access to these communication technologies changed in the past five years?



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ISSN: 2052-7209

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