Nepalese Masculinity and its Relationship to Violence Against Women

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under the supervision of

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Sharmila Sitaula, confirm that this thesis has been submitted to satisfy the requirements for the attainment of the Master of Research degree at the University of Technology Sydney, in the School of International Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

I affirm that the contents of this thesis are my original work, unless otherwise indicated or credited. Furthermore, I confirm that all sources of information and utilised literature in this thesis have been appropriately acknowledged and referenced.

I declare that this document has not been previously submitted to any other academic institution for evaluation.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Sharmila Sitaula

10 May 2023

Dedicated to **all the aspiring women**. Thank you for motivating me.

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To,

My **parents**, for your love and care. No words are enough to thank you for your weekly call to remind me that I am loved.

My **sister,** for providing me the strength to stay intact in this challenging phase of a pandemic.

My **brother,** who refreshed my mood by telling witty jokes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICF	Informed Consent Form
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual+
PIF	Participant Information Form
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WRA	White Ribbon Australia
WRC	White Ribbon Campaign
WRC	White Ribbon Canada
YMI	Young Men Initiative

Glossary

Domestic Violence	Domestic violence refers to a consistent pattern of behaviour employed by one individual to assert power and control over another person with whom they share or have shared an intimate relationship. This form of violence can encompass various types of abuse, including physical violence, sexual coercion, emotional and psychological manipulation, verbal abuse, stalking, and using electronic devices to harass and exert control. [Source: Western Centre for Research & Education of Violence Against Women & Children]
Gender-based Violence	Gender-based violence refers to acts of violence perpetrated against an individual based on gender. Such violence violates fundamental human rights, including the right to life, liberty, security, dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination, and physical and mental well-being. These acts undermine the principles of justice, equality, and respect for individuals and contribute to perpetuating gender inequalities and discrimination. [Source: The World Bank:

	Violence Against Women & Girls-Resource Guide]
Gender Roles	Gender roles are societal expectations and norms assigned to individuals based on their perceived sex or gender identity. These roles outline the behaviours, attitudes, and responsibilities traditionally associated with being male or female within a particular culture or society. The concept of sharing gender roles refers to the commonality or overlap in societal expectations for men and women. It suggests that certain expectations, duties, and roles are commonly shared or expected from individuals based on gender within a given society. [Source: Encyclopedia of Group Processes & Intergroup Relations; Gender Roles]
Intimate Partner Violence	Intimate partner violence refers to harmful actions perpetrated by a current or former intimate companion that result in physical, sexual, or mental harm. It includes physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviour. [Source: The World Bank: Violence Against Women & Girls-Resource Guide]

Patriarchy:	Patriarchy refers to a social system in which male authority is dominant and is perceived to oppress women through various social, political, and economic structures. In a patriarchal society, men primarily hold power, granting them greater access to and control over resources and rewards in both domestic and non-domestic domains. This power imbalance reinforces gender inequalities and can result in the marginalization and subordination of women. [Source: Encyclopedia of Anthropology; Patriarchy]
Sexual Violence	Sexual violence is any form of sexual activity, including attempts to engage in sexual acts, or other actions aimed at a person's sexuality through coercion, irrespective of the perpetrator's relationship to the victim or the setting in which it occurs. This includes rape, which is the forced or coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with the penis, or other body parts, or objects. [Source: The World Bank: Violence Against Women & Girls-Resource Guide]
Violence Against Women	Violence against women (VAW) encompasses various forms of gender-based violence that

result in, or have the potential to cause, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or distress to women, regardless of whether they occur in a public or private setting. (VAW). [Source: The World Bank: Violence Against Women & Girls-Resource Guide]

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Abstract

Nepal's social and cultural value system perpetuates a wide range of discrimination against women as a communal and cultural legacy despite continued efforts to eradicate it. Its patriarchal power relations and male-dominated socio-political institutions ensure men's control over women, limiting women's access to education, empowerment, and development and causing women's vulnerability to discrimination and exploitation.

This thesis investigates how Nepalese society constructs and practices masculinity and how Violence Against Women (VAW) is impacted by Nepalese hegemonic masculinity. It also focuses on how men's perceptions of masculinity differ according to age, marital status, education, location, and occupation. It further discusses how men can contribute to reducing violence against women.

A social constructionist theory of masculinity and power is adopted, supported by hegemonic masculinity theory, which looks at power hierarchies and the attitudes and behaviours of men that perpetuate discrimination against women, men's dominance over women, and some men's power over minority groups of men.

Online survey data from 197 male participants are examined quantitatively. The questionnaire consists of twenty-five closed-ended questions, six open-ended questions, and five background information questions, covering men's attitudes, behaviours, values, perspectives, and practices towards women, violence against women, and victim-blaming.

Results show that the country's conservative and patriarchal societal settings greatly influence men's behaviour and indicate that autonomy, strength, courage, and sexual dominance define Nepalese males, regardless of age. The study shows that Nepalese men tend to believe that extreme aggression is a natural way to express emotions and distress, which shifts to asserting power over their partners, particularly when their masculinity is threatened. The finding identifies the hegemonic masculinity

culture of Nepal, which is characterised by the domination of women, violence as a primary means of expressing hostility, and a belief that men are superior and more intelligent than women. It also normalises violence to demonstrate male superiority and leads to victim-blaming rather than condemning abuse and rape offenders.

One of the study's significant findings is that men's education level positively influences eliminating the victim-shaming stereotypes. The importance of including men in anti-violence programs is therefore emphasised. Teaching notions of gender equality and awareness-raising campaigns for Nepalese male teens can significantly challenge the existing hegemonic masculinity practices.

This research is among the first to explore the relationship between Nepalese masculinity and VAW and to highlight how social norms, beliefs, values, and cultures shape Nepalese masculinities. It is also one of the first in Nepal to examine VAW from the male perspective.

The results suggest that future researchers include multiple genders to extensively understand their role in constructing Nepalese masculinities, as well as study via a more diverse sample how cultural diversity influences views against violence against women. Qualitative or mixed-methods research may provide additional data and insights on this topic.

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Nepal is a highly male-dominant country (Panthhe & McCutcheon, 2015), with a patrilocal and patrilineal system in which a particular religious belief emphasises the primacy of men in the family (Rai, Paudel, Ghimire, Pokharel, Rijal and Niraula, 2014). According to Lawoti (2010), the patrilocal structures reinforce patriarchy and exclusion by increasing women's vulnerability, making them dependent upon men, such as their fathers when they are young, their husbands in adulthood, and their sons in old age. Patrilocal marriage separates women from their families; they were born to begin a new life in a new place and must rely on their husbands to survive and build social networks in the new home. This increases their vulnerability (Lawoti, 20110). Abrejo, Shaikh, and Rizvi (2009) argue that the cultural context of Nepal, influenced by the dominant Hindu religion, and the patrilineal structure of Nepali society assign high importance and value to sons. This is primarily due to their perceived roles in performing funeral rites, continuing the family name, and bringing in a daughter-in-law (a wife and dowry) who can help to support aged parents. They consequently have more power and control over family's resources, particularly land and property, and over the women of the family. The great sacred book Bhagavad-Gita of the Hindu religion of Nepal reflects men as God, creators of the world, warriors, and protectors of the family, whereas women are the supporters of men (Lawoti, 2010). The book demonstrates that the existence of women derives only from their association with men. A woman's highest purpose is to support the warriors in the family: her father, brother, husband, and sons (Lawoti, 2010). In this regard, Pun, Tjomsland, Infanti and Darj (2020) claim that Hindu Scripture has given men sociocultural privileges which subordinate women. For instance, the Goddess of beauty and wealth, Laxmi [female], sits at the foot of lord Bishnu [male]. This ancient tradition has been handed down throughout history, and still exists today.

Given this background, the tendency of male domination in Nepal is highly prevalent in its society, and this relates to the significant problem of violence against women. Das (2017), in ‘Sati Custom in Nepal: a historical perspective’, mentions Nepal’s long discriminatory legacy. Until a century ago, 'Sati' customs required widows to self-immolate on their deceased husband's funeral pyre. Widows who refused to accompany their husbands onto the funeral pyre were burned alive. This custom was an extreme example of socially-sanctioned prejudice against women in Nepal. Nanda et al. (2012) confirm that men in Nepali societies are seen as essential for the family's survival and for aged parents’ social security. Sons are also assigned a greater value than daughters because they are entrusted with economic, sociocultural, and religious responsibilities.

Similarly, Guilmoto (2007) contends that men's societal primacy has resulted in entrenched discriminatory practices against women, severely affecting their status, health, and development, as well as exerting enormous pressure to have sons. It has also led to stereotypical views of masculinity and impunity for engaging men in socially-sanctioned violence (Guilmoto, 2007). Lawoti (2010) confirms that the exclusion of women and the prevalence of patriarchy in Nepal is strengthened within different informal social institutions. This occurs for example in the Hindu and Islamic religious traditions which treat women’s bodies as an object of purity, and kinship structures that make women dependent on the male members of the family.

Male control over economic resources limits women's autonomy, while a political system controlled by men diminishes their influence and discourages them from participating in politics (Lawoti, 2010). Uprety (2016) regards the social norms of traditional masculinities and femininities, social structure (male dominance in leadership positions in public institutions), and law (that reinforces social norms of masculinities and femininities), as the ‘three heads of Hydra’ (p. 509). These work together to sustain patriarchy and violence against women (VAW) in Nepal. Nepalese gender disparity is

evident where women's access to social, economic, and other facilities and opportunities are lower than those available to men (Government of Nepal, 2016). Even though the Nepalese Government has taken legal and social steps to advance gender parity, the effect has been limited due to poor implementation (Government of Nepal 2016; Upreti, 2016; Mahat, 2003). According to Paudel (2007), VAW in Nepal is a long-standing problem related to men's attitudes towards women. Men feel superior to women, attempt to keep women subservient and conduct acts of violence if women deny it (Paudel, 2007). Violence also occurs if women cannot comprehend men's thinking, so they behave in ways to please them and fulfil their reproductive responsibilities and household chores (Paudel, 2007).

According to Murphy (2003), the authority of men is reflected in shaping a nation's laws and policies. It contributes to placing women in subservient positions in the domestic domain, where they are economically dependent on men, and in the public sphere, where they have little or no decision-making power. A recently revised Citizenship Bill in the Federal Parliament in 2020 supports Murphy's (2003) analysis of the position of women in society. It shows Nepal's unequal treatment of women. The Citizenship Bill (2020) grants naturalised citizenship to a foreign woman married to a Nepali man who has been a resident of Nepal for seven years. However, the bill does not include the provision allowing foreign men to marry Nepalese women, which eliminates the possibility of Nepalese women granting citizenship to a foreign-born husband (Government of Nepal, 2020).

Similarly, the Government of Nepal (2015) has inconsistencies between citizenship and equality of rights articles in Part 3 of Nepal's Constitution (2015). While the Constitution guarantees equality of rights and prohibits gender-based discrimination in Part 3 (Article 18), Article 11 (5) concerning citizenship contains discriminatory provisions that grant Nepali men and women unequal rights when conferring citizenship on their children.

Citizenship by descent will be granted to children born to a Nepali father and a foreign mother. In contrast, naturalised citizenship will be granted to children born to a Nepali mother and a foreign father. Allison (2017) claims that patriarchal influence is seen in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the unequal citizenship law. Dhamala's (2019) research also claims that the current citizenship provisions reflect and enforce patriarchy in Nepal.

Violence Against Women

In most societies and cultures, there is a clear contrast between how men and women are supposed to socialise and behave, with gender inequality being firmly instilled in families from an early age (Dhar, Jain & Jayachandran, 2015). VAW is correlated with social attitudes; when individuals view violence as socially acceptable, it can contribute to a culture that perpetuates VAW (Kury et al., 2004). Ferrer-Pérez and Bosch-Fiol (2014) assert that aggressive behaviour is more likely to persist when these actions are tolerated by society; abusive men are not punished, and women do not receive adequate support and justice. Although numerous feminist movements have condemned these acts of violence (Basu, 2018), gender biases continue to impact our communities (Jayachandran, 2015). VAW is still considered a feminist issue and is not usually given priority over other offences (Regan, Lovett, & Kelly, 2004).

VAW is the sytematic and persistent human rights violations worldwide (Ellsberg et al., 2015; Michau et al., 2015). According to the United Nations General Assembly (1993), "VAW encompasses any form of violence rooted in gender, which results in or has the potential to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. It also encompasses actions such as threats, coercion, and unjust limitations on freedom, regardless of whether they occur in public or private contexts" (UN General Assembly, 1993). In addition, according to the United Nations General Assembly (2006), VAW is entrenched in social systems as opposed to being arbitrary and individual, transcending

age, socioeconomic, academic, and geographic limits. It remains a formidable barrier to the worldwide eradication of discrimination and injustice (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

Krahè (2018) argues that VAW is the consequence of a socially-constructed consensus on the roles and rights of men and women. Vandello and Cohen (2008) also consider that the causes of VAW are in a society's social structure, value systems, or a particular social group (Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Vandello & Cohen, 2008). The acceptance of violence is also linked with societies' patriarchal structures, creating a favourable context for male perpetrators (Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward & Tritt, 2003). For example, Vandello and Cohen's (2003) study on male honour and female fidelity among Brazilian respondents reflected that a man with an unfaithful wife was less robust and less masculine than a man with a faithful wife. Therefore, this experiment suggested that a woman's infidelity diminishes her partner's reputation, which could be redeemed by violence against her.

Similarly, VAW is manifested by men-centric social orders and power differences between men and women, with men dominating women in most areas of public and private life (Krahè, 2018; Vandello; Hunnicutt, 2009 & Cohen, 2008). Research conducted by Balzani (2009) on VAW in South Asian communities residing in the United Kingdom detailed the conviction of a Pakistani man for committing domestic violence of his self-reliant and confident wife. Balzani (2009) claims that the man could not comprehend the new social world and believed assertive and independent women were unethical. He could not live up to his conceptions of a South Asian married man, whom he had been raised to believe was financially independent and able to command his household. Therefore, he found a sense of self in masculinity through violence and tried to control his wife.

VAW is pervasive, yet women's experiences of seeking help when faced with violence and the justice system's response remain unexplored in South Asia (Jejeebhoy,

Santhya & Acharya, 2014; Pandey, 2018). Research findings by Jayasuriya, Wijewardena and Axemo (2011) suggest that VAW disclosure and recourse were not considered for most abused women in Sri Lanka. The findings reveal that a significant portion of abused women, precisely 58%, chose to remain silent and never disclosed or discussed the violence they experienced with anyone. This decision was influenced by several factors, including feelings of embarrassment (43%), concerns about the reputation of their family (24%), fear of experiencing more violence (12%), and acceptance of violence as a normative behaviour perpetuated by their family, friends, and communities (8%). Stigmatisation and character judgement of abused women by service providers such as police, health care providers, shelters, and communities was another reason abused women prefer not to express themselves (Jayasuriya, Wijewardena & Axemo, 2011).

Stavrou, Poynton, and Weatherburn's (2016) research on Australian women's help-seeking behaviours revealed that only 27% of violent incidents were reported to the police. Despite this, 69% of women sought advice or support from friends and family, general practitioners, counsellors, and support workers after experiencing violence. This study suggests that women did not report the assault to the police because they believed they could manage the situation on their own, did not believe it was a severe offence, feared their partner, did not want their partner arrested, and were ashamed. The findings highlight the difficulties women face when determining whether or not to report violence to police. Similarly, a study by Postmus, Severson, Berry and Yoo (2009) carried out in a midwestern state in the United States learned that service providers' prioritisation of emotional, psychological, and legal support is not the most helpful for abused women. In contrast, tangible support, such as food, housing, financial assistance, and religious and spiritual counselling, were viewed as the most beneficial (Postmus et al., 2009).

Violence Against Women in Nepal

VAW in Nepal is a widespread issue, although it is often underreported (Government of Nepal, 2016; Paudel, 2007). According to Lamichhane, Puri, Tamang, and Dulal (2011), the presence of structural inequality between men and women, along with cultural, social, and religious practices that uphold women's inferior status within families and society, serve as catalysts for VAW in Nepal. Similarly, Joshi and Kharel (2008) also assert that sociocultural, economic, religious, and political biases reinforce male dominance and enable systematic discrimination and violence to pervade women's lives.

According to Paudel (2007), VAW in Nepal is a problem of men's attitudes towards women. Men have an inherent sense of superiority over women, attempt to keep them subservient and resort to violence if they cannot comprehend their desires and perform household chores. Pradhananga and Shrestha (2002) agree with Paudel (2007) that families want women to be subservient and submissive in gender roles. This suggests that societal norms and expectations put women in a less valuable position and compel them to follow conventional gender roles in their families. According to Sangroula (2005), gender-based discrimination is a significant problem in Nepal, and society's stereotypical views of women's roles and male-female relationships are holding women back. He also asserts that the majority of Nepalese women are illiterate. The widely prevailing set of traditional norms that reject change and prevent progress in the women's lifestyles effectively blocks access to education, empowerment, and development.

There is, therefore, a gender gap between men and women which creates higher vulnerability and is manifestly subject to discrimination and exploitation. Pradhananga and Shrestha (2002) also state that women's low social status and limited decision-making power, restricted access to resources, and information and embarrassment

associated with abuse exposure contribute to their heightened vulnerability to experiencing violence. According to Deuba (1997), VAW is the result of unequal patriarchal power relations that are deeply rooted in a social structure devised, reinforced, and maintained by male-dominated sociopolitical institutions, ensuring that men, by virtue of their gender, have power and control over women and children. VAW encompasses a wide spectrum of exploitation and discrimination in Nepal, such as the *Kamlahari* system, called modern slavery (Metzger, 2019; Maycock, 2012), *Chhaupadi Pratha*, called menstrual period exiles (Kadariya & Aro, 2015; Bhandaree, Pandey, Rajak & Pantha, 2013), domestic violence (Joshi & Kharel, 2008; Paudel, 2007), acid attacks (Welsh, 2009), female infanticide (Vickery & Teijlingen, 2018), sex trafficking (Richardson, Poudel & Laurie, 2009), and rape (Limbu & Hirachan, 2016). However, the most common acts of VAW in Nepal are sexual offences, rape, and attempted rape (Atreya, 2021).

According to Sangroula (2005), these violent cases have a root cause in the flawed value system of Nepalese society, which is being carried on as a social-cultural legacy. According to the Nepal Police (2019), violent cases against women have increased since the Nirmala Pant rape and murder protests nationwide. On 26 July 2018, a thirteen-year-old girl was raped and murdered while returning home after studying at a friend's house. Nepal Police spotted her dead body in a nearby sugarcane field the next day. A recorded video of the crime scene went viral on social media, showing a male police officer washing Nirmala's trousers; this showed either an attempt to cover up for the perpetrator, or the incompetency in the crime scene investigation by on-duty police officers. The post-mortem report revealed that Nirmala was raped and strangled (Deuba, 2021).

The year 2018 was the year of Nepal's mass action, as the rape and murder of Nirmala Pant evoked strong national responses and widespread protests. From 2015 to

2020, the highest rate of VAW was in 2018/2019, with 19,204 acts of VAW (Nepal Police, 2019). The Nepal Police factsheet (July 2017-July 2020) states that out of total crime, 40% of crimes are gender-based violence, where 86.4 % of the offenders are boys and men and 13.06% of offenders are women and girls. Similarly, 5.5% of victims are boys and men, and 94.5% are girls and women. The analysis of crime based on relationships suggests that acquaintances committed 78.54% of crimes, and an unknown offender committed 21.46%. The data shows that women and girls are the primary victims, while men and boys are the major offenders. This data supports findings in the research conducted by Atreya et al. (2021) in Nepal which found that uncontrollable men aggressively disrobe women, causing violence, injuries, and even murder. They become violent when rejected, leading to various forms of violence due to hegemonic masculinity (Atreya et al., 2021).

Atreya et al. (2021) further argue that most Nepalese men consider women inferior despite the law guaranteeing them equal rights. The law forbids a husband from having sexual activity without a wife's consent; that is considered marital rape and illegal. However, Nepalese society views marriage as consent for sex and ignores female rights (Atreya et al., 2021). Suppose a stranger in the dark forces a woman to have sex; it is undoubtedly an act of rape. However, the scenario is perceived differently if the female had brought a friend into her room (Harne, 2002). Many blame the woman for inviting a man into her apartment, especially if they had been drinking before the incident (Harne, 2002). Our society prioritises cultural and social values over legal guilt when discussing violence (Kaplan, 2016). The societal norms and values of an individual decide "what constitutes rape," "why and when it was wrong," and "who is liable" (Baker, 2018). This social-cultural legacy influences lawmakers, law systems, and responsible authorities (Atreya et al., 2021). Therefore, many women, like Nirmala Pant, do not get justice and the perpetrators remain unpunished (Dulal, 2022).

Everyone is born equal, but Nepalese society creates and perpetuates the concept of masculinity in males, elevating men to a superior status. Males are raised with the practice of hegemonic masculinity that undermines women's consent, not only in sexual concerns but also in other household problems (Connell, 2005). Concerning the patriarchal social behaviour in which male entitlement to sex is deeply established, I argue that addressing these deeply founded social issues will lessen violence against women.

Research Objectives

This research aims to identify the relationship between masculinity and VAW in Nepal by firstly exploring the ways masculinities are constructed in Nepalese society, then analysing the impact of masculinity on violence against women, and finally considering how men could contribute to reducing it. The overall research question and relevant sub-questions to address the above objectives are presented below.

What is the relationship between masculinity and violence against women in Nepal?

- *How are masculinities constructed?*
- *How has masculinity impacted violence against women?*
- *In what ways can men engage in reducing violence against women?*

Significance of the Research

The research conducted in Nepal holds significant importance due to the various forms of violence experienced by Nepalese women and their disproportionate impact. This violence is closely linked to the unequal power dynamics between women and men and the strategies employed to maintain or reinforce such inequality (Singh, Timsina & Dhimal, 2016). Men’s threats of rejection, sexual monopoly, acts of supremacy, and restriction on personal freedoms are oppressive and discriminatory. These cause physical, emotional,

psychological, and financial harm to women (Joshi & Kharel, 2008). Therefore, the first step to understanding and solving the problem is identifying how these stereotyped conceptions and mindsets towards women are constructed in Nepal.

This research is distinct from other VAW research in Nepal. It does not focus on the survivors of VAW, or on women to try to uncover its root causes; instead, it focuses on men, who according to Joshi (2008), are the perpetrators of most forms of VAW in Nepal. This research argues that masculinities are constructed, re-constructed, circulated, and practised in various sociocultural contexts. The data explores how norms, beliefs, values, and cultures construct and re-construct Nepalese masculinities.

According to Connell (2005), research on men has been largely absent from gender studies (Connell et al., 2005); therefore, this research on men and masculinities aims to place men at the centre of the study. According to Peletz (1995), there is a need for additional research on men and masculinities in Asia, where masculinity and its constructions are regarded as normal. The enormous body of literature on gender in Asia focuses almost exclusively on women's lives, and Nepal is included in this category. There is a great deal of literature on the peripheral status of women in Nepal, focusing on improving access to legal and social services for victims, their quality of health, and the provision of temporary shelters. Frequent conversations have also centred on VAW, its effects, the victim's survival techniques, and coping mechanisms to avoid it. Nevertheless, there is a severe lack of sustained analyses of the social construction of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity, as well as the relationship between VAW and the construction of masculinity.

Furthermore, even if much of the study done in VAW focuses on women, the cases of VAW registered at the Office of Nepal Police suggest that VAW has not been reduced. According to Flood (2015), prevention requires readdressing the structural and social constructional system. This study focuses on the perspectives and beliefs of men to gain a

comprehensive understanding of masculinity construction in Nepal to minimise the risk of VAW.

The research participants include men aged 20 and above with distinct experiences, opinions, and education. The differences in their demographic profile provide an opportunity to uncover various constructs of masculinity. This study brings new knowledge to understanding Nepali masculinity through the participants' contextual differences. This research explores how masculinity is nourished broadly through societal perspectives and often leads to and affects VAW. As this study broadly focuses on understanding existing social stereotypes, male supremacy over women, and myths in Nepal from men's perspectives, it follows the social construction of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity theory as a framework to organise the research.

The construction of masculinity theory is a study of sociocultural ideology that demonstrates men-women relations, the structure of male role norms, and attitudes and beliefs (Thompson, Grisanti &Pleck, 1985). Hegemonic masculinity theory helps to clarify men's domination over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The chosen theoretical perspectives are vital for this research, creating new concepts and understandings in the VAW research in Nepal. The data collected using an online quantitative survey may limit the depth of understanding of the issues, but it will provide future researchers with the chance for qualitative, in-depth research in a multiple-gender context.

Nepal has established clear legal provisions defining various forms of violence against women (VAW) and their corresponding punishments. The country has also ratified international laws and human rights treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), demonstrating its commitment to protecting women's rights. However, despite these legal measures and international obligations, VAW remains a widespread problem in Nepal. Cultural, economic, and religious factors strongly reinforce male

dominance and the subordinate status of women, contributing to the persistence of VAW. Consequently, violence against women and the underreporting of incidents are common in the country (Singh, Timsina & Dhimal, 2016). This research can provide different perspectives on the government's steps to strictly implement legal measures, and to push for the changes in social, legal, and governmental structure needed to prioritise women. It can also provide different perspectives on the education campaigns for all, focusing on men to challenge the discriminatory attitudes and beliefs of other men and women, and the running of women empowerment campaigns to make decisions and take actions in response to VAW.

Flood (2015) states that effecting change in men is best achieved by working with them to promote gender equality. This study also highlights men's engagement strategies in reducing VAW and promoting gender equality. As Namy, Heilman, Stich, Crownover, Leka and Edmeades (2015) assert, while there is growing discussion about why there is a need to engage men and boys, there is less conversation on exploring how men's involvement in reducing VAW can be facilitated. This study also aims to address this gap.

