UN Women worked to mitigate violence against women and girls in three districts of Bajhang, Doti, and Kailali of far-west Nepal from 2012 to 2016 based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1325 and 1820 and Nepal government’s national action plan. This document is the result of Search for Common Ground’s research on violence in this area during the first and last year of the UN Women project “Strengthening Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Nepal (SIWPSAN): Towards Implementation of NAP on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820.”
Types of violence

**PHYSICAL:** Women talked about husbands beating them, marital rape, rape by members of the family while husbands were abroad working among other things. In 2012, 72% in Kailali said they suffered physically. In 2016, the figure fell to 52%.

**VERBAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL:** Obscene language formed 62% of the abuse in 2012 and increased to 73% in 2015. “Women do not consider this a form of violence,” a woman from Bajhang said.

**TRADITIONAL PRACTICES:** If dowry is considered inadequate, brides are sent out of the home, burned alive, attacked with acid, and victimized. 44% believed child marriage, chaupadi and superstitious beliefs result in violence.

**TANI BIHE AND POLYGAMY:** Kidnapping and forcing women and girls (married or not) into marriage was a part of Bajhang’s cultural practice. Polygamy was interpreted as a sign of better status by 70% of respondents at a FGD. Child marriage is prevalent: 9% said adolescent girls married before turning 14.

Causes of violence

46% identified **LACK OF EDUCATION** and awareness as the main cause of violence. The dalit community, behind in education and awareness, suffered more. 12% said it was important for women to be **PART OF DECISION-MAKING.** Women with access to property are believed to be respected. By 2016, 52% of female respondents had participated in some training.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** increased sex-related crimes against women and girls. Online pornography, including abusive material, impacted communities.

Families are **PATRIARCHAL** and women are not necessarily aware of women’s rights. In Kailali, only 7% of women felt they had taken influential decision-making roles.

35% saw **TRADITIONAL PRACTICES** as a reason for the violence. “We are taught to be submissive and obedient. Women are limited within the household and their movement restricted.”

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** have lead to violence against women and girls. Research finds that up to 50% domestic abuse perpetrators are intoxicated at the time of assault.

Impacts of violence

**PHYSICAL:** Beatings, torture, and other forms of violence have resulted in death, miscarriage, and other health problems. 72% of respondents in Kailali acknowledged physical abuse in their locality.

**VERBAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL:** In 2012 10% of respondents did not feel a sense of worth. 73% of respondents reported that the use of obscene language increased.

**SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL:** In Lamki, women said, “…revelation of violence can result in stigmatization.” Families work towards reconciliation even when criminal activities are involved. 30% in Doti found this to be a reason for violence.

30% believed **POVERTY** was a cause for violence against women and girls. Families accept violence to maintain marriage, avoid loss of financial and social standing and to assure better upkeep of children.

Potential solutions

**AWARENESS AND EDUCATION.** 43% of respondents felt women were denied education and awareness due to their gender in 2012. This figure fell to 30% in 2016 with 84% reporting that this form of discrimination decreased. Participation in **ECONOMIC** empowerment training increased from 9% to 19%. Women made 22,000 rupees more every year. 40% said they struggled to make a meal a day in 2012, 31% said they made enough for two meals while 24% had enough for clothes and education with 5% reporting that they saved money.

**SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT.** 56% of female respondents said they were affiliated to an institution. Mothers’ groups 21%, women’s groups 20%, and forest user groups 11% were most popular. 23% had officiating roles. 65% reported healthy participation in public events. Networks and groups reported violence in distant, hard to access places.

**ENABLING ENVIRONMENT** needs to be created by schools, government services, enterprises, entertainment media and all sections of the society.

**LEGAL SUPPORT.** Service providers should be accountable. Some help is provided to victims to document, collect evidence, and fight violence. Awareness of legal provisions grew from 25% to 75% in 2012. This figure fell to 31% in 2016.

**SECURITY.** 24% believed authorities to be unhelpful or unwilling; 26% felt they took too much time to respond to calls for help while 50% found them responsive and helpful.