Limitations of the Research

The first potential limitation is related to the data collection method of the research. The research data is collected using a Qualtrics online survey. In an online survey, there is a possibility of untruthful responses by respondents due to their biases. Therefore, the data may not be able to determine the respondents' emotions without them cooperating in face-to-face conversations.

Another limitation is the representativeness of the sample size. The chosen sample size of 197 male participants in Nepal, in comparison to the overall male population of Nepal, is relatively small. Therefore, the findings may be deemed as a partial depiction of

Nepali men as a whole. However, the representation of 197 men aged from 20 to over 40 years from all over the country highlights the base findings of the research.

Similarly, another limitation is the lack of many prior research studies on the topic. As a result, it has taken some time to understand the foundations and characteristics of the research problem. In addition, responses based on the participant age groups limited in terms of gaining an equal participation of responses. The age group of above 20 and under 30 participants were higher in number than other age groups.

Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises of six chapters, which are summarized as follows:

- Chapter One, Introduction, establishes the research context by providing a global and Nepalese overview of violence against women. This chapter explores the connection between masculinity and violence against women. It also outlines the objectives, significance, and limitations of the study.
- Chapter Two is one of the two chapters comprising the literature review. Its primary focus is on the theoretical perspective on masculinity and its relation to VAW in Nepal. This section reviews the social construction of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity and discusses the analytical lenses used to achieve the research objectives.
- Chapter Three discusses the approach utilised in this research. It begins by discussing the epistemological position of social constructionism and hegemonic masculinity theory. It then outlines the study design, data collection tools, data collection process and analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion on reliability, validity, and ethical considerations.
- Chapter Four is the second literature review chapter, which examines global masculinity, South Asian masculinity, and masculinity in Nepal. In addition, it reviews the literature on men's attitudes towards violence against women, rape myths, and

victim blaming. Lastly, it reviews men's engagement in preventing violence against women.

- Chapter Five analyses the data gathered to accomplish the research objectives. The analysis focuses on finding new knowledge on the main themes; masculinity as a social construct, masculinity and attitudes towards women, masculinity, and attitudes towards violence against women, and masculinity and its connection to victim-blaming.
- Chapter Six, the concluding chapter, consists of a discussion linking the results to the research objectives and questions. It summarises the key findings and places them within the context of the broader literature. It concludes with a summary of the research contributions, limitations, and future recommendations for the raised issues.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the context of the research by emphasising the social status of men and women. It also discussed how the significance of men in society translates into entrenched discriminatory practices against women. It explained the cultural and social differences between men and women and established a connection between men's attitude problems towards women and women's vulnerability to violence. The VAW was discussed in a global and Nepalese context. The significance of this research, as well as its purposes, objectives, and limitations, were described. The following chapter will provide a theoretical analysis of the research literature.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspectives on Masculinity and its Relationship to Violence Against Women in Nepal

Introduction

This chapter begins with a critical examination of the concepts of the social construction of masculinity theory, which lays the groundwork for an argument on the construction of Nepalese masculinity. The chapter then explains the perspective of hegemonic masculinity theory to outlook the connection between Nepalese masculinity and violence against women. It concludes by highlighting the theoretical notions of masculinity followed by this research.

Social Construction of Masculinity

Social constructionism explains the process by which people interpret their surroundings (Gergen, 1985). According to Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999), Social constructionists study the language used to comprehend the world. They examine how cultural, social, and political factors shape word definitions and event interpretations. Social constructionists also analyse the benefits and drawbacks of various definitions and interpretations (Muehlenhard and Kimes, 1999). It is a theory of knowledge that examines social issues of gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality as human definitions and interpretations influenced by historical and cultural contexts (Subramaniam, 2010 cited in Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). Therefore, one could contend that VAW is a product of society and is rooted in its various structure and culture.

Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) believe that society's dominant groups in power decide whose behaviour is defined as violent, under what circumstances, and by whom. The individuals responsible for determining violent behaviour are influenced by the societal interests of those in positions of power. The social constructionism theory claims that individuals can identify some actions negatively while ignoring and implicitly

condoning others. The manner in which these terms are defined influences how individuals categorize, interpret, assess, and incorporate their own experiences. “This theory posits several presumptions about power dynamics and intimidation, sexual orientation, and gender” (Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, & Giusti, 1992, p. 24).

This means that a social constructionist view can be utilised to show that individuals, groups, and societies ascribe traits, status, or values to individuals based on their sex. It can be used to highlight how culture categorises ‘men’ and ‘women’ within societal institutions. Indeed, many researchers suggest that masculinities are constructed differently according to the social conditions in which people are situated. Thompson, Grisanti and Pleck (1985) consider the construction of masculinity as a culture-based ideology scripting men-women relations, the structure of male role norms, and attitudes and beliefs. This perspective prioritises values, ideologies, experiences, and meanings natural for men or required to be a man in a particular social context (Flood, 2002). According to this viewpoint, different social and cultural environments can present various interpretations or manifestations of men's behaviours.

Similarly, the social construction of masculinity theorists, such as James Messerschmidt and Raewyn Connell, consider masculinity a male trait constructed and re-constructed daily in relationships with other people (Messerschmidt, 1993; Connell, 2005). They claim that VAW is one aspect that constructs masculinity. According to Kaufman (1987), masculinity is perceived as a desirable set of traits for men, including qualities like strength, courage, rationality, intellect, and sexual desire. However, when these characteristics are distorted within the framework of masculine norms and other characteristics associated with femininity are excluded, they can be oppressive and detrimental. These norms are transmitted to boys and young men through various channels, such as families, schools, the media, peer groups, and social institutions (Kimmel & Wade, 2018). Moreover, men individually interpret and internalise these norms (Barker, 2001;

Kimmel et al., 2005; Pulerwitz & Barker, 2008; Tekkas, 2015). For example, boys acquire and exhibit masculine values like competitiveness, toughness, and aggressiveness through their participation in sports (Tekkas, 2015).

Butler's concept of 'performativity' is also helpful in theorising the processes from which identities are constructed. According to Butler, the performance of the gender labels 'male' and 'female' is indispensable and unconscious; that is, one's gender is formed through repeated performances within a rigid regulatory framework (Butler, 1990). It encapsulates the difficulties of comprehending the construction of gender, in which individuals act unconsciously through a sequence of repeated behaviours following and opposing gender norms. Human behaviour is influenced by a combination of conscious and subconscious factors, often shaped by societal norms and expectations. Patriarchy plays a significant role in reinforcing the binary understanding of masculinity (Omar, 2011). In patriarchal societies, notions of masculinity are characterized by the dominance exerted over women and other men (Lorber, 1994; Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985). These societal constructions create perceived differences between males and females. Lorber (1994) offers a simple example by contrasting a doll and a baseball bat, illustrating how it is commonly assumed that the baseball bat is intended for a young boy. Such social boundaries are actively policed and reinforced, influencing our understanding of what it means to be masculine and shaping expectations for male behaviour in various contexts.

Pascoe and Bridges (2016) argue that a socially constructed identity, performance, power, privilege, and masculinity structure is changeable and fluid. In their view, if men find challenges in performing and protecting their socially constructed identity and power, they tend to follow any strategy to protect it, even a criminal strategy. Therefore, the social constructionist perspective of masculinity allows for theorising the crime of sexual violence committed by men against women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016), and an exploration of masculine perceptions and power in society

(Connell, 1995). For instance, Totten's (2003) research on girlfriend abuse as a form of masculinity construction found that VAW by men is a strategy to construct masculine domination. Men in different structural settings employ various forms of violence based on their resources, depending on the ideologies embraced over time and in their structural space. A young man raised in a culture that prioritises the social status and power of men over those of women would likely exhibit dominating masculinity in accordance with prevalent cultural norms (Tekkas, 2015).

This research project considers social constructionism as the primary analytical tool through which researchers can explore the construction of masculinity and its relations to violence against women. It also aligns with the view that since masculinity is a performed social identity, men can positively change the internalisations and expressions of their masculinity traits by engaging with themselves to minimise the violence committed against women. Hooks (1981) presented a viewpoint adopted by third-world feminists and women of colour, challenged the concept of "women" as a political and analytical category. This viewpoint asserts that categorising individuals based on gender tends to obscure the diverse experiences of women and ignores the overlapping influences of ethnicity, class, and gender on both men and women. Instead of focusing on gender as the cause of women's oppression and men's dominance, feminists advocate for an approach that acknowledges the various ways in which women and men can either benefit from or contribute to the alleviation of exploitation experienced by marginalised individuals of different genders (Ford & Lyons, 2012). This approach recognises the interconnected nature of various forms of oppression and seeks to address the complexities of power dynamics more comprehensively.

Similarly, Kimmel and Messner (2007) also argue that men and boys can transform their way of expressing masculinity as they mature throughout their lives. They can influence their families, friends, and societies for a better social cause to help support

violence against women. This suggests that men can be crucial in promoting gender equality and fostering a safer environment for women through their actions and influence.

According to Kimmel and Messner (2008), the above theoretical review offers analytical perspectives to address critical social issues related to masculinity and VAW. These perspectives include the understanding that men and their masculinities are socially learned rather than biologically determined. Additionally, the experience of masculinity is not universally uniform or generalizable to all men but varies across individuals. Masculinity is performed and experienced differently by different men, and there is no absolute or fixed way of experiencing it. Moreover, masculinity is a socially constructed identity that evolves and changes over time.

Informed by this social constructionist view of masculinities, this research explores the relationship between the social construction of masculinity and VAW. It aims to investigate how society constructs and practices masculinity in Nepal and how VAW is shaped, influenced, or affected within Nepali social and cultural contexts. By adopting these theoretical lenses, the research seeks to gain insights into the complex dynamics between masculinity and VAW, focusing on the specific context of Nepal.

Hegemonic Masculinity

As stated previously, the social construction of masculinity has been meticulously categorised in terms of cultural, structural, and societal experiences; it deconstructs the perspectives of feminist thought regarding gender, sexuality, and power hierarchies (Connell et al., 2005). Therefore, feminists, such as Black and Asian feminists rejected this notion because it stifles women's diversity and disregards the ways in which men and women are racialised, classed, and gendered (Hooks, 1981). Collins (1999) examines the notion of power hierarchies and asserts that by perceiving gender through intersectionality, it is redefined as a collection of ideas and societal behaviours embedded within and

interdependently create various forms of oppression. This study incorporates the theory of hegemonic masculinity, which holds considerable importance, as an additional perspective for analyzing gender dynamics and exploring the link between masculinity and violence directed towards women.

Connell's (1995) work introduces the concept of hegemonic masculinity to provide an alternative viewpoint on gender norms and the relationship between masculinity and power. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as the embodiment of current societal practices that address the legitimacy of patriarchy, ensuring men's dominance and women's subordination (Connell, 1995). According to this view, two forms of relationships influence the gender hierarchy. They are: “hegemony, subordination, dominance, and complicity, and authorisation or marginalisation” (Connell, 1995, p. 81). Also, “Subordinate masculinities refer to those labelled as deviant, such as gay men, while marginalized masculinities are shaped by factors like race, class, and ethnicity” (Howson, 2006, p. 63).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as proposed by (Connell, 1987) and further identified by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), highlights certain attitudes and behaviours among men that perpetuate gender inequity. It encompasses the idea of men exerting control over women and dominant men exercising authority over minority groups of men. The concept has been extensively studied, discussed, and updated over time (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). According to Donaldson (1993), hegemonic masculinity is both culturally idealised form and a personal and collective endeavour. Recent research defines hegemonic masculinity as “a set of values created by powerful males that include and exclude individuals while organising a society that perpetuates gender inequality” (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012, p. 40). “This concept acknowledges the existence of a hierarchy of masculinities, unequal power distribution among men (with

women and other men), and the dynamic interplay between men's identities, ideals, interactions, and patriarchal systems" (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012, p. 40).

Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a pattern of gendered practices. It allows men's dominance over women (Connell, 1995; Messerschmitt, 1993). This theory is shaped by various aspects of society, such as class, ethnicity, institutional and political spheres, and consumption patterns (Connell, 1995; Kimmel & Messner, 2008). However, it is also associated with domination, aggression, and violence (Uprety, 2019; Connell, 1995). Therefore, sexual assault and other forms of VAW are the direct results of uncontrollable lust, domination, and power over women's bodies (Connell, 1995). During their formative years, many men internalise such forms of masculinity by observing their father's behaviour towards their mother, learning from friends, and community and institutional structures (Totten, 2003).

According to Totten (2003) and Uprety (2019), there is a connection between the concept of ideal masculinity and attributes such as physical strength, economic power, emotional control, and reproductive capacity. These scholars argue that many men experience a sense of psychological inadequacy if they cannot meet the societal expectations of ideal masculinity. As a result, they may attempt to compensate for this perceived deficiency by resorting to violent behaviours towards women whom they view as subordinate (Uprety, 2019). Uprety (2019) and Pascoe and Bridges (2016) further suggest that such violence is often justified and perpetuated by prevailing social norms and existing social structures. They emphasize that in many communities, men tend to hold more privilege and power than women, and this interplay of social norms and structures shapes the beliefs and practices within the community (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016).

According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is constructed in society and is closely associated with physical power, including the performance of physical violence

and engagement in heterosexual activities. These bodily practices are socially constructed as defining characteristics of “true manhood” (Connell, 2005). In a study of young boys' preschool practices that was carried out in Sweden, the concept of hegemonic masculinity was frequently used to describe the normalisation of specific ways of being a boy, such as a muscular body. This highlighted the power relations and regulated the practices and hierarchies that were constituted between boys and girls in their daily interactions with one another (Jewkes et al., 2015).

Anwary (2015) ’s research also supports Connell’s (1995; 2005) findings that masculinity is connected to the body, especially the penis. She asserts that masculinity is formed from men's dominant sexuality, in contrast to women's submissive and dependent sexuality in heterosexual relationships. Male impotence poses a significant challenge to men's concept of manhood in societies in which patriarchy is thoroughly ingrained and institutionalised. She illustrates this claim with a man killing his wife and announcing publicly in front of police and media that he stabbed his wife to death (Anwary, 2015). He complained that his wife teased his impotence by talking to family and friends about it. Therefore, according to her husband, she deserved to die (Anwary, 2015). This case suggests that gender and violence are closely connected to sustain men’s dominance over women using violence (Connell, 1995). It also indicates that exhibiting strength, resilience, and a willingness to resort to violence are integral to hegemonic masculinity (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall, 2013).

The connection between gender norms, social structures, and individuals is complex, as they mutually influence each other with varying degrees of force and impact over time. According to Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger (2012), hegemonic masculinity is primarily used within social structures to elucidate how different forms of masculinity gain validation through social institutions and groups. It is a problem for both women and men. The system that maintains men's collective dominance over women and their competitive

relationships with other men has a negative effect on their relationships with their wives and girlfriends. The impact is most clearly seen in a country like Nepal, where the frustration about being unable to fulfil men's expectations was perceived as a significant source of violence (Pun et al., 2020). This suggests then that perhaps a change in hegemonic masculinity can have tangible benefits for men and women.

This research aims to analyse the hegemonic masculinity theory through the lens outlined in the previous section. Men internalise and practise masculinity according to the hegemony theory. It also provides the basis for becoming the perfect and powerful man. The link between violence against women and masculinity is reinforced by masculinity theory. Violence effectively subjugates women. Men utilise violence to demonstrate and defend their masculinity. If a man perceives that his masculinity is threatened, he may employ violence to restore it.

Chapter Summary

This literature review chapter considered the relevant literature from a theoretical perspective and discussed the theoretical framework for this research on the social construction of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity. Notions of masculinity as a social construct and the formation of masculinity within society were also discussed. The theoretical framework for the main research questions was set up, and the proposed framework developed for the project was presented. The subsequent chapter will provide a comprehensive explanation of the methodology used to address the identified research problem.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives, demonstrating that the chosen approach was suitable for accomplishing the study's goals. Moreover, this chapter describes and justifies the research methodology, what data was collected, how it was collected, from whom, and how it was analysed. It also addresses the ethical implications of the study.

Epistemology of the Research

Epistemology refers to beliefs about knowledge and how knowledge is constructed, and the philosophical assumptions made influence which methodologies and methods researchers consider appropriate for addressing a research problem (Crotty, 1998). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) argue that epistemology refers to "individuals' underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge, its form, and how it can be achieved and shared with others" (p. 7).The epistemology of a researcher influences every decision they make during the research process, from their initial assumptions about the state of knowledge to their hypotheses, questions, and methodologies (Collins, 1990). It also influences how research is interpreted and understood when analysing the findings (Collins, 1990).

While Trochim (2006) states that many quantitative researchers operate under different epistemological assumptions from qualitative researchers, he advises that the researcher should refrain from polarising the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches. He claims that all quantitative data is fundamentally rooted in qualitative judgments, and, all qualitative data can be subjected to numerical representations and descriptions. According to Bryman (2008), when we talk about quantitative methods, we think about positivism (post), and when we talk about qualitative

methods, we think about constructivism, constructionism, critical theory and many more. In his reviews of approaches to research methodology, Trochim (2006) argues that the researcher is a unique individual and should be allowed to modify and investigate any existing perceptions.

This research aligns with the epistemology of social construction and hegemonic masculinity theory. The epistemology of constructionism holds that 'truth' or 'meaning' arises from within and out of individual engagement with the realities of the world. The value of constructionist research lies in its capacity to generate contextual understandings of a specified topic or issue. It also asserts that "our culture and society teach us the connection between our consciousness and how we relate to others" (Owen, 1992, p. 386). Social constructionists are interested in the normative narratives, which are formed by and, in turn, influence people (Owen, 1992). Similarly, according to Schwandt (2003), social constructionism views knowledge and truth as created by the mind in correspondence with something tangible. This would seem to be consistent with the ideas expressed by Berger and Luckmann (1991), who postulated that knowledge is created by the interaction of individuals and the influence one individual has upon another.

According to Best (2002), the concept of social construction is employed by sociologists to describe the process through which individuals attribute meaning to the world. Best (2001) asserts, "all statistics result from human efforts and are thus social products" (pp. 26-27). Best (2002) further emphasizes that

> numbers do not exist independently of people; comprehending statistics necessitates understanding the who, what, and why behind them. This indicates that statistics are socially constructed. When sociologists use the term social construction, it does not imply something is false or imaginary. Instead, it recognizes that all statistics, regardless of quality, are the outcome of choices that inevitably shape, constrain, and distort the final result.

His clear conclusion therefore, is that quantitative research methodology, when looked at through a social constructionist perspective, is that all the methodologies employed in successful quantitative research, including respondents' decision-making while answering the questions, are the choices and products that are the result of social construction.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is a form of social research that seeks to understand phenomena by gathering numerical data, which is subsequently analysed using mathematically-based methods (Creswell, 1994). This approach involves the systematic gathering and examination of numerical information to characterise, elucidate, forecast, or manage variables relevant to the subject matter under investigation (Topping, 2010). It assumes that the truths can be studied and measured in a systematic and structured way by analysing the numerical data collected from the participants (Creswell, 2018). As an alternative to quantitative research, qualitative research is social research that is person-centred rather than variable-centred, subjective rather than objective, exploratory rather than conclusive, holistic rather than particularistic, and focuses on depth rather than breadth (Cresswell, 2008; Trochim, 2006).

A quantitative research methodology is deemed appropriate for this study because it quantifies opinions, attitudes, and behaviours and explains how the whole population feels about specific issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Goertzen, 2017). It helps to generalise the truth found in the samples and uncover behaviours and trends of the general population (Goertzen, 2017). Quantitative research is suited to demonstrating the relationship between two phenomena (Zyphur & Pierides, 2019), such as the relationship between masculinity and violence perpetrated against women. A quantitative approach permits the statistical evaluation of investigated phenomena, namely the participants' demographics and

perspectives on the social structure of masculinity, and its association with VAW in Nepal. In assuming and adopting a belief in objective reality, quantitative research values the testing of ideas or logical propositions against experiences (Zyphur & Pierides, 2019). This point of view constitutes the epistemological position of the research to be undertaken in this study.

The present study employs a series of structured questions in a standardised survey instrument. A Likert scale is commonly utilized to capture participants' responses as it assesses attitudes, opinions, or perceptions related to a unidimensional variable or a construct comprising multiple dimensions or subscales (Salkind, 2010). The Likert scale generates a score by presenting a series of items consisting of two components: the stem, a statement of fact or opinion to which the respondent is asked to respond, and the response scale. In this study four points are used in the response scale: Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, and Disagree (Salkind, 2010).

Study Design

The study employs a non-experimental design to focus on describing the phenomena under investigation rather than testing pre-existing hypotheses (Loeb et al., 2017). This choice of design allows for the exploration and description of a topic where some knowledge exists, but there still needs to be more certainty (Salkind, 2010). A descriptive design is considered most appropriate to address the research objectives as it aims to characterize the world or a specific phenomenon by answering questions about who, what, where, when, and to what extent. It helps in identifying and describing trends and variations within populations. It aids in identifying and describing trends and variations within populations, the development of new measures for significant phenomena, and the description of samples in studies designed to identify causal effects (Loeb et al., 2017). In some cases, descriptive research can also provide insights into

causal understanding and the mechanisms underlying causal relationships (Loeb et al., 2017).

Through the non-experimental design, the researcher collects data via a survey (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and an online questionnaire (Appendix A). The survey will collect 197 responses from male participants over 20 years of age in Nepal. The number of participants has been calculated using a sample size calculator from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This is based on the population size of men of the age group 20-39 with a confidence level of 99%, confidence interval of 0.08, standard error of 0.040, and relative standard error of 8.16.

One of the aims of this research is to collect survey data by attaining the highest reach among Nepali male youth. To do this, the researcher will collaborate with Troll Nepal, a Nepali Facebook page commonly used by young Nepali males. Troll Nepal will advertise the survey using the researcher's advertisement information platform and will invite participants to fill in the Qualtrics survey developed for the project. The survey's first page provides an online Participant Information Form, and a Consent Form. The information sheet presents the research purposes, benefits, and outcomes. The Consent Form outlines the possible risks that might occur during the survey, and includes the information informing the participants that they can withdraw or change their minds at any time, and that there will be no harm to them as a result. The survey is voluntary, and will not collect the names of the participants and specific home addresses. However, it does contain their gender, the province they live in, their age, academic education, and employment.

The questionnaire will be used to obtain information from the collected sample on the relationship between masculinity and VAW in Nepal. The collected information will then be analysed to generate a demographic profile of men. It will explore the processes of masculinity construction, its impact on violence against women, and the strategies that

may be engaged to reduce VAW by the society's men. To conclude, a descriptive methodology enables the attainment of the research objective, which has been a previously unexplored phenomenon; that is, how the masculinities have been constructed in Nepal. It also helps to distil the collected datasets into meaningful dimensions to uncover the genuine reasons for VAW, and inform and improve the strategies that might be used to mitigate this social issue.

Data Collection Tools

The quantitative methodology underlying this research necessitates the selection of a structured data collection tool. Thus, participants must be given a set of questions to answer in a planned order with prepared response options by limiting their responses. This structured approach's data are quantifiable, making statistical analysis easier to satisfy the study's goals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, a high level of objectivity is employed to obtain the answers to the research questions, thereby reducing the likelihood of subjective evaluation by the researcher (Loeb et al., 2017).

The data will be collected using a self-report approach to obtain honest responses from the participants (Goertzen, 2017). Self-administered questionnaires are most appropriate for a structured self-report data collection approach (Kumar, 1996). Self-administered questionnaire selection depends on several factors:

- Questionnaires that can be easily administered to collect data in a timely and cost-effective manner from a geographically dispersed audience during the COVID-19 pandemic and the border closure to Nepal.
- Self-administered questionnaires, with a significant number of closed-ended questions, are quick and reduce respondent burden (Goertzen, 2017).

- The anonymity of the participants eliminates the possibility of interviewer bias; anonymity also protects against the fear of identity disclosure (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

While the questionnaires for this study (Appendix A) are distinct, they are informed by prior questionnaires, the masculine behaviour scale, and measures for assessing dimensions of VAW (Flood, 2008). The questionnaire in this study consists of 36 questions; 6 being demographic questions, 25 close-ended questions intended to answer research questions one and two, and five open-ended questions intended to answer research question three.

The questionnaires in this study will be administered using Qualtrics, a web-based application. The questionnaire design does not allow respondents to skip questions; the only option is to exit the survey. Participants can only complete the questionnaire once; if they attempt to submit it again, access will be denied. The Participant Information Form (PIF) is included within the questionnaire, providing participants with an explanation of the study's purpose and addressing ethical concerns. Further details on ethical considerations will be discussed in-depth in the subsequent section dedicated to ethical considerations within this chapter. Additionally, the survey will provide guidelines on how to complete the questionnaire effectively.

Reliability and Validity

Two essential criteria for evaluating a data collection instrument are considered in the development of the questionnaire: reliability and validity (Roopa & Rani, 2012). According to Roopa and Rani (2012), reliability refers to the consistency, dependability, and precision with which an instrument measures an attribute across different settings. It guarantees that the instrument produces consistent results when utilised repeatedly under identical conditions The validity, on the other hand, refers to the accuracy with which the

results acquired from the study participants reflect the true characteristics or phenomena being measured among similar individuals outside the study. Validity ensures that the instrument effectively measures what it intends to measure and provides meaningful and accurate findings. Both reliability and validity are important considerations in ensuring the quality and credibility of the data collected through the questionnaire.

A reliable instrument measures quality across locations, and with repeated use by different people (Creswell & Creswell, 2018); if a device is unreliable, the study's validity is undermined (Kumar, 1996). As a significant portion of the questionnaire is based on previously published studies (Tourangeau, 2020), it is acknowledged that these sections have already been assessed for reliability and validity by previous authors. In this study, however, the questionnaires were reviewed by the University of Technology Sydney's Ethics Committee and research supervisors (UTS). The university ensured that the questions were clear, unambiguous, and worded to reduce the possibility of response bias (Kumar, 1996). The test's reliability was determined by estimating the consistency of the results across different items measuring the same construct (Kumar, 1996). The reliability was determined using the statistical test developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs), which is acceptable if the value is at least 99% or above.

Data Collection Process

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic border closure, it was determined that Internet-based electronic data collection is the most efficient. Therefore, It was determined that this method was the most cost- and time-efficient means of disseminating the survey instrument; it also had the added advantage of returning data in electronic format, thereby reducing the risk of data input errors (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004). Furthermore, as there was a pandemic and everyone in Nepal was quarantined, it was hoped that using this medium would maximise the response rates. Therefore, the researcher collaborated

with Troll Nepal, a Nepali Facebook page commonly used by Nepali youth. Troll Nepal advertised the survey using the researcher's advertisement information and invited participants to fill in the Qualtrics survey developed by the researcher.

The survey's first page provided online Participant Information and a Consent Form. The information sheet comprises the research's purposes, benefits, and outcomes, while the Consent Form outlines the possible risk that might have occurred during the survey. It also included the information that the participants can withdraw or change their minds at any time, and there will not be any harm to them. The survey was voluntary. Any personally identifiable information was not collected to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the survey responses. Nonetheless, it included their gender, province, age, academic education, and occupation. All of the information was collected in Nepali.

Data Analysis

The primary purpose of this stage of the research procedure is to construct a statistical portrait or description of the male participants from Nepal. This description includes the men's backgrounds, views on masculine behaviour, and society's perceptions of masculinity. Additionally, the objective is to provide statistical data on VAW and strategies in order to reduce it. Ninety-one thousand seven hundred and forty-one people reach the link on the Facebook page Troll Nepal where reactions, comments and shares are total twenty-one hundred and fifty-two. That is enough representation of the people of Nepal to get data. After the two hundred data records, the survey ends, as the aim of the data collection sample size is only two hundred men.

Following the completion of data collection, Excel will be used to consolidate and cleanse the data in preparation for data analysis. This data consolidation process involves manually combining the survey participant data (200 in total). The extracted file from Qualtrics will be translated into English and then cleaned. There were two women and one

gender not identified who participated in the survey. Thus, after deleting three people, the total number of participants whose data will be used for analysis is 197. The cleaned data will then be transformed for analysis in the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software. It is then coded into numbers, and based on the types of the questions, variable types (Numeric, string, dot, comma) and measurements (Ordinal, scale, nominal) are given and made ready for analysis. The numerical data have been summarised using frequency and percentage measures of Descriptive Statistics (Landau & Everitt, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

The research meets the ethical standards and guidelines established by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). As this research involves human respondents, it abides by the UTS human resource moral code. Permission was granted by the Human Resource Ethics Committee (HREC) after outlining all the relevant information and before approaching human participants to ensure the safety of the participants and the researchers. The researcher also fulfilled the ethical requirements, such as communicating information, requesting consent, and other necessary research protocols required for the integrity of the research (Appendices B, C, D, & E).

The PIF and Consent Form address ethical considerations regarding individual participants (Appendix B). The initial sections of the online survey include the PIF) and the Informed Consent Form (ICF), which provide participants with comprehensive information to make an informed decision about their participation. These forms outline essential details such as the study's objective, the types of data that will be collected, the procedures for data collection and analysis, the level of commitment required, the process of participant selection, potential risks and benefits, the assurance of anonymity, the voluntary nature of participation, and contact information for any inquiries or concerns

(Farrimond, 2013). It was made clear to participants in the PIF that completing the questionnaire indicated their willingness to participate in the study (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Individual participants are additionally safeguarded by anonymity, the most reliable method of maintaining confidentiality (Farrimond, 2013). There is anonymity when there is no link between participants and their data. Throughout all phases of the study, the anonymity of all participants is protected with great care. Similarly, no information will be collected from participants whose identities could be revealed. All efforts will be made to ensure that the study's collected data are stored securely. The captured electronic data will be encrypted and stored on UTS's eResearch storage site. Only the researcher and research supervisors have access to the collected data at any time.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the epistemology of this research. It then discussed the appropriateness of the quantitative research method used. It also described the data collection setting and processes. The framework for analysing the data, reliability and validity of the research were discussed. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical considerations. Following the methodological framework presented, the next chapter will explore the formation of masculinity and its relationship to violence against women.

Chapter Four: Formation of Masculinity and Attitude Towards Women

Introduction

This chapter explores the development of masculinity and its correlation with violence against women. It delves into the existing literature that examines the construction of masculinity on a broader scale, the specific construction of South Asian masculinity, and the manifestation of masculinity in the context of Nepal. Furthermore, it highlights the link between violence-supportive beliefs and the perpetration of violence against women. The chapter also examines masculine norms and the acceptance of rape myths, contributing to blaming women for their victimization. Finally, the chapter discusses various initiatives and approaches to engage men in preventing violence against women.

Masculinity

Masculinity theory relates to men's treatment of power (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Connell, 1995) and how they demonstrate the power through their behaviours, language, and practices towards women in a specific social, cultural, and organisational setting (Connell, 1995). It also pertains to their treatment of other men and those of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, and asexual plus (LGBTIQA+) gender who are viewed as subordinate (Connell, 1995). A significant masculinity example dates to the late 18th-century British colonial period. Hinchy (2014) describes how the British tried to eliminate transgender (hijras) as a visible social category and gender identity from public spaces by prohibiting performances and transvestism. Hijras' performances and transvestism were perceived as moral and sexual dangers to Indian men and colonial public spaces. His research revealed the attempt by British colonial masculinity to discipline the Hijra gender, which was fundamental to British ideologies in ruling India. British men were portrayed as the masculine ideal, with a manly physical appearance and a protective yet inclusive attitude towards their women. They occupied

their time with manly pursuits such as hunting, sports, and enlightened rule of the Subcontinent, thus obscuring the violence of colonialism (Hinchy, 2014).

Similarly, in 1968, just a week before the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr, the fight for financial justice by the workers of colour (as part of the civil rights movement) used the slogan 'I am a man," stressing all men should be equal (Berger, Wallis & Watson, 2012). The slogan of the protest subtly suggested that manliness and equality are always split by equality and the justice of race, class, gender, and sexuality. The slogan also provided a glimpse of the creation of masculinity and the ideological, social structure of patriarchal culture.

Masculinity is shaped by critical historical events that are constructed and re-constructed. Throughout history, all the world's great religions maintain their 'God' as a Supreme Being, Creator, perfect in power and wisdom, and this is revealed in the form of a man (Fichter 1972). A man was considered an individual with a high degree of courage, strength, and vigour. Societies defined men as influential people, a synonym for strength, perfect in every way, and supreme beings. Kimmel & Wade (2018) further contextualised the definition of men by suggesting that men define themselves with honour, duty, integrity, and sacrifice, which they learn from their fathers, culture, historical texts, heroic poems, novels, and various religions. Their study finding also suggested toughness, strength, never showing weakness, winning at all costs, and being competitive are the characteristics men learn from fathers, coaches, male friends, and senior brothers. Kimmel and Wade's findings align with Baldoni (2021), who claimed that masculinity is performative; societal institutions demand men to perform in a particular way to validate their masculinities.

Masculinity is not equivalent to men; it concerns the position of men in the gender order. The concept of masculinity can be defined as the patterns of behaviour and practices in which both men and women, primarily men, embody that particular societal position

(Connell, 2005). To provide the concept of the ways of practice, Magaraggia (2012) examined the tensions between prevailing fatherhood and hegemonic masculinity models and adopted an interpretive approach to understand the meanings new parents give to fatherhood and motherhood by using 40 narrative interviews with fathers and mothers aged between 20-37 years. Her research demonstrated that the ideal 'traditional father' model as a 'good provider' and a signifier of the maleness of masculinity arose during the Industrial Revolution (Scanzoni, 1979). The findings suggested that men need 'new fatherhood', 'intimate fatherhood', and 'responsible fatherhood' to unlearn patriarchal ideologies and learn to speak honestly and openly about who they are, about what they are feeling, and about their experiences, whether they are good, or bad (Baldoni, 2021).

According to Kimmel & Wade (2018), masculinity is shaped and constructed through various meaning-making practices or systems of representation in various social contexts. Such contexts include schools, families, and other social groups in the workplace, leisure and pleasure fields, and the state in a broader sense. These contexts and their discourses on masculinity provide a variety of ways to be a man. For example: during a speech in 2013 to support of White Ribbon Day, Bryan Doyle, the White Ribbon Ambassador, and the Member for Campbelltown said in NSW Parliament, "Real men are endowed with strength and size, but it is crucial to recognize that their physical abilities should be used to protect women, not to perpetrate violence against them" (Doyle, 2013).

According to Macomber (2012), Bryan Doyle's talk was intended to expand notions of masculine strength, pacifism, and relationship protection. They also highlighted masculine power to argue that non-violent men are more masculine than aggressive ones (Macomber, 2012). However, Salter's (2016) article argued that identical terminology employed in campaign slogans by other VAW organisations, such as "man up", "stand up", and "speak out", constructs a regressive type of self-congratulatory display of manhood (Salter, 2016).

South Asian Masculinity

South Asian masculinities are crafted and moulded by traditional South Asian cultures and are distinguished by their emphasis on male power and control over female sexuality (Abraham, 1999). To comprehend South Asian masculinity, one must comprehend the significance of women's sexuality in those cultures. According to Pandey (2018), South Asian culture places a high value on women's chastity, particularly their pre-marital virginity. Most South Asian women are raised to believe that losing their virginity before marriage brings shame and disgrace to the family (Pandey, 2018). The sexual purity of a woman is a measure of male honour within her family and kin, as it determines the purity and legitimacy of their heirs (Pandey, 2018; Osella & Osella, 2006). Therefore, there is intense pressure to protect women's sexuality by limiting their social engagement with other males, as women's virginity can be preserved if they do not interact with other men (Pandey, 2018). Osella & Osella (2006) claim that pre-marital virginity is a cultural imperative in South Asia that displays the dominance of men to control women and women's sexuality in South Asian civilisations.

Abraham (1999) asserts that sexual purity is viewed as the responsibility of women for the honour of men, family, society, and nation. However, in South Asian traditions, masculinity is associated with men's authority, sexual strength, and ability to regulate the morality and sexuality of women (Abraham, 1999). South Asian men are raised to believe that sexual ability is a sign of manhood and that male sexual urges are normal (Abraham, 1999). Abraham (1999) elaborated on marital rape as a male privilege that leads to sexual abuse by limiting women's reproductive rights. A husband's belief in his capacity to control his wife's sexuality includes the power to influence her reproductive rights and body (Abraham, 1999). This is in line with the previous explanation of how safeguarding women's virginity and seeing female sexuality are tied in South Asian culture to protecting men's right to legitimate heirs. In this sense, restricting women's reproductive rights is

equivalent to restricting a woman's body by limiting her access to and options for contraception, her decision to have children, and her right to an abortion. Therefore, South Asian men perceive control over a woman's reproductive capacity as an entitlement as husbands and patriarchs (Osella & Osella, 2006).

Chakraborty (2014) argues that South Asian men and masculinities have been influenced by critical historical events and processes. These includes colonialism, anti-colonialism, state formations, civil wars, religious conflicts, and migration. Similarly, Osella and Osella (2006) also support Chakraborty's argument with the claim that South Asian men and masculinities are presented in two types of literature: on historical analyses of masculinities under colonialism and the South Asian culture of semen loss (Viryanash) anxiety. Munoz-Laboy (2004) also examines the culture of semen preservation to prove manhood and masculinity. The South Asian hegemonic masculine culture views the absence of semen as a malfunction. A respected man must be sexually competent, have no sexual disability, and fully please his female partner. Therefore, one must not waste semen.

As previously discussed, the colonial period inevitably acquired an essential place in discussions of the construction of masculinity in South Asia. The literature on colonial masculinities helps in uncovering domination and identity formation processes. According to Rajan (2016), women in the colonial period were looked upon as a symbol of sophistication for men who were expected to take care of family and household work; however, they hardly had any decision-making powers in the family, whereas a man with financial resources, earning capacity, had control over the wife and children (Osella & Osella, 2006). These patriarchal values were accepted by society at large, where families were responsible for conditioning young boys into the patriarchal structure, and women were also expected to internalise those values (Prakash, Kar & Rao, 2014). According to Prakash, Kar, and Rao (2014), families exhibited distinct characteristics where a mother or mother-like figure raised children. In such families, boys would receive significant

pampering from their mother or mother figure and hold their father or father-like figure in awe. The priest or religious guru who guided family affairs also held a patriarchal position of authority. If the priest practiced celibacy (brahmacharya), he would be regarded with even greater reverence due to the belief that the loss of semen diminishes patriarchal valour (Prakash, Kar, & Rao, 2014). Women of the family also internalised the loss of semen norms. Consequently, older women in the family controlled the bride's visits to her husband's bedroom (Prakash, Kar, & Rao, 2014).

In understanding masculinity in the South Asian region, examining the caste-based Hindu social hierarchies is vital. The book Homo Hierarchies: The Caste System and its Implications by Louis Dumont (1970) contributes to a sociological analysis of the South Asian Caste System (Newell, 1972). Dumont (1970) investigates the South Asian Caste System and its organising principles based on its underlying ideas (Newell, 1972). The focus is on the normative and dominant social types and stages of the life cycle indicated in the Hindu Dharmashastra (religious text), including the 'Laws of Manu' (Hindu Law) and 'the Dharmashastra' (Hinduism's religious treatises) (Osella & Osella, 2006). The fourfold of Brahmin (saint), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (merchant), and Sudra (labourer), along with untouchables (today's Dalits), classifies four idealised male activity models (Osella & Osella, 2006). These four varna systems of the 'Laws of Manu' and 'Dharmashastra' are constructed patterns of masculinity in South Asia, according to Osella & Osella (2006).

Osella & Osella (2006) further state the ideal stages of the life cycle are as follows: celibate student (brahmacharya), householder (grihastha), forest-dweller (vanprastha), and renouncer (sannyas). Students who are celibate are expected to avoid women. Householders are married men with children who rules the family. The forest-dweller is expected to provide a period of meditation for a life that has completed parental duties, withdrawn from domestic duties, and begun to seek spiritual sustenance. In the final

moment as a renouncer, a man is supposed to abandon his wife, reject the world, and contemplate God. According to Dumont (1970), the renouncer is significant because those who choose this position can genuinely live above Hindu society's fundamental concerns with impurity and pollution (1970). (Newell, 1972). According to Osella & Osella (2006), a man who stands alone, outside of the community, and bows only to God is a profoundly masculine heroic figure who exemplifies many of the characteristics often associated with dominant males: independence, self-confidence, self-control, and high-mindedness.

Masculinity in Nepal

There are few scholarly works on masculinity in Nepal and the South Asian continents (Osella & Osella, 2006), and those that do exist primarily examine the impact of Indian British colonialism on notions of manhood (Chakraborty, 2014). More research is required to understand the multiple masculinities in Nepal (Connell 2005; Duncanson 2013), including its relation to caste, class, ethnicity, education, and numerous historical and political manifestations. However, scholars such as Heidi Riley, Sanjeev Uprety, Matthew Maycock, and Pratyoush Onta have prepared the base for further research concerning Nepal’s masculinity.

In Riley's (2019) study, the concept of collective gender identity is utilized to examine insurgent masculinities. This concept encompasses attitudes towards gender-specific roles and behaviours, perceptions of acceptable conduct in male-female interactions, and views on gender hierarchies. The existing literature on pre-conflict Nepal demonstrates the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity, wherein men are associated with characteristics such as bravery, warrior-like qualities, fearlessness, being the provider for the family, and assuming the role of the household head. In contrast, women are associated with weakness and as subordinates of men (Maycock, 2012, Yadav, 2016). Riley (2019) claims that women’s participation during the war and their explicit demonstrations of

masculine traits and women's equality in taking on male roles, and men taking on the tasks that are traditionally viewed as feminine, represented a shift in masculinity in Nepal.

Onta's (1996) work concerns constructing a brave Nepali nation in British India creating brave masculine men to fight the colonisation attempt of British India in Nepal, though it does not directly deal with masculinities. The history of British India in Nepal provides the backdrop necessary to comprehend how they may have contributed to the formation of masculinities in Nepal. Uprety's (2011) also studied the constructions of masculinity of Gurkha soldiers in British representations and compared such structures with representations of the masculinities of the two most potent and influential Rana Prime Ministers, Jung Bahadur Rana, and Chandra Shumsher, who visited England, in 1850-51 and 1908, respectively. Uprety's (2011) study has demonstrated how the masculinity of ordinary Gorkhali soldiers was represented as lower-class British masculinity with the qualities of physical bravery, courage, impulsiveness, and lack of rational control. Their research shows that the Gorkhali soldiers' masculinity was different to British representations of the masculinity of the Rana Prime Minister, Jung Bahadur Rana, with the stories surrounding his hyper-masculine courage. He was associated with taming wild animals, battling flooded rivers and fires, subduing a buffalo that had escaped from a fighting arena, indulging in drinking, and womanising vices.

By contrast, Chandra Shumsher's British representation of his masculinity was tied to his art of exercising authority to his benefit and objectives. His adoption of Western attire, combined with his traditional royal gems and stones, symbolised both cultural and political power, reaffirming his position of mastery and masculinity (Uprety, 2011). His strict regulations of Hindu caste rules protected him from the charges that masculinity was compromised due to Western imitation (Uprety, 2011). Additionally, Chandra Shumsher's adherence to strict Hindu caste regulations acted as a protective measure against accusations that his masculinity was compromised by Western influence (Uprety, 2011).

The contrasting analysis of the masculinities of Jung Bahadur Rana and Chandra Shumsher depicts the cultural shifts that have shaped the constructions of Nepali masculinities in the first half of the 20th century (Uprety, 2011).

Uprety (2016) explores three interconnected dimensions of patriarchy in Nepal that contribute to the shaping and reinforcement of masculinity and violence against women. These dimensions include social norms, social structures, and the legal system. Uprety's findings indicate that sociocultural and legal institutions are influenced by the circulation of patriarchal social norms that prescribe specific expectations for masculinity and femininity. These norms perpetuate the belief that men are naturally inclined to be aggressive, engage in polygamy, possess rationality, and possess superior breadwinning abilities compared to women. Furthermore, men's greater representation in leadership positions within public institutions such as the police, courts, and media, which play significant roles in the law and justice mechanisms, perpetuates patriarchal norms and practices.

Similarly, Maycock's (2012) study explores various aspects of Kamaiya (former bonded labourer) masculinities after being freed from being a bonded labourer in far West Nepal. It also provides a thorough glimpse of Brahmin masculinity as hegemonic masculinity subordinating Kamaiyas as bonded labourers. In this study, Maycock (2017) examines the migration of Kamaiya (former bonded labour) masculinities and argues that transnationally enacted migrant masculinities are both subservient and hegemonic across geographically different contexts. He adds that Kamaiya enforces hegemonic masculinity at home and reduces modern slavery to subalterns overseas, using Ram as an example.

Men's Attitude Towards Violence Against Women

VAW is widespread and surpasses various societal, economic, religious, and cultural barriers. One of the most common types of VAW seen around the globe is women being

abused by their spouses or other close male companions. According to a study done in Northwest Ethiopia by Yigzaw, Berhane, Deyessa, and Kaba (2010), the societal expectation that marriage problems are inevitable makes it challenging for society to reject violence. They assert that VAW in Ethiopia reflects inappropriate behaviour according to prevailing societal and gender norms, since there is no justification for the act and it causes great suffering (Yigzaw et al, 2010). There is a fair bit of tolerance for violent acts when they are not viewed as unlawful, when there is a prosocial assumption, and when the repercussions are judged to be minimal (Yigzaw et al., 2010). There is less willingness to denounce marital rape because of a lack of understanding of the crime (Yigzaw et al., 2010).

Pease and Flood (2008) argue that men's adherence to derogatory, patriarchal, and sexually aggressive beliefs correlates with their use of violence against women. Their study highlights the correlation between the perpetration of violent behaviour, both at the individual and community levels, and attitudes and beliefs that support violence (Pease & Flood, 2008). Heise (1998) further emphasizes the relationship between antagonistic and negative sexual attitudes towards women, identification with hegemonic masculinity, male entitlement, and the likelihood of sexual assault among men. Similarly, O'Neil and Harway (1997) discovered that men with more traditional, restrictive, and discriminatory gender-role attitudes are more likely to engage in domestic violence. These findings are supported by a recent meta-analysis by Murnen et al. (2002), which examined the relationship between masculine ideology and sexual aggression. They discovered a significant correlation between male concepts and acts of violence against women. Acceptance of social norms that justify violence against women is prevalent in communities with a disproportionately high incidence of violence against women (Murnen et al., 2002). These studies collectively emphasize the role of attitudes, beliefs, and societal

norms in shaping violent behaviour towards women and underscore the need to challenge and transform these harmful ideologies to address violence against women effectively.

Burt's (1980) research examines the link between attitudes towards women and violence against women. The results of a regression analysis of interview data reveal that a respondent's acceptance of VAW increases with the level of sex-role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence. However, Burt reveals that younger and more educated individuals exhibit fewer stereotypical, less aggressive, and pro-violence views. Burt draws a conclusion from the research by asserting that the attitudes and beliefs of individuals and communities are components of a pervasive ideology that, in practice, condones or provides an explanation for violence against women.

Similarly, Wigglesworth et al. (2015) investigate the attitudes and beliefs of 500 young males in post-conflict Timor-Leste about gender relations and female violence. Focus group and interview data acquired for this study reveal that East Timorese have a prevalent culture of hierarchical and patriarchal gender roles and relationships. They discovered that men are often referred to as Chefe Familia (stronger than women) and are expected to be smart and devoted to their families (Wigglesworth et al., 2015). Women are supposed to serve their families as decent, responsible wives and mothers (Wigglesworth et al., 2015). This study indicates that physical abuse such as screaming, shoving, hitting, and hurling stones is prevalent among young males, who do not consider these actions to be violent (urban areas, 21–31% and rural areas, 30–36%). However, 52% of young males in rural areas disagree that verbal sexual harassment of women in public is unacceptable, compared to 40% of young men in urban areas. Similarly, 31% of young men do not consider forced sex to be an act of violence, and 42% think a woman cannot refuse to have sex with her spouse; if she refuses, males have the right to compel her (Wigglesworth et al., 2015).

Flood (2010) interviewed academics, policy experts, and service providers on the topic 'where men stand: men's roles in ending violence against women.' The study discovered that traditional male attitudes are associated with a higher endorsement of VAW and these attitudes are influenced by larger gender and sexuality norms. Men are more inclined to accept, excuse, or rationalise violence on the grounds that they should be dominant at home and have the right to exercise their dominance and sexual access rights over their wives or girlfriends (Flood, 2010). This perspective adds to the fact that males are typically the aggressors in family conflicts.

Similarly, Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, & Stewart (2004) investigated the impact of traditional gender norms and patriarchal values on South Asian immigrants in Canada. The study discovered that immigrants with greater patriarchal beliefs are less likely to view domestic violence as abuse (Ahmad et al., 2004). Only 17% consider forced sex by a husband to be potentially violent. Accordingly, Ahmad, Smylie, Omand, Cyriac, & O'Campo (2017) investigated the multi-ethnic perceptions of South Asian immigrant men and women about partner violence. According to their study men's perceptions of women and violence vary based on women's multi-ethnic concept (Ahmad et al., 2017). Sociocultural norms and values are more likely to influence perspectives on violence against women. For instance: Most South Asian men and women believe men have rights to sexual access and pleasure, even if it is by force, compared to white men and women (Klein, Campbell, Soler, & Ghez 1997, as cited in Ahmad et al. 2017).

Rape Myth and Victim-blaming

Victims of VAW are often blamed for their victimisation. Victim-blame for victimisation is the result of the acceptance of rape myths. These were defined in Burt's (1980) seminal work of cultural myths and support for rape as biased, conventional, or inaccurate beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists in creating a negative atmosphere for rape victims.

Recently, victim-blaming, and other negative attitudes towards victims have received considerable attention in studying individuals' attitudes towards the victim of abuse. Therefore, Hockett, Saucier & Badke (2016) attribute the need for this kind of research to analyse the fact that women are still partially liable for their violence. However, perceptions of women who have been assaulted differ among individuals. Research findings consistently indicate that, overall, men demonstrate a higher tendency to embrace rape myths and engage in victim-blaming culture compared to women (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1995; Davies, Gilston & Rogers 2012; Hockett, Saucier & Badke 2016), and they do so because men tend to endorse hostile attitudes towards women (Burt 1980, Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1995). Moreover, individuals who adhere to inflexible gender role stereotypes are more prone to endorsing the idea of men naturally dominating women and harbouring negative attitudes towards female victims (Burt, 1980; Davies et al., 2012; Hockett et al., 2016). Therefore, Hockett et al.'s (2016) research outcome suggests that men's social dominance supports keeping victims in a debased social position, blaming the victim, and accepting rape myths.

One of Hockett, Smith, Klausing & Saucier's (2016) research findings suggests that the narrow concept of mythic beliefs and sexual violence outside of the victim stereotype is perceived as an incident that happened by a combination of victim characteristics. Such characteristics are defined based on what the victim did, said or wore if she was out late at night and drunk (Hockett et al., 2016; Yapp & Quayle 2018). This suggests it most likely happened because the victim secretly wanted to engage in sexual behaviour. Therefore, these types of violence are not perceived as 'real' violence (Hockett et al., 2016). Similarly, Stephens et al.'s (2016) study on rape myth acceptance among 637 college students conducted in three countries, namely the United States, Japan, and India have slightly different findings from Hockett et al.'s (2016) results. Stephens et al. (2016) claim that rape myth acceptance varies by country and varies whether participants were aware of

the help-seeking organisation or that they can seek help. They claim that no-help-seeking directly links with the rape myth acceptance of blaming the victim. The U.S. participants were less likely to believe the rape myth than Japan and India because U.S. participants from grade school to college receive education and protection from sexual discrimination, which was lacking in Japan and India.

Similarly, Kosloski, Diamond-Welch, and Mann's (2018) study on the presence of rape myths in the virtual world represent a breakthrough in rape myth culture. It identifies a novel method of victim-blaming utilising social media platforms. Their study examines newspaper coverage of sexual assault cases in Steubenville, Ohio, focusing on social media content. It suggests that rape fallacies are widespread and perpetuated by social media users responding to the issues as they discover them on the social media wall painted by the comments; it is as if the assault was irrelevant (Freedman, 2002). Many victim-blaming remarks were made, particularly regarding victims' alcohol consumption (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004) and how perpetrators were not responsible/should not have their lives destroyed for this one-time error (Burt, 1980). Therefore, Kosloski, Diamond-Weiland, and Mann (2018) assert that individuals with no difficulty assigning blame on the shoulders of unconscious girls are recreating rape myths in online dialogues.

Le, Pekosz, and Iwamoto (2020) investigate the association between multiple masculine norms (playboy, violence, authority over women, and contempt for homosexual men) and approval of the rape myth among 251 university men in the United States. The findings indicate that the masculine norms of control over women and contempt for homosexual men are significantly associated with the rape myth belief. This research is comparable to previous studies on masculine ideals and misconceptions regarding rape acceptance. Locke and Mahalik (2005) found that rape myth acceptance is associated with

masculine norms such as sexual promiscuity, the subjugation of women, aggression, recklessness, and bias against homosexual males.

Hegemonic masculinity best explains why support for rape myths is inextricably linked to the norms of power over women and contempt for homosexual men. Hegemonic masculinity is the belief that being a male means being dominant in society and that women must be subservient to maintain power (Mankowski & Maton, 2010). The findings of Le, Pekosz, and Iwamoto's (2020) study corresponded closely with the antecedent definition, which argues that power over women and disdain for homosexual men increases the likelihood of dominance and supports hegemonic masculinity.

Men's Engagement to Prevent Violence Against Women

Murphy (2004) argues that men supporting women in their rights is not a new phenomenon; it was widely discussed in the academic community, and men had written several significant works since late fourth and early fifth century Greece when Aristophanes wrote his play Lysistrata (411 BCE), and Plato wrote the Republic (380 BCE). Both of these works suggest that women are equal to men. However, Sawyer (2004), argues that cultural and societal preconceptions of sex roles exist in our culture and encourage men to be dominant and women to be submissive and tolerant of the stereotypical behaviours that men exhibit when engaging in sexual activity with them.

Flood (2011) reviews various initiatives that engage men to prevent violence against women. He mentions that the feminist rationale for addressing men in ending VAW has three key elements. First, efforts to prevent VAW must include men because, primarily, men perpetrate violence (Flood, 2011). For instance: Hirachan & Limbu (2016) examined 55 cases of sexual assault in two hospitals in Nepal from 2012 to 2016, where all the victims were female, and perpetrators were male. Second, constructions of masculinity play a pivotal role in shaping VAW at multiple levels, including the individual, family and

relatives, as well as the broader communities and societies (Flood, 2011). For instance, Pandey's (2018) research among male prisoners concludes that male prisoners' masculine attitudes and dominance are the primary cause of violence against women. Hence, to eradicate violence against women, it is essential to modify men's mindsets, actions, self-perceptions, and interactions. Third, although men receive a patriarchal advantage from gendered structures of inequality, they can be motivated to use these advantages to advance the elimination of VAW (Flood, 2011). These privileges include personal well-being, relational interests, collective and community interests, and men's values (Flood, 2011).

Seymour's (2018) article critically examines the key elements of the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), which plays a significant role in ddressing violence against women. The researcher references Australian Parliamentarian statements that highlight the WRC as an exemplary demonstration of men supporting women (Commonwealth of Australia 2016b, cited in Seymour 2018) and as evidence of societal progress (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, cited in Seymour 2018) to make a crucial difference in our societies. However, the article argues that the WRC's reliance on a binary perspective of gender and its focus on the attitudes and acts of individual men contribute to overlooking the collective advantages men enjoy. Seymour (2018) blames WRC talks on social change, but predominately focuses on a personal level in terms of attitudes and behaviour. It encourages men to review their attitudes and behaviours and live non-violent and respectful relationships with women and other men (WRA 2016c, cited in Seymour 2018). However, according to Seymour (2018), "focusing on one individual's attitudes diverts attention away from structural power relations, as if the real issue is in men's minds and all that is needed is convincing them" (Pease 2008, p.11). This explanation oversimplifies an individual's attitude. Targets for change should therefore include institutional systems of

privilege and inequality, including not only gender and race but also ethnicity, social class, caste, and sexual orientation.

Minerson, Carolo, Dinner, and Jones (2011) investigate the underlying causes of men's socialisation, dominance, patriarchy, various forms of masculinity, gender inequality, and their relationship to violence against women in their 2011 study. This study focuses on potential strategies, best practices, and effective frameworks for involving men and boys to reduce and prevent gender-based violence. By examining these factors, the study sheds light on how to engage men and boys effectively in addressing and combating violence against women. This research examines four types of barriers that WRC identified for engaging men in preventing and reducing violence against women. They are accountability barriers, awareness barriers, privilege barriers and men's silence. Research suggests that accountability barriers are articulated through the comments like: "I do not force sex on my wife". The comment demonstrates that men think they are not part of the problem, and the idea of not forcing a wife supports their claim of being a good guy. Another finding of the WRC barrier was awareness barriers. This means that many men do not think VAW is a severe issue in their community.

Men are socially, culturally, and experientially conditioned to assume that violence is a part of women's existence (Minerson, Carolo, Dinner & Jones, 2011). Therefore, Minerson et al. (2011) conclude that working with men to reduce VAW must not only challenge the detrimental aspects of masculinities, patriarchy and men's privilege, but also promote enlightened self-interest motivations. This is because VAW is neither exclusively a women's nor men's issue, but it is an issue of society (Minerson et al., 2011). In a way, it is about women's empowerment, support, reclaiming safe spaces and intervention for women (Minerson et al., 2011). Alternatively, it is also about deconstructing masculinity, dismantling men's privilege, and providing education, awareness, and prevention for men (Minerson et al., 2011). Therefore, while engaging men on VAW, it is important to address

the fact that men are not just a part of the problem, but part of the solution. They need to be invited and challenged to critically reflect on patriarchy's existence, male power, and privilege to analyse the impacts on women and girls.

Engaging males has become an integral part of extensive international initiatives to prevent sexual assault against women, with a focus on men's behaviours, attitudes, and social structure. However, WRC Canada faces challenges in engaging men and overcoming men's created barriers in that country's engagement (White Ribbon Canada, 2014). In contrast, Chakraborty, Osrin & Daruwalla (2018) are tremendously positive regarding men's engagement in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) prevention program in Mumbai, India. They demonstrate that a barrier to men's participation in anti-violence activity is their incapacity to surpass and critique the public-private division and perceive VAWG as a public issue (Chakraborty et al., 2018). Therefore, Chakraborty et al. (2018), confidently claim that men's engagement programs allow them to acquire 'knowledge' and 'awareness' through intervention.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature to understand the formation of masculinity and how it relates to attitudes towards women. It was discovered that masculinity is constructed through a variety of meaning-making practises or systems of representation in various social contexts. Such contexts include schools, families, and other social groups in the workplace, leisure and pleasure fields, and the state in a broader sense. It was evidenced through men's explanations of their attitudes towards violence against women, rape myths, and a victim-blaming culture. The next chapter discusses the analytical steps taken to analyse Nepalese masculinity and violence against women.

Chapter Five: Nepalese Masculinity and Violence Against Women

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from survey data collected from 197 male participants. Different variables are considered as to how age, marital status, education, occupation, and geographic location contribute to the construction of masculinity in Nepal, as well as how these variables affect the construction of masculinity attitudes towards women, and masculinity and victim-blaming. Bar charts, figures, graphs, tables, and pie charts highlight the key results.

Demographic Profile

The demographic information profile gathered the participants' age, gender, marital status, Province, highest educational qualification, and employment. Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of participants by their primary societal group. In the beginning, the sample of 200 participants comprised 197 males, two females, and one gender not-mentioned (two females and one gender not-mentioned were not included in this research). Therefore, this demography contains only information about 197 male participants. The most significant proportion of the respondents (47.2%) were 20-25 years old; this was the participants' largest age group. The next largest age group was 26-30 (31%), drastically dropping the 31-35 age group to (12.2%). The lowest percentage age group was 36-39 (3.6%), and the second lowest was the over-40-age group (6.0%).

The most significant proportion of participants (65%) were unmarried, and (35%) were married. Most participants were found to reside in Province 3 (42.1%), followed by 17.3% in Province 1. There are significantly fewer differences between the participants living in Province 1 (17.3%) and Province 4 (16.2%). The participants between Provinces 2 and 7 have very subtle differences, with 6.6% and 5.1%.

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-25	93	47.2%
26-30	61	31.0%
31-35	24	12.2%
36-39	7	3.6%
Over 40	12	6.0%
Gender		
Male	197	100.0%
Female	0	0.0%
Marital Status		
Married	69	35.0%
Unmarried	128	65.0%
Reside In		
Province 1	34	17.3%
Province 2	13	6.6%
Province 3	83	42.1%
Province 4	32	16.2%
Province 5	20	10.2%
Province 6	5	2.5%
Province 7	10	5.1%
Highest Level of Education		
No Formal Education	3	1.5%
Secondary Education[1]	20	10.2%
Higher Secondary Education[2]	57	28.9%
Bachelor of Education	91	46.2%
Master of Education	24	12.2%
Over Master of Education	2	1.0%
Employment		
Student	42	21.3%
Unemployed	20	10.2%
Business	22	11.2%
Labourer[3]	19	9.6%
Service[4]	45	22.8%
Professional Employment[5]	49	24.9%

Most participants studied for a Bachelor of Education (46.2%), followed by Higher Secondary Education (28.9%). The participants' ratio from Higher Secondary Education to

[1] Formal school education comprised of grade 9 and 10 is secondary school education.
[2] Formal school education comprised of grade 11 and 11 is higher secondary school education.
[3] People involved in physical work especially an unskilled work is labourer.
[4] People involved in government jobs such as military service, police, and civil services.
[5] People involved in other skilled jobs such as teaching, employ of private companies, NGOs and INGOs.

Master of Education dropped to more than half (12.2%). There were 10.2% of Secondary Education participants, whereas only 1.5 % presented with No Formal Education, and only 1% were studying for a PhD.

Most of the participants, 24.9%, were involved in a professional job, whereas only 9.6 % were engaged in labouring. Similarly, participants involved in service sectors, such as military service, government service, and police, with the percentage (22.9%) had a subtle difference from the students (21.3%). Likewise, there was a slight difference between participants involved in business (11.2%) and the unemployed (10.2%).

To summarise, the most significant proportions of participants were as follows:

- 19-25 years old (47.2%)
- unmarried 65%
- Province 3 residents (42.1%)
- Bachelor of Education qualification (46.2%)
- professional employment (24.9%)

In contrast, the lowest proportion of the participants were:

- 36-39 years old (3.6%)
- married (35%)
- Province 6 residents (2.5%)
- completed Over Master of Education (1%)
- manual labour employment (9.6%)

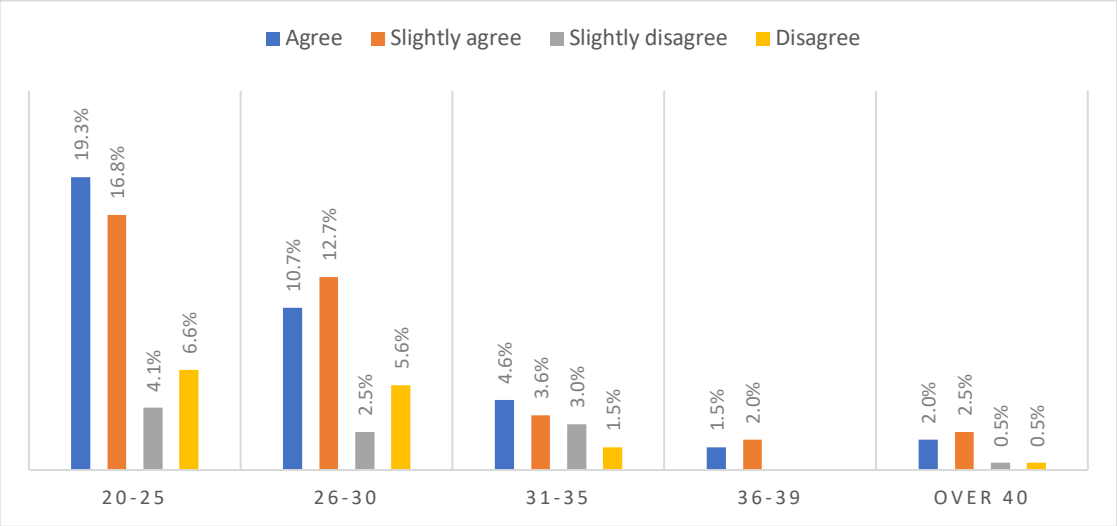
Age: Masculinity as a Social Construct

Having outlined the demographic details above, this research analysed online survey questionnaires, comparing the data with demographic information to explore the construction of masculinity in Nepal. This research began the analysis by comparing the survey questionnaire results with the age variable to understand how different age groups

contribute to constructing masculinity in Nepal and what kinds of masculinities are constructed in different age groups.

Figure 1: Respect of Men with Age Variables

Crosstabulation of the statement that people do not respect men who frequently talk about problems with age variable.



The cluster chart above shows that 19.3 % of the people aged 20-25 agree, and 16.8% of the people slightly agree that people do not respect men who frequently talk about problems. Similarly, 10.7% and 12.7 % agree and slightly agree with the statement mentioned above by the 26-30 years old group. The data shows that the percentage decreases when the age of the men increases. For example, only 1.5 % and 2% of men aged 36-39 and over 40 agreed with the above statement.

Further, to understand how the age variable correlates with the perceptions of masculinity, a Pearson Chi-Square test was carried out. The importance of undertaking the test relates to the need for the two variables to comprise categorical data, which is ordinal, and the variables containing two or more categorical independent groupings. The distribution of the responses with age for the variable, *People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems,* is depicted in the Crosstabulation Table 2 below.

Table 2: Men's Respect with Age Crosstabulation

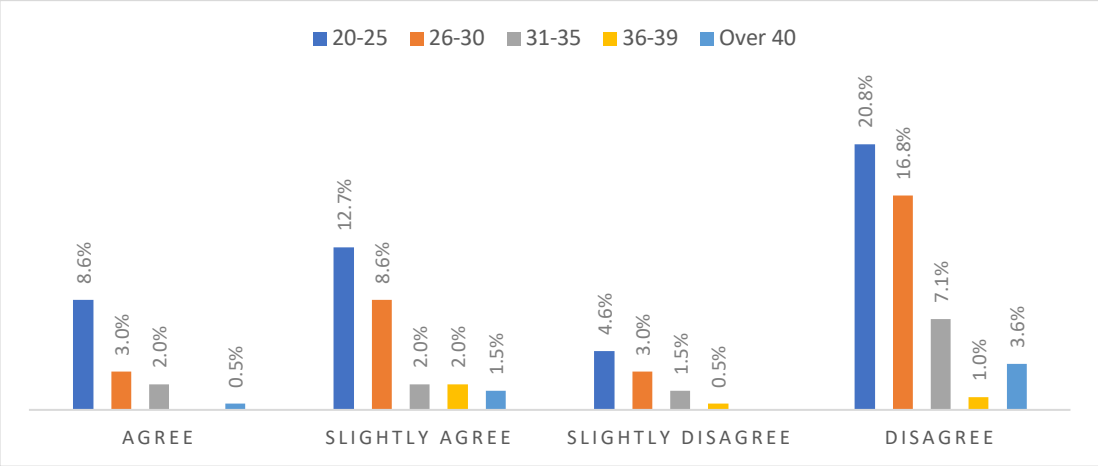
Age * People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems. Crosstabulation

			People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems				
			Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Total
What is your age	20-25	Count	38	33	8	13	92
			50.7%	44.6%	40.0%	46.4%	46.7%
	26-30	Count	21	25	5	11	62
			28.0%	33.8%	25.0%	39.3%	31.5%
	31-35	Count	9	7	6	3	25
			12.0%	9.5%	30.0%	10.7%	12.7%
	36-39	Count	3	4	0	0	7
			4.0%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%
	Over 40	Count	4	5	1	1	11
			5.3%	6.8%	5.0%	3.6%	5.6%
Total		Count	75	74	20	28	197
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The output in Table 2 above shows that the perception of masculinity rings true among Nepalese men. Interestingly, the statistics obtained suggest that the youngest respondents (20 -25 years) strongly support the idea that people do not respect men who frequently speak about their problems (50.7%). That result goes against the perception that such an idea is only found among men of the older generation (Dahal, Joshi & Swahnberg, 2022). To understand this phenomenon in detail, a review of the responses to other questions and an analysis to correlate them with the age of the respondents was required.

Figure 2: Aggression of Men with Age Variable

Crosstabulation of the statement that strong aggression is a natural emotion for men with age variable.



Anger is a natural human emotion experienced by everyone in response to any kind of threat. Aggression and violence are not the same, but a person can commit violence due to aggression (Malonda-Vidal, Samper-Gracía, Llorca-Mestre, Muŋoz-Navarro, & Mestre-Escrivá, 2021). Masculine aggression is derived from a traditional patriarchal structure that believes in inherently aggressive masculine genes (Malonda-Vidal, Samper-Gracía, Llorca-Mestre, Muŋoz-Navarro, & Mestre-Escrivá, 2021). Edward Wilson, the socio-biologist, claims that the culture has amplified the physical and temperamental differences between men and women into universal male dominance (Connell, 1995). The naturalisation of male dominance as an aggressive masculine gene is one source of masculine construction (Messerschmidt, 1993) that also works to blame the victim. Figure 2 above provides the percentages in Nepal relating to the statement that strong aggression is a natural emotion for men. It shows that 41% of men agreed and slightly agreed that men are aggressive by birth, whereas 21.3% of men aged 20-25 showed positive responses.

Aggression is one of the main drivers of gender-based violence, especially against women. According to Connell (1995), aggression is an integral element of hegemonic masculinity and is understood as a critical driver of dominance over women by utilising one's physical strength. Hence, understanding how age correlates with the notion that extreme aggression is an integral part of conventional masculinity was deemed to be essential. The crosstabulation and Eta tables below demonstrate the association between age and the statement *that strong aggression is a natural emotion for men.*

Table 3: Aggression of Men with Crosstabulation

Strong Aggression is a Natural Emotion for Men. * Age

Crosstabulation

			What is your age?					
			20-25	26-30	31-35	36-39	> 40	Total
Strong aggression is a natural emotion for men.	Agree	Count	17	6	4	0	1	28
		Expected Count	13.1	8.8	3.6	1.0	1.6	28.0
	Slightly Agree	Count	25	17	4	4	3	53
		Expected Count	24.8	16.7	6.7	1.9	3.0	53.0
	Slightly Disagree	Count	9	6	3	1	0	19
		Expected Count	8.9	6.0	2.4	.7	1.1	19.0
	Disagree	Count	41	33	14	2	7	97
		Expected Count	45.3	30.5	12.3	3.4	5.4	97.0
Total		Count	92	62	25	7	11	197
		Expected Count	92.0	62.0	25.0	7.0	11.0	197.0

Table 4: Directional Measures

Directional Measures			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Strong aggression is a natural emotion for men. Dependent	0.126
		What is your age Dependent	0.106

In Table 3 above, the presence of positive discrepancies between the Actual and Expected Counts within the upper left (20-25) column, and the presence of negative discrepancies in the lower-left columns and vice versa, would be indicative of an association between the two variables – *age* and *Strong aggression is a natural emotion for men.* Considering that a difference exists, i.e. (17 and 13.1 for Count and Expected Count) respectively, there is a possibility of a relationship.

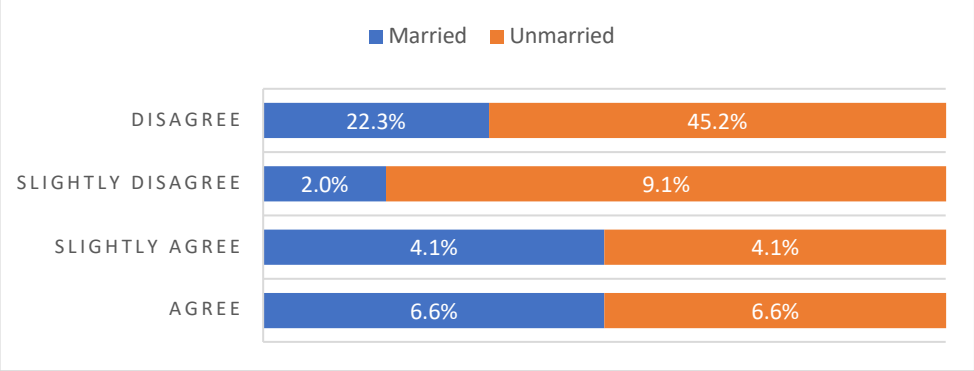
As shown in Table 4 above, *strong aggression is a natural emotion for men* was taken as the dependent variable; hence, the appropriate Eta is 0.126, which is a small effect size. Eta squared would be 0.02, which indicates that the two variables share a 2% common variance. Hence, Eta was employed to investigate the association between respondents' age and their response to the statement. The results showed that *Strong aggression is a natural emotion for men* (eta = 0.126) had a small effect size. It can be concluded, therefore, that older respondents were less likely to believe that strong aggression is a natural emotion in men than younger respondents.

Marital Status: Masculinity as a Social Construct

Having more than one sexual partner is taboo in Nepali culture (Adhikari & Adhikari, 2017), and strong social and cultural norms in the Hindu religion prohibit young men and women from having pre-marital sex. This study found no difference in opinion between married and unmarried men (Agree and Slightly Agree) with this statement. Both Agreed and Slightly Agreed somewhat (6.6% and 4.1%) in the same ratio.

Figure 3: Men's Multiple Sexual Intercourse Comparison with Marital Status

It is OK for men to have sexual intercourse with many women: comparison with marital status variable.



However, the data above in Figure 3 shows that unmarried men (45.2%) disagree that men cannot have sex with more than one sexual partner. Although the prevalence of sexual intercourse with more than one partner varies by age category, 31.5% of men aged 20-25 and 22.3% of men aged 26-30 disagreed that men could not have more than one sexual partner. This means young unmarried men studying or unemployed believe sexual intercourse before marriage or having more than one sexual partner is inappropriate. This analysis is associated with the attitude towards male virginity and a cultural and religious belief that sexual intercourse with many partners and an attempt to gain sexual pleasure before marriage is offensive. It also points towards male virginity before marriage.

There is a similar belief that women are not as intelligent as males. The notion of the inferiority of women as a fabrication of hegemonic masculinity is supported by this conception. Based on this, it was deemed necessary to undertake a correlation analysis to determine how marital status may influence the tendency to hold certain hegemonic masculinity notions. Importantly, Pearson's Correlation is the most popular approach scholars employ to analyse correlations between variables. For Pearson's Correlation to be used in the analysis of variables, the data within the variables must conform to certain assumptions, such as being continuous and possessing a linear relationship with one another. Furthermore, the data should be devoid of any outliers and follow a specific pattern for which there is minimal variation between the data sets. In addition, the data sample should be generally distributed because it possesses a bivariate assumption. Notably, these assumptions do not hold for a Likert Scale Survey, such as the one used in this study, especially in the responses to the questions.

As a result, Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was employed owing to its capacity for measuring both the strength and direction of association between variables measured on an ordinal scale. For the analysis, the aim was to determine the correlation between marital status and the perception that women are not as smart as men. The

analysis output commences with Table 5 below, which details the Descriptive Statistics. It shows that for a sample size of 197 respondents, the means for *marital status* and *women not as smart as men* were 1.65 and 3.47, respectively. This result indicates that most respondents were unmarried, while most respondents slightly disagreed or disagreed with the question.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Marital status	1.65	.478	197
Women are not as smart as men	3.47	.972	197

The results presented in Tables 6 and 7 are an essential aspect of the analysis, as they detail the correlations found between the variables.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation

Correlations[a]

		Marital Status	Women are not as smart as men
Marital status	Pearson Correlation	1	.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.245
Women are not as smart as men.	Pearson Correlation	.083	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.245	

a. Listwise N=197

The Pearson Correlation in Table 6 above indicates that the Pearson Correlation coefficient is.083, while the significance level is p =.245. Furthermore, in agreement with Table 5, the sample size for the correlation is 197. Crucially, the degree of freedom for correlations is given by (N – 2), and for this analysis, r (197) =.083, p =.245. The dataset is thus unfit for Pearson Correlation due to its ordinal nature. The reasonable correlation for the analysis is detailed in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Spearman's rho Correlation

Correlations[a]

			Marital Status	Women are not as smart as men.
Spearman's rho	Marital Status	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.069
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.334
	Women are not as smart as men.	Correlation Coefficient	.069	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.334	.

a. Listwise N = 197

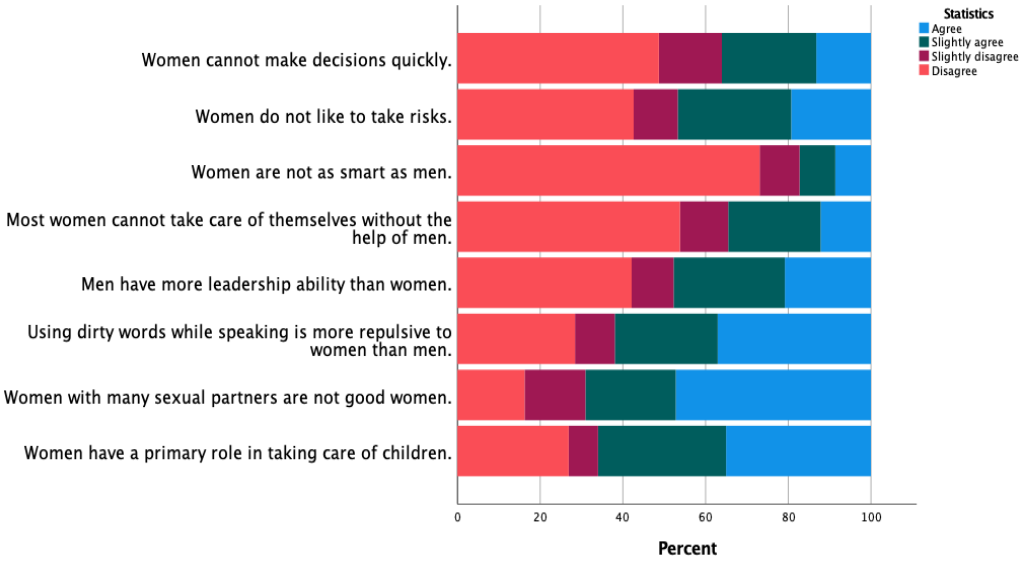
Accordingly, a correlation was computed to determine whether there was a statistically significant association between marital status and the response that *women are not as smart as men*. Based on the nature of the variables comprising ordinal data, they violated the assumption for continuous data, making Pearson's Correlation relevant to the study. Spearman's rho statistic was therefore computed, with its output as depicted in Table 7 above, and was R_s (197) =.069, p =.334. The direction of the correlation was found to be positive, but not significant, i.e., p >.05. That means there was no significant correlation between the respondents' marital status and their perception of whether women are not as smart as men.

Masculinity and Attitude Towards Women

The study also showed certain masculine attitudes towards women concerning sexuality and women's role. Of the respondents, 66.0%, for example, either agreed (35%) or slightly agreed (31%) that women have a primary role in caring for children. In comparison, only 26.9% disagreed, and 7.1% slightly disagreed with such a statement. There was also a widely accepted stereotypical difference between men and women regarding social expectations concerning sexual behaviour. For example, 69% of the men either agreed (47.2%) or slightly agreed (21.8%), stating that women with many sexual partners are not good women. Similarly, 62% of men agreed (37.1%) or slightly agreed (24.9%) with the statement that using dirty words while speaking is more repulsive to women than men.

In contrast, only 16.2% disagreed, or 14.7% slightly disagreed with a statement that women with many sexual partners are not good women, and only 28.4% disagreed, or 9.6% slightly disagreed with a statement using dirty words while speaking is more repulsive to women than to men.

Figure 4: Masculinity and Attitude Towards Women



The survey shows that most men still associate with the older stereotypes of masculinities, such as men have more leadership power than women, most women cannot take care of themselves without the help of men, women are not as smart as men, women do not like to take risks, and women cannot make decisions quickly. Therefore, 20.8% agreed, and 26.9% slightly agreed that men have more leadership ability than women. Similarly, 12.2% of men agreed, and 22.3% slightly agreed that most women could not take care of themselves without men's help. Surprisingly, men in Nepal think gender decides the smartness of people as seen in the 17.2% of men who agreed (8.6%) or slightly agreed (8.6%) that women are not as smart as men.

It is unfortunate that 46.7% of males in Nepal believe women do not like to take risks and that 36% believe women cannot make decisions quickly. It clearly showed that while modern Nepali women try to break away from the hypothetical non-physical attributes given to women that produce social norms and ideologies concerning gender,

their male counterparts still hold onto the same long-held beliefs and attitudes. In contrast, only 52.3% of men disbelieved men have more leadership power than women. Similarly, 65.5% of men disagreed or slightly disagreed with a statement that most women cannot take care of themselves without men's help. It is a progressive Nepal signal, where 82.7% of men did not believe women are not as smart as men. However, if the entire research data collection were from rural Nepal, the disbelieved percentage would be lower. Approximately 53.3% of men denied a statement that women do not like to take risks, and 63.9% of men refused to say that women cannot make quick decisions.

Education is crucial for eliminating gender stereotypes and diminishing the persistent hegemonic masculinity tendencies that are predominantly prominent in society. As such, for the current study, it was essential to determine whether education levels can help to facilitate a change in the respondents' perceptions regarding masculinity. In that case, the aim was to ascertain whether there was a statistically significant difference among the six education groups of the respondents on responses to the following statements: *It is not appropriate for men to ask for help*, *Men should not show sadness to others*, *People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems*, *Men should always be brave*, *Men should always be logical*, *Men should always be independent, Men should always be tough*, and *Men need to be able to find a well-paying job.* A Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out, primarily because the dataset violated the variance assumption, which would make it possible to utilise One-Way ANOVA.

The output from the test commences with the Ranks output as detailed in Table 8 below. The table offers the Means Ranks for eight dependent variables, i.e. *It is not appropriate for men to ask for help*, *Men should not show sadness to others*, *People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems*, *Men should always be brave*, *Men should always be logical*, *Men should always be independent, Men should always be tough*, and *Men need to be able to find a well-paying job.* For the analysis, the Kruskal-Wallis (K-W)

test compared the mean ranks for the six education groups of the respondents. Following the Ranks output, Table 9 below details the Test Statistics and indicates whether there is an overall difference among the six groups regarding the response to the eight dependent variables.

Table 8: Ranks- Kruskal-Wallis Test

	What is your highest level of education?	N	Mean Rank
It is not appropriate for men to ask for help.	No Formal Education	3	17.33
	Secondary Education	20	62.73
	Higher Secondary School	57	99.33
	Bachelor of Education	91	108.31
	Master of Education	24	100.88
	Over Master of Education	2	128.50
	Total	197	
Men should not show sadness to others.	No Formal Education	3	42.00
	Secondary Education	20	63.93
	Higher Secondary School	57	90.85
	Bachelor of Education	91	110.55
	Master of Education	24	106.21
	Over Master of Education	2	155.50
	Total	197	
People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems.	No Formal Education	3	62.83
	Secondary Education	20	88.43
	Higher Secondary School	57	94.04
	Bachelor of Education	91	99.90
	Master of Education	24	116.65
	Over Master of Education	2	148.00
	Total	197	
Men should always be brave.	No Formal Education	3	87.67
	Secondary Education	20	90.75
	Higher Secondary School	57	92.24
	Bachelor of Education	91	103.87
	Master of Education	24	102.75
	Over Master of Education	2	124.75
	Total	197	
Men should always be logical.	No Formal Education	3	62.83
	Secondary Education	20	84.08
	Higher Secondary School	57	98.55
	Bachelor of Education	91	103.26
	Master of Education	24	94.08
	Over Master of Education	2	180.50
	Total	197	
Men should always be independent.	No Formal Education	3	48.67
	Secondary Education	20	72.20
	Higher Secondary School	57	102.36
	Bachelor of Education	91	103.46
	Master of Education	24	97.46
	Over Master of Education	2	162.50
	Total	197	
Men should always be tough.	No Formal Education	3	25.83
	Secondary Education	20	71.97
	Higher Secondary School	57	98.37
	Bachelor of Education	91	106.89
	Master of Education	24	99.21
	Over Master of Education	2	135.50
	Total	197	
Men need to be able to find a well-paying job.	No Formal Education	3	53.67
	Secondary Education	20	94.00
	Higher Secondary School	57	105.61
	Bachelor of Education	91	96.08
	Master of Education	24	103.85
	Over Master of Education	2	103.50
	Total	197	

Table 9: Test Statistics

Test Statistics[a,b]

	It is not appropriate for men to ask for help.	Men should not show sadness to others.	People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems.	Men should always be brave.	Men should always be logical.	Men should always be independent.	Men should always be tough.	Men need to be able to find a well-paying job.
Kruskal-Wallis H	26.396	19.926	6.900	3.273	8.245	10.972	16.211	3.586
Df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001	.228	.658	.143	.052	.006	.610

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: What is your highest level of education?

Due to the fact that there were unequal variances, a Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test was conducted to test for statistically significant differences between respondents' education groups in eight dependent variables, namely: *It is not appropriate for men to ask for help*, *Men should not show sadness to others*, *People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems*, *Men should always be brave*, *Men should always be logical*, *Men should always be independent, Men should always be tough*. The test's output indicated that the six respondents' education groups differed on *it is not appropriate for men to ask for help*, χ^2 (5, N = 197) = 26.396, p <.001, with a mean rank of 17.33 for No Formal Education, 62.73 for Secondary Education, 99.33 for Higher Secondary Education, 108.31 for Bachelor of Education, and 100.88 for Master of Education.

In addition, according to the test's output, the six respondents' education groups differed on *men should not show sadness to others* χ^2 (5, N = 197) = 19.926, p =.001, with a mean rank of 42.00 for No Formal Education, 63.93 for Secondary Education, 90.85 for Higher Secondary Education, 110.55 for Bachelor of Education, 106.21 for Master of Education, and 155.50 for Over Master of Education. The trend was also witnessed with *men should always be tough*, where the six respondents' education groups differed χ^2 (5, N = 197) = 16.211, p =.006, with a mean rank of 25.83 for No Formal Education, 71.97 for

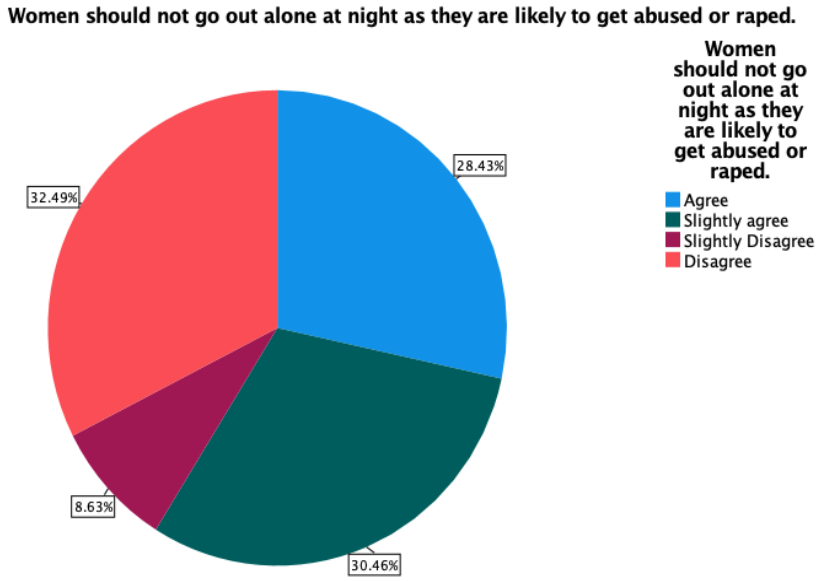
Secondary Education, 98.37 for Higher Secondary Education, 106.89 for Bachelor of Education, 99.21 for Master of Education, and 135.50 for Over Master of Education.

The outputs indicate that the three statements, i.e., *it is not appropriate for men to ask for help, men should not show sadness to others,* and *men should always be tough,* depicted a significant influence of respondents' education on their response. For the other statements, the responses from the respondents were hardly affected by their education levels. Hence, for education, the overwhelming perception would be that it helps reign in gender stereotypes, especially in reducing the uptake of hegemonic masculinity, especially within the younger generations. The study results indicate that Education in its current state in Nepal does not provide such a shift in the conventional societal mindset. That is the case since hegemonic masculinity is extensively entrenched within society, and conventional Education is doing little to enlighten Nepalese, especially men, on how flawed their perception of their place in society is. It is thus indicative of a need for lessons explicitly aimed at unravelling the existing gender stereotypes and providing an avenue for a shift in how society approaches the issue of hegemonic masculinity.

Masculinity and Attitude Towards Violence Against Women

The study also measured men's beliefs and ideologies that led to violence against women. The survey found that many men believe women should be confined within the household to save them from abuse or rape. Therefore, a total of 58.9% of men agreed (28.4%) or slightly agreed (30.5%) that women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped. In contrast, only 41.1% of men disagreed (32.5%) or slightly disagreed (8.6%) with the above-mentioned statement.

Figure 5: Women should not go out alone.



Notably, there was a need to understand whether the respondent's age influenced the perception of women being confined at home to avoid rape, i.e., the response to the question was significantly different based on the respondent's age. Hence, the aim was to determine whether younger and older respondents differed on whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that women should confine themselves to their homes to avoid getting abused or raped. In analysing the relationship between the two variables, there was a need to determine whether the dataset passed the requirements for utilising Pearson Chi-Square.

The key assumption to be met when utilising the statistics was that the two variables should comprise ordinal or nominal level data, which was the case with the two variables, i.e., the respondent's age. *The* response to the statement – *women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped*. Secondly, the two variables should consist of two categorical independent groupings. The assumption was met by the two variables whereby the *age of respondents* in the seven categorical groupings included 'Under 20', '20 – 25', '26 – 30', '31 –.35', '36 – 39', and 'Over 40'. On the other hand, the

statement response was based on a Likert scale comprising of 'Agree', 'Slightly Agree', 'Slightly Disagree', and 'Disagree.'

After conducting Chi-Square Tests to assess whether there is a statistically significant association between the two variables, Tables 10 and 11 report the results. The age of respondents and reaction to the statement "women should not go out alone at night because they are likely to be abused or raped" are cross tabulated in Table 10 below. Using the Counts and Expected Counts output, it is possible to determine that a more significant proportion of the youngest respondents – '20 – 25' – agreed with the statement that women should not go out alone at night because they are likely to be mistreated or raped. Nevertheless, it is impossible to verify if the difference is systematic. In addition, in the Crosstabulation Table, the Expected Count for the youngest respondents (20 to 25 years old) who agreed with the statement is 26.2, but the actual Count is 32. The result of the Chi-Square Tests in Table 11 below addresses the inconsistencies and the determination of whether the trend between the Expected Counts and actual Counts is systematic.

Table 10: Women going out Alone with Age Crosstabulation

Women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped. * What is your age Crosstabulation

			What is your age					
			20-25	26-30	31-35	36-39	> 40	Total
Women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped.	Agree	Count	32	14	6	2	2	56
		Expected Count	26.2	17.6	7.1	2.0	3.1	56.0
		% Within What is your age	34.8%	22.6%	24.0%	28.6%	18.2%	28.4%
	Slightly Agree	Count	28	18	7	4	3	60
		Expected Count	28.0	18.9	7.6	2.1	3.4	60.0
		% Within What is your age	30.4%	29.0%	28.0%	57.1%	27.3%	30.5%
	Slightly Disagree	Count	9	4	3	0	1	17
		Expected Count	7.9	5.4	2.2	.6	.9	17.0
		% Within What is your age	9.8%	6.5%	12.0%	0.0%	9.1%	8.6%
	Disagree	Count	23	26	9	1	5	64
		Expected Count	29.9	20.1	8.1	2.3	3.6	64.0
		% Within What is your age	25.0%	41.9%	36.0%	14.3%	45.5%	32.5%
Total		Count	92	62	25	7	11	197
		Expected Count	92.0	62.0	25.0	7.0	11.0	197.0
		% Within What is your age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided) Sig.	99% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	99% Confidence Interval Upper Bound	Monte Carlo Sig. (1-sided) Sig.	99% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	99% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	10.483[a]	12	.574	.578[b]	.566	.591			
Likelihood Ratio	10.900	12	.537	.627[b]	.615	.640			
Fisher's Exact Test	9.923			.589[b]	.576	.601			
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.205[c]	1	.138	.137[b]	.128	.146	.072[b]	.065	.078
N of Valid Cases	197								

a. Ten cells (45.0%) have an Expected Count of less than five. The minimum Expected Count is.60.
b. Based on 10000 sampled tables with starting seed 2000000.

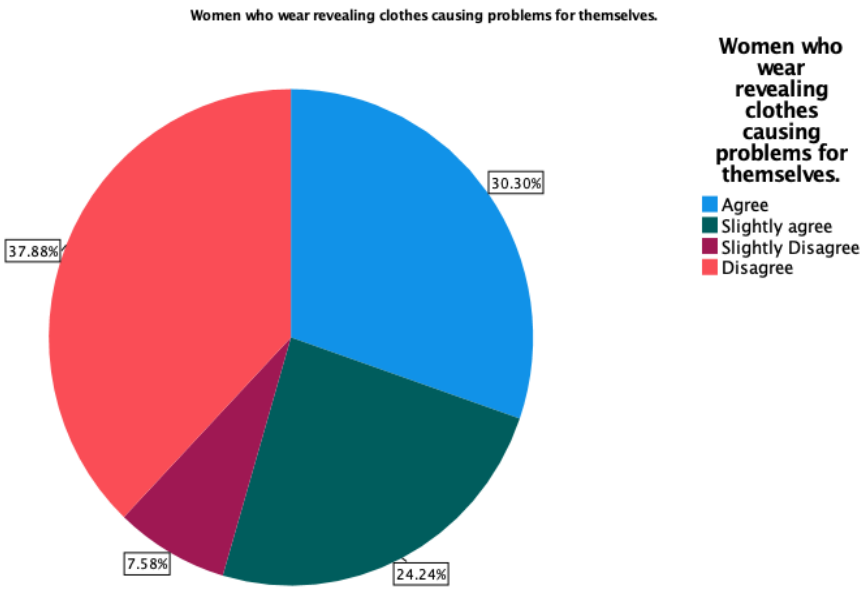
From Table 11 above, there is the option of using Pearson Chi-Square or Fisher's Exact Test, based on the nature of the data set. According to the output, the Pearson Chi-Square output for the two variables is insignificant, i.e. (p =.574), which is indicative of the lack of certainty on whether older or younger respondents were significantly different on whether they agreed or did not disagree with the statement that *women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped.* However, according to the footnote on the Chi-Square output, ten cells (45%) have an Expected Count of less than 5, when the minimum Expected Count is.60. Thus, the prerequisites for applying Pearson Chi-Square were not met, and Fisher's Exact Test was employed while reading the Chi-Square Tests table. In determining the Fisher's Exact Test, the decision to employ the Monte Carlo method was influenced by the fact that in both the Asymptotic and Exact options, the analysis took too long and yielded a negative result due to device memory constraints.

A Chi-Square test was conducted to evaluate whether younger or older respondents differed in their agreement or disagreement with the statement that women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to be abused or raped. The test results suggested that

there is no substantial difference between younger and older respondents about whether women should not go out alone at night. They are likely to experience sexual abuse or exploitation ($\chi^2 = 10.483$, $df = 12$, $N = 197$, $p = .589$). This result is relevant to the current study because it demonstrates that the discourse of abuse and rape is still strongly biased towards the alleged carelessness of the victim, as opposed to criticising the overwhelmingly male perpetrators of the crime. This impression is shared by all age groups of men, whether young or old.

Another similar statement was given, and the resultant percentages were not different. When given the statement that women wearing revealing clothes causes problems for themselves, 54.5% of men agreed (30.3%) and slightly agreed (24.2%) with the statement. Only 37.9% of men disagreed, and 7.6% of men slightly disagreed with the statement.

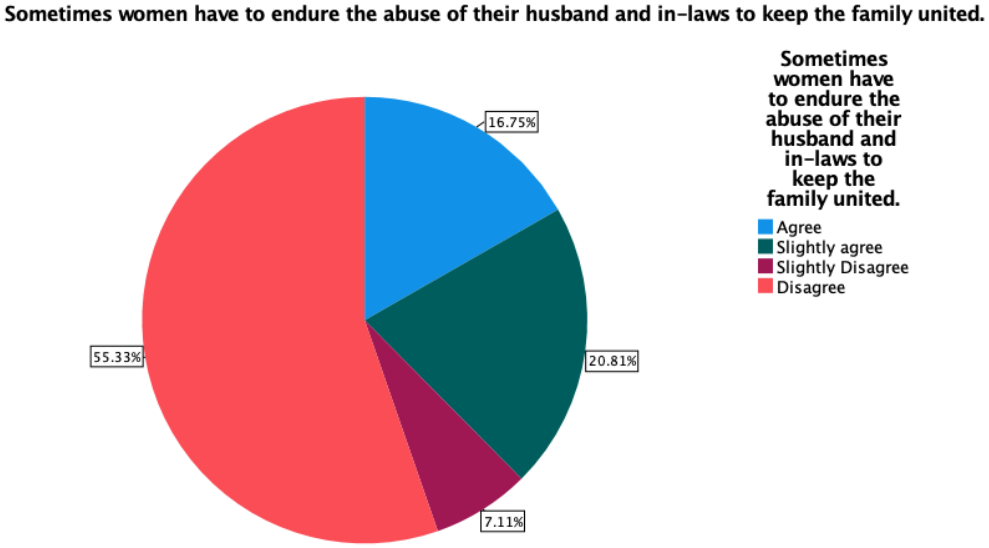
Figure 6: Women Wearing Revealing Clothes



Nepali society has given women the big responsibility of uniting and keeping families together. Surprisingly, however, the women who keep the family together are not safe. The survey statistics proved it: 37.6% of men agreed (16.8%) or slightly agreed

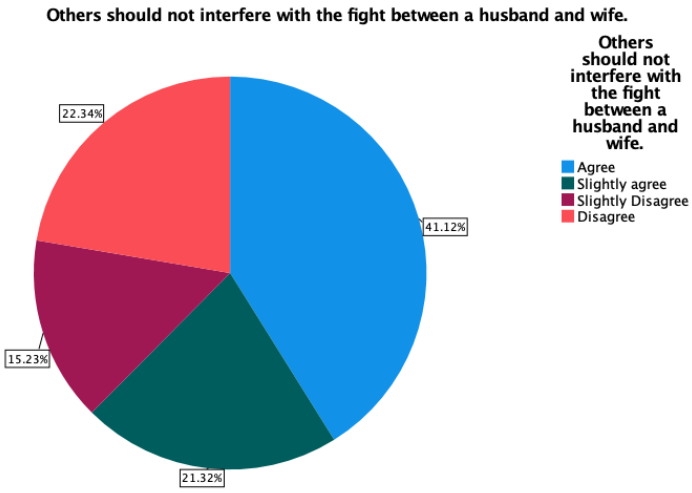
(20.8%) that sometimes women must endure the abuse of husbands and in-laws to keep the family together. A large number (62.4%) of men disagreed (55.3%) or slightly disagreed (7.1%) with the statement; however, we cannot deny the fact that 37.6% is a significant number and women who raise their voices against abuse from husbands and in-laws might face violence.

Figure 7: Women's Endurance on their In-Laws and Husband's Abuse



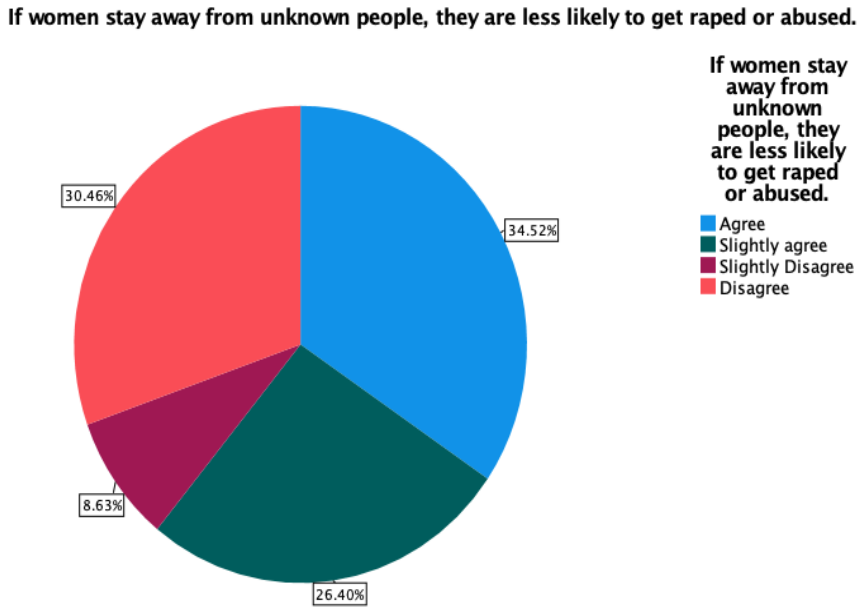
In Nepal, reporting violence or seeking help to end the violence is still uncommon. The society also does not intervene if they see couples fighting. There is a famous saying in Nepali, *"Logne swasni ko jhagada paral ko aago"* (fights between a couple are like a blaze in the straw that does not last long). The survey statistics prove that the above saying governs people's attitudes towards a couple's discord. The results here show that 62.4% of men either agreed (41.1%) or slightly agreed (21.3%) that others should not interfere with a fight between a husband and wife. Only 22.3% of men disagreed, and 15.2% of men slightly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 8: Fight Between Husband and Wife



While the Government of Nepal's research (2016) claims that most cases of VAW were committed by someone known to the victim, the survey results found that many men in Nepal still believe that if women stay away from unknown people, they are less likely to get raped or abused. Around 60.9% of men agreed (34.5%) or slightly agreed (26.4%) with the above statement. Only 30.5% of men denied the statement, and 8.6% barely rejected it.

Figure 9: Women Keeping Distance from Unknown People



The fact that most violent abuse and rape of women in Nepal is perpetrated by someone they know, i.e., a relative, informs the need for an in-depth understanding of men's perceptions regarding women as the majority victims of rape. That suggests the need for, and development of a research question based on the available dataset to evaluate the phenomenon. To that effect, the analysis of the phenomenon carried out in this study is expressed through the following research question:

RQ: *Men's age and married status appear to have a statistically significant impact on their opinion of the need for women to avoid strangers, hence decreasing the likelihood that they may be assaulted or raped?*

From this research question, a null hypothesis can also be derived for the analysis, which is described below:

H_0: *There is no correlation between the respondent's gender and marital status and their perception of the necessity for women to avoid strangers to prevent being harmed or abused.*

Due to its usefulness in analysing a comparison of groups based on two independent variables, each of which classifies participants based on a particular characteristic, a Two-Way ANOVA test was employed to conduct the analysis. Each participant was allocated to one level of each independent variable (completely crossed design).

The output from the analysis commences with Table 12 below, which is the Between-Subjects Factors output which displays the distribution of the value labels for the two variables – *your age* and *marital status*. The study sample population is ***n* = 197**. That is followed by the Descriptive Statistics output in Table 13 below, which displays the means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for the different variables.

Table 12: Between-Subjects Factors

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
What is your age	2	20-25	92
	3	26-30	62
	4	31-35	25
	5	36-39	7
	6	Over 40	11
Marital status	1	Married	69
	2	Unmarried	128

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: **If women stay away from unknown people, they are less likely to get raped or abused.**

What is your age	Marital Status	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
20-25	Married	1.78	1.061	41
	Unmarried	2.59	1.299	51
	Total	2.23	1.259	92
26-30	Married	1.84	1.214	19
	Unmarried	2.79	1.166	43
	Total	2.50	1.251	62
31-35	Married	1.80	1.304	5
	Unmarried	2.65	1.137	20
	Total	2.48	1.194	25
36-39	Married	1.50	.707	2
	Unmarried	2.00	1.225	5
	Total	1.86	1.069	7
Over 40	Married	2.50	2.121	2
	Unmarried	2.56	1.130	9
	Total	2.55	1.214	11
Total	Married	1.81	1.115	69
	Unmarried	2.64	1.208	128
	Total	2.35	1.239	197

The Test of Between-Subjects Effects in Table 14 below is a crucial output, especially in reviewing the interaction *F* (Age*marital), which is not statistically significant in this case, ***F* (4.187) = 0.234, *p* =.919.** Had the interaction been significant, it would have instituted a need for caution regarding interpreting the main effects since they could be misleading. Following a breakdown of the effects of Age*marital status, the analysis moves to the individual variables. The insignificant F for Age indicates that younger respondents (20-25) were not significantly different from older respondents (over

40) in their perception of whether women should stay away from unknown people as a way of avoiding being abused or raped **(*M* = 2.23 vs. 2.55)**.

Table 14: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

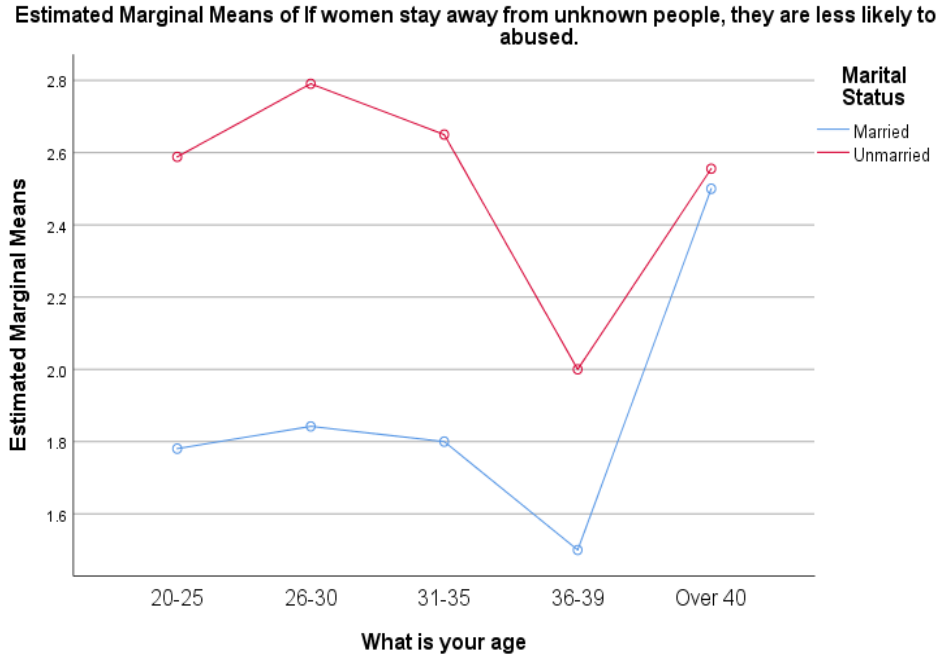
Dependent Variable: **If women stay away from unknown people, they are less likely to get raped or abused.**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	35.240[a]	9	3.916	2.757	.005	.117
Intercept	288.110	1	288.110	202.854	.000	.520
Marital	5.947	1	5.947	4.187	.042	.022
Age * Marital	1.327	4	.332	.234	.919	.005
Error	265.592	187	1.420			
Total	1389.000	197				
Corrected Total	300.832	196				

a. R Squared =.117 (Adjusted R Squared =.075)

The significant F for marital status, i.e., $p = 0.042$, indicates that married respondents were more likely to agree with the assertion that if women stay away from unknown people, they are less likely to get raped or abused than the unmarried respondents (*M* = 1.81 vs. 2.64). That is an insightful finding considering that most perpetrators are often known to the victims in perpetrating abuse and rape (Nepal police, 2019). That would further perpetuate violence against women, as their husbands are keen to have them restrained. The final output following the analysis is the profile plots as detailed in Figure 4 below.

Figure 10: Profile Plots



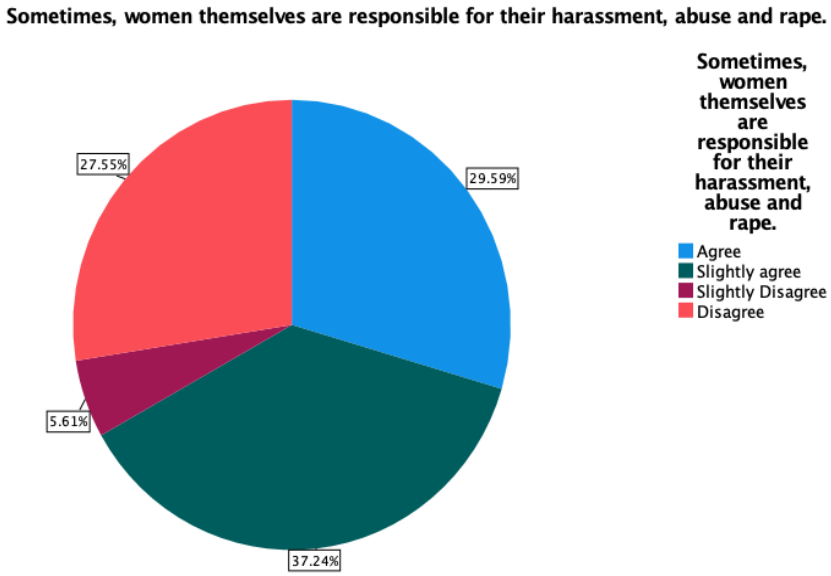
Hence, a Two-Way ANOVA was undertaken to determine whether age and marital status seem to have a statistically significant effect on respondents' perspectives on whether women should stay away from strangers to avoid getting abused or raped. Crucially, as depicted by Table 14 above, there was not a significant interaction between age and marital status on the respondents' perception of women avoiding strangers as a way of preventing abuse or rape **(*p* =.919).**

Consequently, based on the outcome of the analysis, the null hypothesis is confirmed. The gender and marital status of respondents does not correlate with their perception of the need for women to avoid strangers to ensure they are not abused or abused. Despite this, marital status influences a respondent's perspective on whether women should avoid strangers to prevent rape and abuse, as the majority of married respondents believed that a woman's safety from rape and abuse rests in avoiding the company of strangers.

The statement 'sometimes, women themselves are accountable for their harassment, abuse, and rape' was used to test victim-blaming perceptions. It was discovered that

perceptions of victim blaming in Nepal are highest among Nepali men. The results showed that 66.8 % of men agreed (29.6 %) or somewhat agreed (37.2 %) with the statement, while just 27.6 % slightly disagreed, and 5.6 % disagreed.

Figure 11: Women's Responsibilities on their Harassment



Masculinity and Victim Blaming

Scholars claim that the culture of victimisation is still partially responsible for violence against women. Table 15 below shows the data on victim-blaming in Nepal. More than half of men (58.9%) in Nepal believe that it is women's fault if they go out alone at night and get raped. Among them, 28.4% of men completely agreed, and 30.5% slightly agreed with the statement above. The data unequivocally shows that males in Nepal are likely to place responsibility on the victim when a sexual assault or other violent crime occurs after a woman has gone out at night for whatever reason and has been victimised as a result. Nepali men are more likely to do this since they support antagonistic attitudes towards women (Hockett, Saucier & Badke, 2016), and scrutinise the victim's independence.

Table 15: Masculinity and Victim Blaming

Women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped.					
		Agree	**Slightly Agree**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Disagree**
Reside In	Province 1	6.1%	5.1%	1.5%	4.6%
	Province 2	2.0%	2.5%	0.5%	1.5%
	Province 3	11.2%	12.2%	3.6%	15.2%
	Province 4	4.1%	7.1%	1.0%	4.1%
	Province 5	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%	4.6%
	Province 6	1.0%	1.0%		0.5%
	Province 7	2.0%	0.5%	0.5%	2.0%
Age	20-25	16.2%	14.2%	4.6%	11.7%
	26-30	7.1%	9.1%	2.0%	13.2%
	31-35	3.0%	3.6%	1.5%	4.6%
	36-39	1.0%	2.0%		0.5%
	Over 40	1.0%	1.5%	0.5%	2.5%
Employment	Student	5.1%	4.6%	3.6%	8.1%
	Unemployed	3.6%	3.6%	0.5%	2.5%
	Business	2.0%	5.6%	1.0%	2.5%
	Labourer	2.5%	4.1%		3.0%
	Service	10.2%	5.1%	1.5%	6.1%
	Professional employment	5.1%	7.6%	2.0%	10.2%
Educational Level	No Formal Education	1.5%			
	Secondary Education	6.1%	2.5%	0.5%	1.0%
	Higher Secondary School	9.6%	9.1%	2.5%	7.6%
	Bachelor of Education	9.6%	14.2%	3.0%	19.3%
	Master of Education	1.5%	4.6%	2.5%	3.6%
	Over Master of Education				1.0%
Marital Status	Married	16.2%	8.6%	2.5%	7.6%
	Unmarried	12.2%	21.8%	6.1%	24.9%
Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves					
Reside In	Province 1	4.6%	4.6%	2.5%	5.6%
	Province 2	1.5%	1.5%		3.6%
	Province 3	10.7%	7.1%	4.6%	19.8%
	Province 4	3.6%	3.0%	0.5%	9.1%
	Province 5	1.0%	3.0%	2.0%	4.1%
	Province 6	1.5%	0.5%	0.5%	

	Province 7	1.5%	0.5%		3.0%
Age	20-25	13.2%	9.1%	4.6%	19.8%
	26-30	7.1%	8.6%	2.5%	13.2%
	31-35	3.0%	1.5%	1.5%	6.6%
	36-39	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%
	Over 40	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	4.1%
Employment	Student	6.6%	2.5%	2.5%	9.6%
	Unemployed	2.0%	2.5%	1.0%	4.6%
	Business	2.0%	2.5%	1.0%	5.6%
	Labourer	3.0%	1.5%	1.0%	4.1%
	Service	6.1%	5.6%	2.0%	9.1%
	Professional employment	4.6%	5.6%	2.5%	12.2%
Educational Level	No Formal Education	1.0%	0.5%		
	Secondary Education	3.6%	3.0%	1.0%	2.5%
	Higher Secondary School	7.1%	6.1%	3.0%	12.7%
	Bachelor of Education	8.6%	8.6%	5.1%	23.9%
	Master of Education	3.6%	2.0%	1.0%	5.6%
	Over Master of Education	0.5%			0.5%
Marital Status	Married	9.10%	7.10%	3.60%	15.20%
	Unmarried	15.20%	13.20%	6.60%	29.90%

Essentially, men living in Province 3 responded positively (11.2% agreed and 12.2% slightly agreed) to the statement that *Women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped.* Men residing in Province 3 have a similar percentage of disagreement (15.2% agreed and 3.6% disagreed).

Similarly, in the age category, 30.4% (16.2% agreed and 14.2% slightly agreed) of men aged 20-25 seemed to believe that women should not go out alone at night. Half of the disagreement (16.3%) came from the age category 20-25, and 15.2% disagreed from the 26-30 age group.

The study found that unmarried men are more rigid, dominating, and hostile towards women than married men. Approximately, 25.4% of married men agreed and

slightly agreed with the statement, whereas 34% of unmarried agreed (12.2%) and slightly agreed (21.8%).

The level of education did not have much positive impact on this study. Most men studying Higher Education and a Bachelor of Education agreed that women should not go out alone at night. The percentage of complete agreement between Higher Education and a Bachelor of Education is the same (9.6%). However, 9.1% of men studying Higher Education and 14.2% of men studying for a Bachelor of Education slightly agreed with the given statement in the survey.

The findings of this study reveal that independent men in Nepal are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards women and place blame on the victims of crimes. The figure of men involved in professional employment was 26.4% (15.2% agreed and 11.2% slightly agreed). The data basically suggested that, to protect women from being raped and harmed, 26.4 % of men supported restricting women's freedom of movement. However, men engaged in business showed liberal opinions in this study. Only 7.6 % of men (2% agreed and 5.6% slightly agreed) engaged in the business said women should stay within their home boundaries to save themselves from violence.

The results of this study indicate that women should not go out alone at night to avoid becoming victims of violence; it also highlights the important question: what is the situation of the large numbers of women who do not feel safe at home? Sadly, the foregoing data demonstrates that patriarchal and cultural norms in Nepal are stronger than the amount of education and financial independence in terms of Nepali men's view of women and violence against women. These strong cultural and patriarchal structural standards strengthen Nepal's male norms.

Table 15 above also shows that there are very few drastic and modern opinions of Nepali men about girls' and women's clothing. Men in Nepal still believe that the type of women's clothing is a sign of sexual and asexual women. According to men, those ladies

who like to wear modern and fashionable clothing are teasing men and inviting them to have sex. Province 3 recorded 17.8% of men (10.7% agreed and 7.1% slightly agreed). Province 3 gave a positive reply to the statement that women who wear revealing clothes cause problems for themselves, whereas most men from Provinces 5, 6, and 7 disagreed with the statement. Likewise, men aged 20-25 and 26-30 believed women should not wear revealing clothes to protect themselves from possible violence. By comparison, the age categories 31-35 seemed more liberal. Only 4.5% of men (3% agreed and 1.5% slightly agreed) aged 31-35 said women should not be wearing revealing clothes, whereas 22.3% of men aged 20-25 and 15.7% of men aged 26-30 responded positively.

Like the response to the previous statement, men with professional employment were found to agree more that women should not be wearing revealing clothes (21.9%). The student participants come in second in rank in agreeing (9.1%) with the statement. However, unlike the previous statement, 28.4 % of unmarried men agreed (15.2% agreed and 13.2% disagreed) that women who wear revealing clothes cause problems for themselves. This data shows that men studying Secondary Education and for a Master of Education have the same opinion as the 3.6%. A higher percentage of positive responses come from men studying for a Bachelor of Education (17.2%).

In total, 58.9% of men agreed (28.4% agreed and 30.5% slightly agreed) that women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped, and 44.7% of men agreed (24.4% agreed and 20.3% slightly agreed) that women who wear revealing clothes are causing problems for themselves. The data from Nepal supports the literature mentioned above and suggests that a high degree of victim-blaming attitudes in terms of victims' clothing sense, timing to go out of home, where, and with whom, and victim's alcohol consumption blames the victim for their victimisation and narrates how perpetrators were not at fault; and putting perpetrators in jail for their one- time mistake is not justifiable.

The prevalent culture of victim-blaming in Nepal, particularly among Nepali men, appears to be a significant factor in VAW in Nepal. With that in mind, it is essential to determine how the various indicators of upward social mobility, especially through education and professional development, have shaped the contemporary thinking among men in Nepal on victim-shaming. To that effect, the first analysis involved determining whether there are statistically significant differences among the six education groups, in response to the following statements: *Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united, others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife, Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse and rape,* in addition to *Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.* Based on one of the variables, the Kruskal-Wallis's test was considered the most appropriate. The analysis of the variables on SPSS commences with the Ranks output as presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16 provides the Mean Ranks for the four dependent variables: *Sometimes women must endure the abuse of their husband and in-laws to keep the family united, others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife, Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape, and Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.* Crucially, for the current case, the Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test compared the Means Ranks for the six respondents' education groups.

Following the Ranks output, Table 17 below presents the Test Statistics and seeks to indicate whether there was an overall difference among the six groups.

Table 16: Ranks

Ranks

	What is your highest level of Education?	N	Mean Rank
Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.	No Formal Education	3	29.33
	Secondary Education	20	45.30
	Higher Secondary School	57	98.92
	Bachelor of Education	91	112.02
	Master of Education	24	99.60
	Over Master of Education	2	143.00
	Total	197	
Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife.	No Formal Education	3	41.00
	Secondary Education	20	63.68
	Higher Secondary School	57	97.68
	Bachelor of Education	91	104.32
	Master of Education	24	112.29
	Over Master of Education	2	175.50
	Total	197	
Sometimes, women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape.	No Formal Education	3	29.50
	Secondary Education	20	66.25
	Higher Secondary School	57	90.80
	Bachelor of Education	91	108.71
	Master of Education	24	114.81
	Over Master of Education	2	133.00
	Total	197	
Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.	No Formal Education	3	39.17
	Secondary Education	20	77.22
	Higher Secondary School	57	97.91
	Bachelor of Education	91	107.22
	Master of Education	24	96.90
	Over Master of Education	2	88.75
	Total	197	

Table 17: Test Statistics

Test Statistics[a,b]

	Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.	Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife.	Sometimes, women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape.	Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.
Kruskal-Wallis H	34.491	18.221	19.355	9.312
Df	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.003	.002	.097

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: What is your highest level of Education?

As such, a Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test was conducted to test for statistically significant differences between respondents' education groups concerning their responses to four critical statements relating to victim-shaming. The test's output indicated that the

six respondents' education groups differed on *Sometimes women must endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.* **χ^2 (5, *N* = 197) = 34.49, *p* <.001.** Notably, the mean rank of respondents who had Over Master of Education (143.00, n = 2) was significantly higher than that of respondents with other levels of education, including Master of Education (99.60, n = 24), Bachelor of Education (112.02, n = 91), Higher Secondary Education (98.92, n = 57), Secondary Education (45.30, n = 20), and No Formal Education (29.33, n = 3).

Furthermore, the test's output indicated that the six groups differed significantly on *others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife* **χ^2 (5, *N* = 197) = 18.22, *p* =.003.** Notably, the mean rank of respondents who had Over Master of Education (175.50, n = 2) was significantly higher than that of respondents with other levels of education, including Master of Education (112.29, n = 24), Bachelor of Education (104.32, n = 91), Higher Secondary Education (97.68, n = 57), Secondary Education (63.68, n = 20), and No Formal Education (41.00, n = 3).

In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in the six respondents' education groups in *Sometimes, women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape* **χ^2 (5, *N* = 197) = 19.36, *p* =.002.** Crucially, the mean rank of respondents who had Over Master of Education (133.00, n = 2) was significantly higher than that of respondents with other levels of education, including Master of Education (114.81, n = 24), Bachelor of Education (108.71, n = 91), Higher Secondary Education (90.80, n = 57), Secondary Education (66.25, n = 20), and No Formal Education (29.50, n = 3).

Considering that the responses to the four questions involved a Likert scale, i.e., 1 – 4 from Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, and Disagree, a higher mean rank would indicate that the responses were mainly Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Hence, for the questions for which there was a statistically significant difference, the reactions from those with a higher level of education presented the highest mean ranks, i.e., Bachelor of

Education, Master of Education, and Over Master of Education. To that effect, a trend can be derived in that the negative perceptions aimed at victim-shaming, such as the notion that *Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape,* seem to be mainly held by those with lower levels of education, i.e., Secondary Education, and No Formal education. It can thus be deduced that the attainment of high levels of education has a positive influence of helping reign in on some of the male stereotypes associated with victim-shaming of abuse and rape victims.

Following a determination of how education influences perceptions relating to victim-shaming, the second analysis involved determining whether there were statistically significant differences among the six employment groups on responses to the statements: *Sometimes, women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united, others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife, Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse and rape,* in addition to *Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.* Based on the nature of the variables, Kruskal-Wallis's test is the most appropriate. The output from the analysis of the variables on SPSS commences with the Ranks output in Table 18 below.

Table 18 below provides the mean ranks for the four dependent variables, i.e. *Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husband and in-laws to keep the family united; others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife, Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape,* in addition to *Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.* In addition, for the current case, the Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test compares the mean ranks for the six respondents' professional groups. Following the Ranks output, Table 19 below presents the Test Statistics and seeks to indicate an overall difference among the six groups.

Table 18: Ranks

Ranks

	What job do you do?	N	Mean Rank
Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.	Student	42	112.94
	Unemployed	20	91.85
	Business	22	105.73
	Labourer	19	93.21
	Service	45	77.40
	Professional employment	49	109.03
	Total	197	
Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife.	Student	42	103.06
	Unemployed	20	100.23
	Business	22	91.09
	Labourer	19	80.32
	Service	45	88.57
	Professional employment	49	115.40
	Total	197	
Sometimes, women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape.	Student	42	110.96
	Unemployed	20	89.25
	Business	22	99.93
	Labourer	19	89.97
	Service	45	81.59
	Professional employment	49	111.80
	Total	197	
Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.	Student	42	96.68
	Unemployed	20	100.73
	Business	22	105.48
	Labourer	19	93.34
	Service	45	93.23
	Professional employment	49	104.87
	Total	197	

Table 19: Test Statistics

Test Statistics[a,b]

	Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.	Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife.	Sometimes, women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape.	Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.
Kruskal-Wallis H	13.843	9.101	10.638	1.740
Df	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.017	.105	.059	.884

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: What job do you do?

Thus, a Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test was conducted to test for statistically significant differences between respondents' professional groups' responses to four critical statements relating to victim-blaming. The test's output indicated that the six respondents'

professional groups differed on *Sometimes women must endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united.* **χ^2 (5, *N* = 197) = 13.84, *p* =.017.** Importantly, the mean rank of respondents who were students (112.94, n = 42) was significantly higher than that of respondents within other employment groupings, including professional employment (109.03, n = 49), business (105.73, n = 22), labourer (93.21, n = 19), unemployed (91.85, n = 20), and service (77.40, n = 45).

The output for the other variables such as *Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife, Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape,* and *Women who wear revealing clothes, causing problems for themselves,* did not present a significant Kruskal-Wallis H value, thus indicating the lack of differences in the responses to the four questions, based on the type of employment. Hence, women having to endure the abuse of their husbands and in-laws to keep the family united, students, and those in professional careers and businesses indicated a disagreement with the statement. That said, the result does not present a conclusive understanding of the influence that one's profession has on their ideologies towards victim-shaming.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the study's analysis based on data gathered through an online survey. It explored how masculinities are constructed in Nepal. It compared the data with variables such as age and marital status to determine how various age groups and marital status construct Nepalese masculinities. This chapter also addressed the second research question, and how the findings contributed to a better understanding of Nepalese masculinity and its relationship to violence against women. The topics of masculinity, attitudes towards women, and victim-blaming were thoroughly discussed. The subsequent chapter synthesises the findings and relates them to the more extensive international literature. Additionally, it addresses the third research question of the thesis.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

This concluding chapter summarises the study's key findings and discusses them in relation to the aims and objectives stated in Chapter 1. This chapter also investigates how these findings fit within the existing published literature, as reviewed in Chapter 4. The findings relate to the field's broader theoretical perspectives. This chapter establishes the importance of this study by interpreting and discussing the findings within the context of previous research. The implications of the findings are also discussed, along with suggestions for future research. This chapter also includes some recommendations for addressing Nepalese masculinity and its connection to VAW in Nepal. Finally, it ends with the conclusions drawn from this research.

This study addressed critical issues surrounding Nepalese masculinity and the connection between masculinity and violence against women. It also sought to provide concrete strategies for reducing VAW in Nepal by engaging men in the process of change. In meeting its objectives, the study featured three critical research questions.

- How are masculinities constructed?
- How has masculinity impacted violence against women?
- In what ways can men engage in reducing violence against women?

The three questions were conclusively addressed using survey questionnaires involving 197 male Nepalese participants. The demographic variables among the participants included age, marital status, level of education, and employment status.

The significant findings from the data analysis in the previous chapter suggested that Nepalese masculinity is constructed around their behaviours, practices, values, and perspectives shaped by society (Flood, 2002; Thompson, Grisanti & Pleck, 1985). The participants shared the common understanding that belief systems adhering to male supremacy have subordinated women to men. The data provided examples of the social

practices of male supremacy, such as being the breadwinners, decision-makers, and strong individuals, while women are the homemakers who always need the protection of men (Dahal, Joshi & Swahnberg, 2022). This unequal social positioning of men and women created hierarchies in society, putting women in inferior positions and men in dominating positions. This unequal positioning has also justified the violence of men towards women. (Connell, 1995; Kaufman, 1987). Men have continued to hold on to these unequal social, cultural, and religious norms for ages in Nepal (Uprety, 2011; Onta, 1996). Interestingly, neither their education nor income level (employment status) appeared to influence their perceptions of masculinity.

The reviewed data also illustrated that by holding on to such standards, which dictate their societal roles, Nepalese men scrutinise women's freedom and seek to prevent them from crossing the perceived divide between them (Maycock, 2017; Uprety, 2019). The examples of the societally perceived line found in this study were that women should not go out alone at night, not wear revealing clothes, and stay away from unknown men. If women violate these boundaries, it serves as a catalyst for victim-blaming (Uprety, 2016). Unfortunately, this implies that the Nepalese social structure allows perpetrators of VAW to escape punishment while continuing to terrorise their victims (Sikweyiya et al., 2020; Chakraborty, 2014; Osella & Osella, 2006). The following is a detailed explanation of the study's findings, and each research question will be discussed individually.

The Construction of Masculinity

This study set out to identify the construction of masculinity in the Nepalese context. In doing so, the survey involved multiple questions aimed at understanding the influence of age on masculinity as a social construct. The first was the statement, ‘people do not respect men who frequently talk about problems’. The study’s finding on the question was that among five age groups, 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-39, and over 40 years of age, the most

significant percentage agreed with the assertion that people do not respect men who talk about their problems. This was in the 20-25, and 26-30 age groups. This finding suggests that age does not greatly impact the "traditional ideas of masculinity" as a "provider", "protector", or "smart" (Kimmel & Wade, 2018; Lawoti, 2010). Nepalese men of the younger generation are also successfully following the tradition that aligns with the Hindu book "Bhagavad Gita" and the history of "Bir Gorkhali" (Lawoti, 2010; Uprety, 2016; Rai, 2021). They believe men should be tough and take care of their problems quietly. It correspondingly aligns with Kaufman (1987), who claims that masculinity comprises certain traits valuable to men, including strength, courage, intellect, rationality, and sexual urge.

Furthermore, after undertaking a correlation analysis of the responses from the respondents on the issue relating to men talking about their problems, the younger respondents supported the notion that people do not respect men who frequently speak about their problems. That is insightful, considering it goes against the overriding perception that such a conservative notion regarding men can only be found in older-generation men (Ciabattari, 2001). This finding means that one of the critical constructs of masculinity within Nepalese society revolves around the perception of toughness, which would make men hesitant to share their problems (Courtenay, 2000).

Moving on from the age variable, the second variable within which the study was undertaken was the marital status of the respondents in informing the social construct. Crucially, Nepalese society firmly holds on to the social and cultural norms prohibiting young men and women from pre-marital sex (Adhikari & Adhikari, 2017). Unsurprisingly, the older generation supported the topic of sex as an offensive subject, which aligned with the research done by Adhikari and Adhikari, who claims that the higher the age, the more unfavourable attitude to sex. Likewise, Kimmel & Messner (2008) also believe that masculinity, a socially constructed identity, changes with time, meaning that boys and men

can experience a transformation in how they express masculinity as they mature in their lifetime. In addressing the social construct of masculinity within the confines of marital status, the statement to which the respondents were asked to respond was, 'It is ok for men to have sexual intercourse with many women'. The study found no significant difference in the perceptions of married and unmarried men with the need to avoid having pre-marital sex.

A substantial portion of the unmarried men who participated in the study agreed that men could have sex with more than one sexual partner. That notion informs Nepal's social construct of masculinity, which dominantly follows male sexual dominance and pre-eminence over women (CARE, 2015). It is thus no wonder that the notion of a man having multiple sexual partners is condoned to a high degree, despite being offensive as per Nepalese traditions.

The societal construct of masculinity is one that, by its very nature, is susceptible to being interpreted as being driven by preconceived notions of how men and women should behave (Adam, 2013). The key to eroding the hegemonic masculine characteristics that tend to drive the masculinity construct is widespread among individuals with less education (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). Therefore, education should be a tool for eradicating entrenched gender stereotypes and, to some extent, accelerating the erosion of the persistent hegemonic masculinity tendencies regarded as more prominent in conventional social conceptions (Cartier Philanthropy et al., 2019). Therefore, it was essential for the study to investigate whether education influenced the respondents' attitudes, particularly on masculinity. Some of the essential responses were utilised to determine reactions to the masculinity-related statements. They included that it is not appropriate for men to ask for help, men should always be brave and independent, men should always be tough, and men need to find a well-paying job. A study was undertaken

to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the responses to the statements based on the respondent's education level.

The output from the study indicated that there were statements for which the respondent's education level did not influence their opinion; rather, the responses from the respondents were hardly affected by their education levels. The statements are that it is not appropriate for men to ask for help, men should not show sadness to others, and men should always be tough. The finding was that the higher the respondent's education level, the less they were likely to believe that men should not ask for help, that men should not show sadness to others, and that men should always be tough. The finding indicates that some of the constructs of masculinity have been eroded through education. However, for the rest of the statements, the respondent's education level appeared to produce no change in their opinion. The overwhelming perception is that a man must find a well-paying job and always be independent (Halvorsen & Ljunggren, 2020). Furthermore, men should remain logical and brave, and to gain the respect of others, men should avoid frequently talking about their problems (Rai, 2021). These factors indicate that the social construct of masculinity in Nepal has not been eroded by education.

This finding is in line Adam (2013), who highlighted the institutional masculinities, imparted to men, particularly within school settings. Some of its essential characteristics include gaining popularity through physical strength displayed in sports and battling, denying academic success, being ignorant of emotions, emphasising heterosexuality or sexism through interactions with girls or expressed narratives, and delivering filthy humour. These aspects of institutional masculinities are primarily associated with the West (Adam, 2013), but in the case of Nepal, the notions of masculinity are passed on by their families, societies, and wider cultures (CARE, 2015).

The conception of masculinity is intricately intertwined with gender stereotypes, whereby gender is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings, which constantly

shift and vary based on time and place (Jewkes et al., 2015). According to Courtenay (2000), gender stereotypes are the meanings society uses in its construction of gender and are ordinarily believed to be typical for men or women. There is a significant agreement within the current society regarding what is considered typical feminine and masculine tendencies. It is often the case that people are compelled to conform to stereotypical beliefs about who they innately are. The current research indicates that men and boys tend to experience relatively more significant social pressure than women and girls to endorse gendered stereotypes, such as the belief that men are supposed to be self-reliant, robust, strong, and rigid (Edwards, 2015). Men struggle with emotional expression and the identification of coping mechanisms due to constructs of masculinity (McAllister, Callaghan & Fellin, 2017). This idea extensively features in the present study, where there seems to be an overwhelming agreement among the respondents that it is not appropriate for men to ask for help and that men should not show sadness to others.

The theoretical perspective guiding this study was that masculinities are socially constructed, whereby the societal conditions in their community inform men's conduct. As summarised by Thompson, Grisanti & Pleck (1985), the construction of masculinity is a culturally-based ideology, which scripts the relations between men and women, the structure of the male norms, and the attitudes and beliefs that men and women hold. Based on that perspective, any social and cultural setting can result in different versions of behaviours among men (Adam, 2013). In this research, fair numbers of respondents believe that men must find a well-paying job and be independent. From a social constructionist perspective, these factors indicate that men and boys are not only 'victims' of a socially prescribed role in Nepal, but are also conditioned or socialised by their cultures to conform to a particular approach to life (Courtenay, 2000). As a result, they stand out as active agents in constructing the dominant norms of masculinity.

Masculinities and Violence Against Women in Nepal

One of the study's objectives was to investigate how masculinity in Nepal has impacted VAW.

To understand the causes of VAW, the study sought to determine how men perceive the notion that strong aggression is a natural emotion for men. One approach taken in the study was to determine how that notion correlates with the ages of the surveyed respondents. Eta squared was employed to investigate the association between the respondent's age and their response to the statement that *men's aggression is a natural emotion*. The result (**eta =.126)** indicates a small effect size. The younger respondents were more likely to believe that strong aggression is a natural emotion for men as compared to the older respondents. This finding aligns with the research of Aromäki, Haebich & Lindman (2002), who discussed age as a strong modifier on male attitudes and behaviours related to sexual aggression, dominance, and interpersonal violence. According to Connell (1995), aggression is an integral element of hegemonic masculinity, where using a man's physical strength stands out as one of the main drivers of dominance over women. Uprety (2019) also asserted that hegemonic masculinity could be understood as a pattern of gender practices that allow dominance over women. Aggression is one of the main tools used to exert that dominance. Similarly, Sadeh, Javdani, Finny & Verona (2011) also discussed the point that anger and violence are evolved or learned socialisation processes that dictate the use of outward violence as an appropriate masculine expression. As a result, the culture of VAW in all its forms, particularly rape, emanates from uncontrollable lustfulness and interest in dominating women's bodies (Connell, 1995).

In addition, based on the finding of this research that younger respondents are more likely to believe strong aggression is a natural emotion in men, we can suggest that the ideology, which is a construct of hegemonic masculinity, is actively being passed on from the older generation to the younger generation of men (Kimmel & Messner, 2008). This is

supported by Totten (2003), who argues that many young men in societies where an aggressive form of masculinity is internalised in different forms of hostile behaviours against women, have based this on the conduct of their fathers towards their mothers, as well as the community. As a result, they believe that physical strength is essential to being a man and will not hesitate to commit acts of VAW when they feel it is necessary.

Based on the study's finding that younger respondents are more likely to believe that aggression is a natural male emotion, it can be concluded that hegemonic masculinity surpasses age in Nepal. Therefore, one could argue that masculinity in Nepal functions by placing men in positions of authority and transforming from one generation to generation the next (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Consequently, men's authoritative position is expected to adhere to a predetermined set of masculine gender roles, which promote men's dominance, subordination, and abuse of women (Smith et al., 2015). Therefore, men's aggressive tendencies are viewed as normal, and their use of their biological characteristics is defended as a means of subordinating women (Murnen, Wright & Kaluzny, 2002). The belief that women are inferior or subordinated to men is an element of hegemonic masculinity, and the belief could be attributed to providing the grounds for VAW (Connell, 1995).

One notion that highlights the perception of women's inferiority is the idea that women are not as smart as men. In this context, a descriptive analysis was conducted, finding that 25.8% of participants agreed women are not as smart as men. Similarly, a Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation analysis was undertaken to ascertain the correlation between the marital status of respondents and the notion that women are not as smart as men. The output from the computation of Spearman's rho statistic yielded $\boldsymbol{r_s}$ **(197) =.069,** $\boldsymbol{p}$ **=.334**, indicating that the correlation direction was positive but insignificant. Thus, there was no significant correlation between the respondents' marital status and their perception of whether women are not as smart as men.

This finding is significant because it indicates that the unequal understanding between men and women completing the same action suggests women's inferiority in Nepal is shared by both married and unmarried men. It also indicates that Nepal's men comply with a rigid and inequitable explanation of masculinity and femininity. According to Barker (2001), the inequitable understanding of masculinity and femininity means men are more likely to perpetrate multiple acts of VAW, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV). Furthermore, the perception that women are inferior to men, determined in the study, establishes violence as a normative expression of superiority and an effective problem-solving strategy for men (Heise, 2011) in Nepal. Using violence is seen as a strategy to control the partner, especially considering the accepted view within Nepalese society that women are perceived as inferior beings.

The study also sought to determine the beliefs and ideologies in men that fuel violence against women. In terms of the survey question findings on whether women should be confined to their households to save themselves from rape and abuse, 59 % of the respondents believed women should not go out alone at night, as they are likely to get abused or raped. That argument is well reflected in a study by Perrin et al. (2019), who sought to understand the construct of gender-based violence (GBV) from the perspective of social norms.

Perrin et al. (2019) identified three key factors catalysing GBV in various global contexts. One of these significant factors is the response to Sexual Violence, which encompasses the individual, family, and community responses that tend to blame the victims of GBV. The findings suggest that women often face blame when subjected to GBV. This finding reflects a cultural acceptance of sexual violence and other forms of VAW. It also normalises the norms that restrict women and girls in their movements and actions to prevent assaults by men (Perrin et al., 2019). This victim-blaming response perpetuates a culture that tolerates and perpetuates GBV and inhibits effective prevention

and support measures for survivors. The argument is also that once 'tempted', men cannot control themselves; hence, the responsibility is on women and girls to avoid situations in which they would 'tempt' the men, thus leading to violent acts.

Similarly, in Nepal, society has given the responsibility to women to care for themselves and ensure they do not place themselves in situations where they 'tempt' men. That is reflected by the overwhelming agreement of the respondents to the statement that women should avoid going out alone at night to avoid getting raped. Furthermore, a Chi-Square test was undertaken to understand whether the perception of the respondent's age affects whether or not women are responsible for the violence committed against them. The outcome of the test indicated that younger or older respondents are not significantly different on whether they believe women should not go out alone at night or they are likely to be abused or raped **($\chi^2 = 10.483$, $df = 12$, $N = 197$, $p = .589$)**. The relevance of this study's outcome is that it indicates a discourse of abuse and rape which is still largely skewed towards the purported recklessness of the victim, as opposed to slamming the perpetrators of the crime, who are overwhelmingly male (Aromäki, Haebich & Lindman, 2002). This perception stretches across all age groups of young or older men in Nepal.

For further understanding of the construct of hegemonic masculinity, particularly the culture of victim shaming and how it has influenced VAW in Nepal, the survey queried men on the perception of what women wear and how it might control violence against them. The results suggested that 55 % of the respondents agreed that women who wear revealing clothes are causing problems for themselves. As such, in Nepal, there is always a burst of sympathy towards sexual predators if a victim is wearing "revealing clothes" at that time. The victim is blamed for the incident as she "tempted" the predator. This finding is not unique to Moor (2010), where she demonstrates the gender gap in which men perceive a sexualised look as an indication of sexual interest and seductive intent.

On the other hand, women cite their desire to feel and appear attractive as the primary cause, rejecting the seduction claim. She claims that victims of sexual violence often tend to get blamed for triggering their assault, mainly through 'provocative' and body-revealing styles of dressing. The crux of the rape myth is the assumption that revealing clothing is a sign of consent for sexual approaches, making victims liable for any sexual assaults perpetrated by men (Moor, 2010). This tendency follows from one of the critical elements of hegemonic masculinity, which is the sexual objectification of women (Moor, 2010). This produces a culture where women are objects for men's gazing, sexual yearning, and desire (Moor, 2010). Furthermore, According to Moor (2010), objectifying pictures confine women's existence to their exposed body parts, provocative appearance, alluring behaviour, and comprehensive demeanour, implying sensuality and a desire to acquiesce to men's sexual approaches.

The prevalent research findings show that conservative Nepali culture perceives women who are open-minded in their dressing sense as inviting sexual relations with men. That also speaks to the widespread sexual objectification of women in Nepalese culture, which relays specific messages, presumably influencing expectations regarding the interactions between men and women (Awasthi, 2017). So far, as the objectification of women turns the female body into a consenting target for sexual lust by men, confusion about the actual intentions of women may ensue, mainly due to the tenets instituted by a flawed cultural perception of women as being constantly interested in sex (Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002). According to Moor (2010), men tend to misconstrue sexual intent from women in multiple settings in seemingly innocuous tendencies such as friendliness. For instance, according to Puri, Misra & Hawkes (2015), VAW is widespread in Nepal, where a survey conducted in 2011, 4.6% of girls aged 15 – 19 years indicated they had experienced sexual violence. Furthermore, 20% of women aged 15 – 49 years reported having experienced physical violence, and a study detailing

the scale of violence against women living with disabilities indicated that a significant proportion of them (60%) had experienced violence from a relative (Puri et al., 2015).

With that understanding, this study sought to understand the perceptions of Nepalese men regarding the fact that women are primarily victims of rape. A null hypothesis guided that analysis: *The gender and marital status of a respondent do not correlate with their perception of the need for women to avoid strangers to ensure they are not abused or abused*. To that effect, a Two-Way ANOVA was undertaken to determine whether men's age and marital status in Nepal each significantly impact the respondent's perspective on whether women should stay away from strangers to avoid getting abused or raped. The study's findings indicated no significant interaction between age and marital status on the respondents' perception of women avoiding strangers as a way of escaping getting abused or raped **(p =.919).** Even so, there was a statistically significant effect of marital status on a respondent's perspective regarding the statement that women should keep away from strangers to avoid abuse or rape. The outcome of the analysis confirms the null hypothesis that a respondent's gender and marital status do not correlate with their perception of the need for women to avoid strangers to save themselves from rape and abuse. Therefore, the marriage status affects a respondent's perspective on whether women should avoid strangers to prevent rape and abuse. Most of the married respondents agreed that a woman's safety from abuse and rape lies in their avoidance of the company of people they do not know. These findings speak to masculinity in Nepalese society, whereby men hold women as inferior and unable to make informed decisions, particularly on their well-being. Thus, it is apparently the men's role to ensure their women's safety. It means, for married men, the need to exert tight control over their wives and reinforces the notion that women's safety can only be guaranteed by them staying at home.

The finding also speaks to the controlling nature of men within Nepalese society, which raises the issue of violence against women. According to Pradhananga & Shrestha

(2002), women are expected to play a subordinate, submissive and more conservative gender role in marital relationships in Nepal. That 'submission' is often obtained through violence, which, according to Khatri (2021), is psychological violence; it is an act or omission meant to damage a woman's self-esteem, identity, or development. Pascoe & Bridges (2016) claim that such violence is legitimised through a circulation of prevalent social norms and the existing social cultures, including most men enjoying more power and privilege than women. In the end, the network of social norms and structures shapes the beliefs and practices within a community. Considering that the notion of a woman from the perspective of hegemonic masculinity is as being inferior to men, the primary forms of psychological violence meted against them include scolding by a partner and her in-laws (Paudel, 2007). They are usually insulted and accused of not bringing a respectable dowry, being unable to conceive a son, being of loose character, or even witchcraft (Paudel, 2007).

Significantly, the findings from this study, particularly on the perception of married men towards women staying away from strangers to avoid being abused or raped, point to the need for married men in Nepal to have complete control over their wives. According to Paudel (2007), the control over wives sometimes extends to physical violence as a way of purportedly 'keeping the women in check'. The need to control the wives is one of the constructs of masculinity within Nepal, which supports traits among men, and one key trait that is emphasised is the sexual prowess of men. Connell (1995) asserts that the notion of masculinity is closely linked to a man's body, and especially their manhood. The concept of manhood is obtained from the dominant sexuality of men, as opposed to a woman's passive and dependent sexuality, particularly in heterosexual relationships. As a result, one of the most effective forms of violence against women, particularly married women in Nepal, is sexual violence, which takes different forms, including marital rape, forced sex, and sex during physical body weakness. Husbands are the most prevalent perpetrators of sexual violence against most women (Paudel, 2007).

As opposed to other forms of interpersonal crimes, including robberies and muggings, the victims of sexual violence tend to be significantly exposed to being blamed for the attack, which brings up the issue of victim-blaming (Gordon & Riger, 1991). The culture of victim-blaming is rampant in most societies, and particularly among men, it appears to be a significant catalyst for escalating VAW (Gravelin et al., 2019). This study sought to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the different education groups' responses to the statements about victim-blaming. Some of the ideas included; *Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husbands, and in-laws to keep the family united; Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife; Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape; Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves*.

The responses to the above four statements involved a 1 – 4 Likert scale for Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, and Disagree. A high mean rank indicates that the responses were mainly Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The statements showed a statistically significant difference in responses. The respondents with higher levels of education, i.e., those with a BA, an MA, and degrees above an MA, illustrated the highest mean ranks. Hence, the negative perceptions aimed at victim-shaming, including the notion that sometimes women are responsible for their harassment, abuse, and rape, appear to be mainly held by those with lower education levels, i.e., secondary education and no formal education. It can also be deduced that higher education influences positively to eradicate the stereotypes aligned with hegemonic masculinity, and victim-shaming of abuse and rape victims. This finding aligns with Gravelin et al. (2019), who found that the most important and often ignored contributors to victim-shaming of sexual assault are cultural structures, beliefs, and practices. Therefore, this study suggests an emphasis on education as a catalyst for eradicating negative stereotypes, which are often the drivers of the victim-shaming culture in Nepal.

Engaging Men in Reducing Violence Against Women in Nepal

Violence against women represents a worldwide epidemic, impacting approximately one in three women during their lifetime. According to Connell (2005), it is disproportionately perpetrated by men against women and deeply infused with men's power, control, and a sense of entitlement (Connell, 2005). It stems from the unequal power dynamics between men and women, with women frequently lacking power in comparison to men (Fulu et al., 2013). It is fuelled by socially embedded norms and harmful attitudes that justify men's use of violence, including notions of masculinity that glorify men's aggression, sexual entitlement, and exercising control over women (Fulu et al., 2013). These harmful attitudes emerge from childhood experiences and witnessing violence at early ages (Kimmel & Wade, 2018). For instance, in a United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) research project on Nepali masculinities, gender-based violence suggests that 100% of working-class respondents in the Kathmandu Valley and Terai region of Nepal have witnessed the men in their locality beating or scolding women (UNDP, 2014). Studies conducted in South Asia and the Pacific shows that 50% of men who have engaged in rape or sexual assault against women or girls initiated such behaviour during their teenage years (The Asia Foundation, 2016). Moreover, another research indicated that men who have experienced violence, particularly during childhood, have an elevated probability of becoming perpetrators of violence against their future partners and children (Fulu et al., 2013).

The preceding discussion also indicates that in Nepal, a highly conservative society, patriarchy reinforces the constructed dichotomy of masculinity, which, according to Omar (2011), entails the dominance of women by men. There is also the case of hegemonic masculinity, characterised by anti-feminist tendencies. Men attempt to avoid femininity, especially actions, thoughts, and emotions interpreted as feminine, such as

appearing weak. This requires suppressing one's emotions, presenting a tough exterior, and internalising anti-feminine attitudes and norms which are essential for dominating interpersonal interactions (Smith et al., 2015). A crucial aspect of hegemonic masculinity is the desire for dominance and power, which refers to a man's desire to control and dominate others by objectifying and dehumanising them. It may lead to men committing acts of VAW (Smith et al., 2015).

The existing circumstances necessitate collaboration between men and boys to address and eradicate violence against women effectively. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the number of articles, discussion papers, books, conferences, and government policies advocating for greater male involvement in tackling the issue of violence against women. The participation of men in movements aimed at preventing violence against women has now become an established aspect of the principles and policies of numerous international organizations (Flood, 2006). The growing emphasis on interventions involving men and boys is driven by the recognition that men's participation in perpetrating violence and the influence of masculinity and social norms surrounding gender are closely interconnected with acts of violence (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). It is crucial to acknowledge that not all men are violent, yet every man and boy plays a significant role in reducing violence against women. By recognizing this shared responsibility, and promoting dialogue, education, and collective action, men and boys can actively contribute to creating a society that is more equitable and free from violence.

In the Nepalese context, there has been an attempt to shift from focusing on men as a perpetrator and violence as a women's issue to involving men as a primary prevention strategy by forming the organisation called *Men Engage Nepal* in 2007 and *Men Engage Alliance Nepal Country Group Network* in 2008. The network comprises over 60 individuals, including government officials, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, academic institutions, research organisations, media outlets, multicultural leaders, and rights

activists. Since then, these networks have been particularly working on advocacy, educating men of different occupational sectors targeting low- and middle-class income and men's activism to act against violence against women.

The section below will discuss the thematic strategies informed by the data from research questions one and two and the available research, published articles, discussion papers, and progress reports on men's engagement strategies needed to end VAW in Nepal.

Men in Women's Economic Empowerment

The literature review above mentions that the leading cause of VAW is men's power, control, and entitlement towards women (Connell, 2005). The economic power and its impact on VAW are immense (Sleigh, Barker, Kimonyo, Ndolimana & Bannerman, 2013) because economic stability allows women to make decisions. Sleigh, Barker, Kimonyo, Ndolimana & Bannerman (2013) added that increased and decreased VAW depends on women's economic dependency on men. Despite men's adverse reactions to women's economic empowerment (Poudel, 2013; UNDP, 2014; Sleigh et al., 2013), government, international organisations, NGOs, and INGOs have made minimal efforts to engage men as allies and foster partnerships in women's economic empowerment.

An article on an evaluation of a pilot project in Rwanda conducted in collaboration with CARE Rwanda's Village Savings Loan (VSL) program provides several positive and informative outcomes and strategies (Sleigh et al., 2013). CARE Rwanda, in collaboration with the Rwandan Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), selected 30 spouses from underprivileged families to participate in 16 weeks of group education sessions. The work involved engaging a group of single men and couples in discussions regarding family dynamics, such as decision-making and partner relationships, economic empowerment, sharing the caring work, and VAW. They delivered many training sessions to men individually and in couples. After all the training, pre-and post-training group discussions,

and individual couple discussions on alternative ways of managing their households, Sleigh et al. (2013) discovered that men and women could learn and unlearn substitutes to lead homes out of economic deprivation and improve the household. Their experiment suggests the possibility of expanding men's participation as partners in women's economic empowerment in ways that are advantageous to families. The transformation of those men and couples was aided by training sessions that promoted the active engagement of men as persons and as partners, thereby fostering transformation at the domestic level.

Similarly, the international rescue committee (IRC) targeted women and their husbands in 25 VSL groups across Makamba Province in Burundi in six discussion group series addressing household decision-making, the respective role of men and women, and the occurrence of VAW at home more broadly (Ferrari & Iyengar, 2010). Their group discussion curriculum enabled men and their spouses to reflect on personal attitudes and beliefs about gender and the costs of rigid norms of masculinity and femininity, as well as questioning traditional ideas about household decision-making and division of labour, including childcare. In some cases, the curriculum activities focused on conflict within marital relationships and the significance of couple communication. They claim that the project helped men to be more accountable for equality between men and women.

Working with Men on Violence Against Women in Public Space

Many researchers have suggested that the lack of safety in public spaces places women at high risk. According to Paudel (2013), public transport is one of the high-risk areas where Nepali women are found vulnerable. She claims that office hours and evening times are the most vulnerable time for violence and are considered unsafe and insecure for women due to the heavy flow of people at that time.

Nepal has an overwhelmingly male workforce in the public transport sector. Utilising those workforces in countering Violence Against Women and Girls will be

exemplary work that sends a positive message to the community. According to the United Nations (UN) (2013), the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA) is providing training to the male workforce to better understand and address the sexual harassment of women on public transport. It focused on VAW, women's rights to safety, ways to address incidents of harassment on public transport, and ways to support women who have experienced such violence (UN, 2013). Their work also involved an awareness-raising campaign to highlight the violence faced by women and girls on public transport. Their campaign also included educational videos which played on city buses (UN, 2013). The information about the free hotline services is also exhibited all over the public spaces and encourages people to report VAW (UN, 2013).

Men's Activism to Respond Violence Against Women

Public transport workers can have a significant role to play as 'active bystanders' in taking action to respond to incidents of VAW when they witness them. This 'active bystander' approach is especially important in engaging men as allies to challenge the normalisation of VAW in public spaces. Central to the men as 'active bystanders' approach was the notion that men might effectively challenge violent supportive behaviours or speech among their male peers (Casey & Ohler, 2012; Flood, 2005). Casey & Ohler (2012) did a study that presented descriptive findings about the bystander experiences of 27 men recently involved in VAW. Most of the male anti-violence allies in this study reported that they intervened to take some form of action when confronted with exploitive, offensive, or inappropriate behaviours by men. However, the study suggests that those men needed clarification about whether the situation was problematic enough to act. Henceforth, it is essential to provide enough exposure and what it means to be 'active bystanders' men, such as training on women's right to safety, and how to intervene in incidents of VAW in the street.

Working with Men on Safe Migration and Mobility

Cross-border or internal migration has affected traditional gender roles within heterosexual couples as men's breadwinner status is threatened by migrant women's increased opportunities for employment and higher earnings in Asia (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2009). The IOM has implemented self-help groups for migrant men in Vietnam to build an awareness of gender inequality and VAW, and to encourage men to adopt and advocate alternative non-violent models of masculinity projects. They held a training series on gender inequalities, harmful norms of masculinity and their links with VAW, and attitudes and practices of positive masculinities. The internal project evaluation found changes in attitudes and behaviours among many male participants. In contrast, female participants emphasised that the self-help groups had become a crucial source of support and knowledge to deal with VAW. The project reached over 1000 participants, including 255 men. The IOM claims that the project contributed to a reduction in VAW in target communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for men's engagement policy in reducing VAW in Nepal.

Address Social Influences Shaping Norms of Masculinity

The above discussion suggests that Nepalese masculinities are constructed around social norms, practices, values, and perspectives. These norms are produced and perpetuated in society by cultural, social, family, and educational structures. Therefore, to reduce violence against women it is important to challenge and change those norms which promote harmful forms of masculinity. The change is possible if the men's engagement program targets the

men at an individual level. Individual change can positively influence men as individuals in their families, peer groups, and in society.

Hold Male Authority Figures Accountable for Their Public Discourse

This study reveals that men acquire damaging masculine norms through their fathers, coaches, male friends, and older brothers. Supporting men in varied positions is an ignored aspect of engagements with men which aim to eliminate VAW. Therefore, the method of helping men unlearn and relearn gender-friendly behaviours and holding men accountable for their destructive male conduct and discourses should be prioritised. Addressing this issue could create more hospitable public environments for initiatives to end violence against women.

Highlight Men's Role in Homemaking

The presence of men who share domestic responsibilities has the potential to challenge established gender norms. Additionally, in many ways it can also promote gender equality. First, women with equal partners at home are more likely to be successful at work when they are less anxious about how their employment might affect their household responsibilities. Sons have a more egalitarian view of gender roles at home and work if their fathers contribute equally to homemaking. Thirdly, some research suggests that fathers who are actively involved in homemaking and their children's care have unlearned patriarchal notions and have learned to speak openly and honestly about who they are, what they are experiencing, and whether they are positive or negative attributes (Baldoni, 2021). These kinds of initiatives could therefore result in males being less violent towards their wives.

Create Safe Spaces for Stepping out of the Gender Norms for Men and Boys

The majority of men struggle to adapt to the idealised and exaggerated gender stereotypes for manhood, despite the fact that males have long been the dominant group. As a result, they do not always feel safe discussing gender equality or evolving notions of manhood. This necessitates the creation of secure environments in which men and boys can challenge commonly accepted inequitable standards. For example, when working in a community or school, it can be beneficial to create instructional or discussion groups that include both men and women, or separate groups if necessary. It also indicates that activism and educational outreach should not seek to shame and disgrace men, thus inducing defensiveness; it should instead offer safe spaces for them to experiment with new ways of being men under the supervision of positive male leaders and role models.

Implications for Future Research

This study has not attempted to include both male and female participants to perform a comprehensive explanatory analysis aimed at identifying men's and women's roles in constructing Nepalese masculinities. While it is acknowledged that there are some limitations related to the data-gathering sources, this study has accomplished its stated goals. As is typical when investigating concepts linked with a more prominent topic, it is intended that this study will serve as a foundation for developing other research hypotheses for further research. As a result, future research can extend to both men and women to understand society and gain more insights into women's attitudes towards VAW and its contribution to masculinity construction.

Further analysis involving larger sample sizes, potentially encompassing a national scale in Nepal, is required to support or challenge the findings of this study. Future research should focus on participation equity regarding the age, education, occupation, gender, and the participant's residential location. Additionally, future research should

include a diverse range of participants with broader social and cultural backgrounds to assess the influence of societal culture on attitudes towards VAW and rape myths and address any existing ambiguities.

Future research could employ alternative methodologies beyond the quantitative approach used in the present study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Nepalese masculinity and its relationship to VAW. A qualitative or mixed-methods approach may be advantageous for providing richer data and expanding the scope of available insights on this topic.

Policy and Practice Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have practical and policy implications for Nepali masculinity and its connection to VAW. It highlights that men in Nepal are following and imposing traditional, harmful gender norms in families and society to protect masculinity. Nepali males who accept rape myths and victim-blaming have a socially sanctioned and normalised conventional view of women and their responsibilities. It is causing violence against women. Therefore, a strong call should be made to direct attention towards the need for Nepal's gender power imbalance and structural social transformation. Addressing everyday misogynistic attitudes and behaviours helps men and women unlearn harmful norms and adopt good values and behaviours to reduce VAW in Nepal.

The research findings for Nepal underscore the urgent need to promote gender-equitable attitudes through awareness programs, primarily targeting rural populations where traditional gender norms are more prevalent than in urban areas. Although there have been some recent initiatives to engage men in Nepal, these campaigns have limited reach, as they are not large-scale national-level government initiatives. Moreover, in the era of the internet and social media, the majority of campaigns are restricted to a subset of the population with internet access, thereby diminishing their impact. To address this,

campaigns should be more inclusive and take into account Nepal's socioeconomic and geographical disparities.

The research emphasizes the significance of education in combating negative attitudes towards women, violence against women (VAW), rape myths, and victim-blaming. Therefore, it is highly recommended to incorporate comprehensive sex education modules in schools to serve as a medium for change. Additionally, the research reveals that many men have a sense of superiority and view women as inferior, indicating a sense of entitlement and proprietorship over women. To address this, schools should integrate gender education modules that promote equal partnership and challenge such beliefs into their curriculum.

Conclusion

This study investigated significant issues pertaining to Nepalese masculinity and the relationship between masculinity and VAW, with the aim to provide tangible solutions for engaging men to reduce VAW in Nepal. In order to achieve its objectives, three important research questions were posed:

1. How are masculinities constructed?
2. How has masculinity impacted VAW?
3. In what ways can men engage in reducing VAW?

The three questions were addressed using survey questionnaires delivered to 197 male participants in Nepal within a quantitative methodological framework. The demographic variables among the participants included age, marital status, level of education, employment status, and residential location. The study was carried out by utilising an online survey. The data captured were then used to answer the research questions, and the findings represented the fulfilment of the study's aim and success in meeting its objectives.

The most important findings suggest that the country's extremely traditionalist and patriarchal societal circumstances significantly impact men's behaviour. Men of all ages in

Nepal have similar ideas about being a man. These ideas revolve primarily around independence, strength, bravery, and sexual dominance. Likewise, society wants them to be courageous, stoic, and logical. They are obligated to earn the respect of others around them and refrain from talking about the problems they face. This contributes to VAW, a culture of rape, victim-blaming by encouraging men to repress vulnerability, rejecting the expression of personal traumas, and to act on homophobic and misogynist attitudes.

Males of all ages in Nepal believe that intense aggression is a conventional process for men to express emotion and sorrow. Over time, men's violence evolves towards asserting dominance over their spouses, especially when their masculinity is threatened. As a result, men and boys in Nepal are more likely to engage in violent behaviour towards women. This key finding highlights the hegemonic masculine culture of Nepal, which is characterised by the encouragement of dominance over women, and the recognition that violence is one of the key strategies for cultivating enmity. It is common for married and unmarried males to believe that men are superior to women and that women have lower intelligence than men. This belief is one of the root reasons for the many forms of violence committed against women, most notably intimate partner violence/abuse (IPV). Additionally, it normalises violence to display their supremacy, a widespread problem.

In addition, the study found that Nepal's construct of hegemonic masculinity is such that the discourse surrounding abuse and rape is still primarily geared towards victim-shaming rather than condemning the perpetrators of the crimes. The research came to some intriguing conclusions, one of which was that higher levels of education positively influence the eradication of victim-shaming beliefs linked with hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, there is an argument for using education as a catalyst for eliminating the harmful beliefs that serve as the underlying factors behind a culture of victim-blaming. This can be accomplished using education as a tool to dispel negative assumptions.

This study showed the need to incorporate men in violence prevention programs for women. Given that men are typically the perpetrators of these offences, the significance of including men in such programs has been highlighted. Economic imbalance is also one of the key variables that place women in exploitable positions of vulnerability. Giving women more economic power is one of the simplest ways to promote gender equality. Males who perceive they have lost control over women's wealth and the authority that comes with financial status may resort to violent revenge if the emphasis is placed exclusively on empowering women financially. In order to effectively eliminate VAW and foster collaboration between men and women inside households, initiatives aimed at empowering women must recruit men as allies. Young males, particularly adolescents in Nepalese society, should be exposed to gender equality through education and awareness campaigns. These programs are of the utmost importance to change society, because if young men can bring a positive change in themselves and their peer groups, these long-established conventions may be called into question.

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Appendix A- Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questions

1. Personal Information

1. **Your age?**

Under 20	31-35
20-25	36-40
26-30	Over 40

2. **Your Sex**

Male	Female
Transgender	Prefer not to say

3. **Marital Status**

Married	Unmarried

4. **In which province do you live?**

Province 1	Province 5
Province 2	Province 6
Province 3	Province 7
Province 4	

5. **What is your highest level of Education?**

No Formal Education	Bachelor's degree
Secondary School	Master's degree
Higher Secondary School	Over Master's degree

f) What do you work?

2. Please, tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement (Agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree, disagree).

1. It is not appropriate for men to ask for help.
2. Men should not show sadness to others.
3. People do not respect men who frequently talk about problems.
4. Men should be brave.
5. Men should be logical.
6. Men should be independent.
7. Men should be tough.
8. Men need to be able to find a well-paying job.
9. Strong aggression is a natural emotion for men.
10. It is OK for men to have sexual intercourse with many women.
11. Women have a primary role in taking care of children.
12. Women with many sexual partners are not good women.
13. Using dirty words while speaking is more repulsive to women than men.
14. Men have more leadership ability than women.
15. Most women cannot take care of themselves without the help of men.
16. Women are not as smart as men.
17. Women do not like to take risks.
18. Women cannot make decisions quickly.
19. Women should not go out alone at night as they are likely to get abused or raped.
20. Women who wear revealing clothes causing problems for themselves.

21. Sometimes women have to endure the abuse of their husband and in-laws to keep the family united.

22. Others should not interfere with the fight between a husband and wife.

23. If women stay away from unknown people, they are less likely to get raped or abused.

24. Sometimes, women themselves are responsible for their harassment, abuse and rape.

25. It is safer not to trust women.

26. Women always try to manipulate men.

3. Short answer questions

27. Other countries have started focusing on working with men to end violence against women. Do you think it is possible to work with men to end violence against women in Nepal?

28. Do you want to be engaged in reducing violence against women?

29. What do you think is the best way of reducing violence against women?

30. Do you think providing sexual education to men will reduce violence against women?

Thank you for your time and participation. Since this response was submitted anonymously, Once submitted, it cannot be withdrawn. Your all the responses are secure and confidential.

APPENDIX B- PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

UTS APPROVAL NUMBER - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

What is the research study?

The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between social construction of masculinity and violence against women in Nepal. It will explore the ways masculinities are constructed in Nepali society. It also intends to analyse how masculinity is impacting violence against women and in what ways men can engage in reducing it.

Therefore, I invite you to participate in this online survey. Your feelings, opinions, experiences provide me with the information to find the relationship between the social construction of masculinity and violence against women of our country, Nepal.

Who is conducting this research?

My name is Sharmila Sitaula, and I am a student at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). My supervisor is Dr Kyungja Jung. Her work phone number is +61 295142057, and her email address is kyungja.jung@uts.edu.au.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Before you decide to participate in this research study, we need to ensure that it is OK for you to take part. If you fit into our inclusion/exclusion criteria, you are welcome to continue the survey. The following are the criteria:

- The participants of the survey should be men of the age of 20-39. Below 20 and above 39 will be excluded in the research. If you are not men or below 20 and above 39, Please exist.
- Not able to provide consent are also excluded in this study. If you are interested in this study, please, answer 'Yes' to the last question of this form.

- If anyone failed to understand the Nepali language, you are requested to exit the survey.

Do I have to take part in this research study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. It is entirely up to you whether or not you decide to take part. If you choose to participate, we invite you to continue the survey.

You can change your mind at any time and stop completing the survey without consequences. However, if you want to withdraw your data after you submit, I will not be able to do so, because your data is recorded as anonymous data.

Are there any risks/inconvenience?

I do not expect this questionnaire to cause any harm or discomfort; however, if you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation, you can contact any of the numbers provided below:

- Research local contact person, Name: Saroj Sitaula and Contact Number: [redacted]. You can contact him at any time. He will let me know, and I will provide you with the necessary assistance.
- If it is feasible for you, you can directly contact me. My contact number is +61 [redacted].
- If you would like to talk with helpline in Nepal, contact Mental Health Helpline Nepal: 16600133666.
- You can also contact in 24-hour toll-free helpline number of reliefweb, national women commission in Nepal. The number is 1145. They support for shelter, psycho-social support, child support and legal aid.

What will happen to information about me?

The link to the questionnaire is https://utsau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_24tB5LOwAiJbaLP. Here, if you simply

click next at the end of this information sheet, you will get access to the questionnaire. Submission of the survey is an indication of your consent. By answering all the questions, you consent to use your data on my research project.

The data is collected anonymously. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that others will be able to identify, including the researcher. The survey data generated will be treated confidentially. It will be stored on UTS servers securely. Any data kept on the researcher's personal laptop temporarily during the data collection and analysis phase will be password protected.

I plan to publish the outcomes of this research as articles, books, or conferences. In any publication, the information is non-identified.

What if I have concerns or a complaint?

- If you have any immediate concerns or a complaint about the research, Please, contact Saroj Sitaula. His contact Number is [redacted]. You can contact him at any time. He will let me know, and I will provide you with the necessary assistance.
- Similarly, if you have concerns about the research that you think my supervisor or I can help you with, Please feel free to contact me us on +61[redacted], Sharmila.sitaula@student.uts.edu.au or +61295142057, kyungja.jung@uts.edu.au

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772 or Research.ethics@uts.edu.au and quote this number *[UTS HREC Approval Number].*

APPENDIX C- PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research project *[NEPALESE MASCULINITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN] (UTS HREC approval reference number]* being conducted by *[SHARMILA SITAULA, UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY, +61* .

I have read the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research as described in the Participant Information Sheet.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without affecting my relationship with the researchers or the University of Technology Sydney.

I agree: *[Tick the correct one]*

☐ To answer survey questions.

☐ I disagree.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in the form of articles or books that does not identify me in any way.

I am aware that I can contact in an above-given number if I have any concerns about the research.

APPENDIX D- FACEBOOK ADVERTISEMENT

Nepalese Masculinity and its Relationship Between Violence Against Women

Dear Participants,

My name is Sharmila Sitaula and, I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney. I am researching on 'Nepalese Masculinity and its Relationship Between Violence Against Women' and would welcome your participation. The research will involve multiple-choice questions and should take no more than fifteen minutes of your time. You will find all the required information related to the research after you click the link below:

https://utsau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_24tB5LOwAiJbaLP

This research is for my studies of Master of International Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. If you are interested in participating, please click the link below and tick in given checkboxes. You are under no obligation to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Sharmila Sitaula

Graduate Research Student

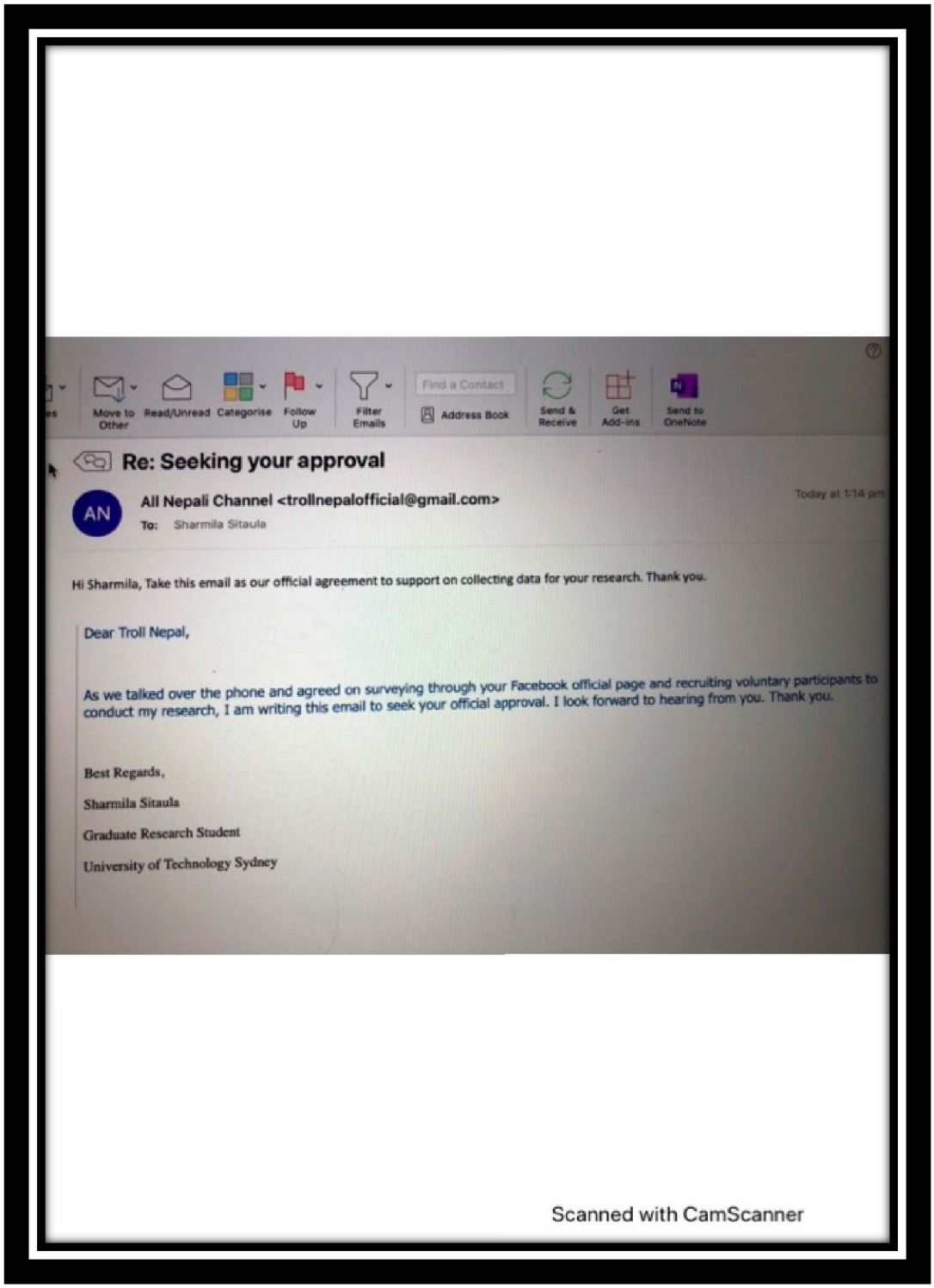
University of Technology, Sydney

Sharmila.sitaula@student.uts.edu.au

+61 [redacted]

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (Ph: +61 2 9514 2478 Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au), and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX E—APPROVAL OF TROLL NEPAL



Move to Other | Read/Unread | Categorise | Follow Up | Filter Emails | Find a Contact | Address Book | Send & Receive | Get Add-ins | Send to OneNote

Re: Seeking your approval

AN

All Nepali Channel <trollnepalofficial@gmail.com>

Today at 1:14 pm

To: Sharmila Sitaula

Hi Sharmila, Take this email as our official agreement to support on collecting data for your research. Thank you.

Dear Troll Nepal,

As we talked over the phone and agreed on surveying through your Facebook official page and recruiting voluntary participants to conduct my research, I am writing this email to seek your official approval. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Best Regards,

Sharmila Sitaula

Graduate Research Student

University of Technology Sydney

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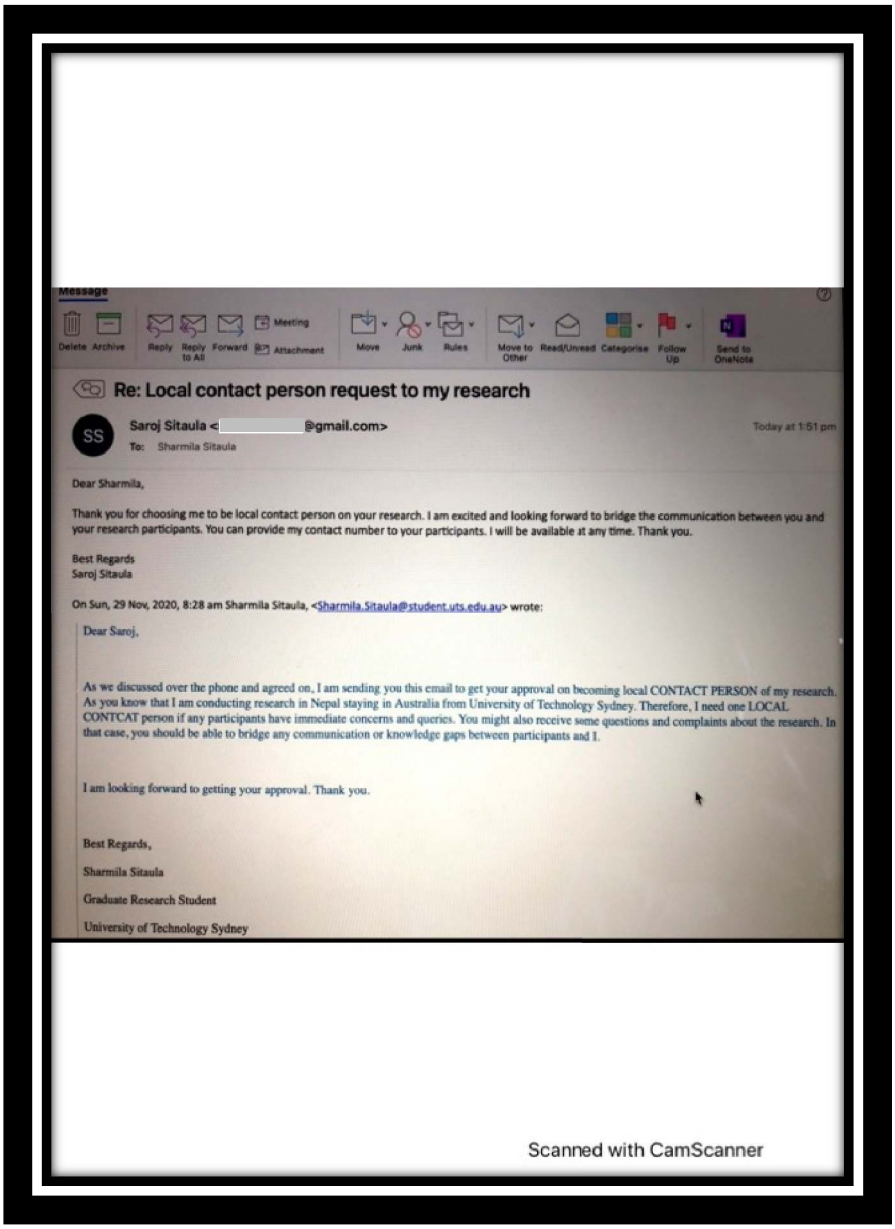
APPENDIX F- LOCAL CONTACT PERSON'S APPROVAL



Message

Delete Archive | Reply Reply to All Forward Meeting Attachment | Move Junk Rules | Move to Other Read/Unread Categorise Follow Up | Send to OneNote

Re: Local contact person request to my research

SS **Saroj Sitaula <[redacted]@gmail.com>** Today at 1:51 pm

To: Sharmila Sitaula

Dear Sharmila,

Thank you for choosing me to be local contact person on your research. I am excited and looking forward to bridge the communication between you and your research participants. You can provide my contact number to your participants. I will be available at any time. Thank you.

Best Regards
Saroj Sitaula

On Sun, 29 Nov, 2020, 8:28 am Sharmila Sitaula, <Sharmila.Sitaula@student.uts.edu.au> wrote:

> Dear Saroj,
>
> As we discussed over the phone and agreed on, I am sending you this email to get your approval on becoming local CONTACT PERSON of my research. As you know that I am conducting research in Nepal staying in Australia from University of Technology Sydney. Therefore, I need one LOCAL CONTCAT person if any participants have immediate concerns and queries. You might also receive some questions and complaints about the research. In that case, you should be able to bridge any communication or knowledge gaps between participants and I.
>
> I am looking forward to getting your approval. Thank you.
>
> Best Regards,
> Sharmila Sitaula
> Graduate Research Student
> University of Technology Sydney

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