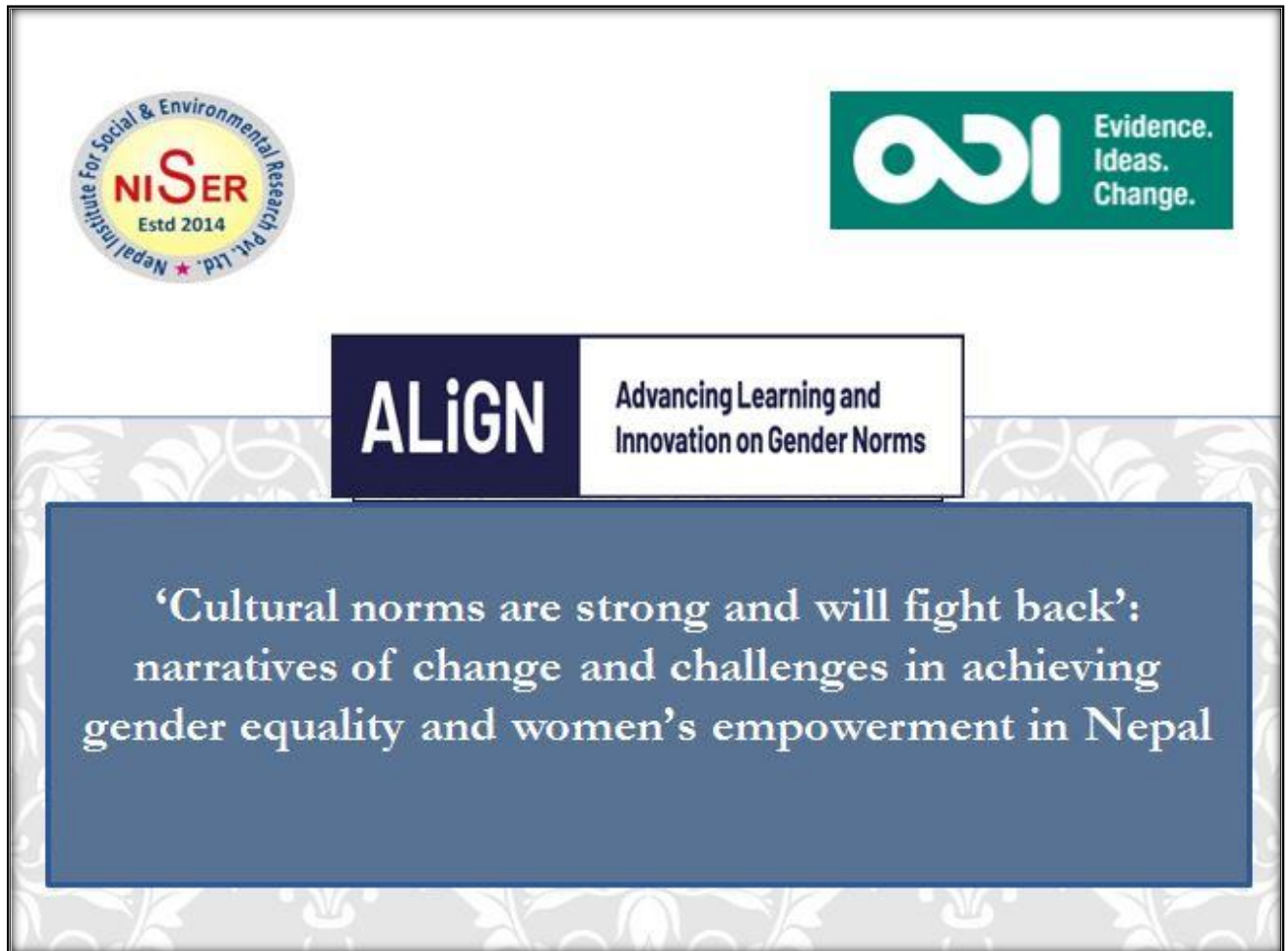


**Report on
Dissemination Workshop on Advancing Learning and Innovation on
Gender Norms (ALIGN) Project, Nepal**



Held By:

Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER)

Hotel Summit, Kupondole Height, Lalitpur

12th July, 2019

Introduction

This brief presents report from the dissemination workshop on a qualitative study undertaken in Nepal as part of a 'History and Change' research series of the Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN) initiative. The ALIGN initiative is being led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and seeks to further knowledge-sharing and innovation to ensure that evidence and learning on norm change informs more effective policy and practice in promotion of gender justice and women's empowerment.

The 'History and Change' research seeks to put together and draw lessons from personal narratives and analyses of change and resistance in gender norms, expectations and behaviours as these play out against a backdrop of broader social, economic and political processes. The overall aim is to enhance understanding of factors that enable or challenge positive changes as these are perceived and experienced through the lives of individual women at national level, as well as through inter-generational discussions with selected participants.

The research has been guided by the project's conceptual understandings of gender norms - both how they operate and how they either change or resist change. It is also underpinned by current thinking around gender justice and entitlements and has been informed by the capabilities approach to human development, which posits that progress across the life cycle in a number of key domains is critical to the empowerment of women and girls and their equitable attainment and exercise of full capabilities. Narrative investigations have therefore covered norms around household and family relations; education; physical integrity and health; psycho-social well-being; and political and civic participation.

The dissemination workshop presented findings from the study undertaken in Nepal over a two-week period in November 2018 as part of a 'History and Change' research series covering 51 study participants in all - 43 women (across three generations) and 8 young men. In addition to a literature review, the study drew on a variety of qualitative research methods. These included 18 in-depth individual interviews (IDIs); four intergenerational interviews (IGI) with grandmothers, mothers and daughters or daughters-in-law; four small group interviews (with minority ward representatives, health workers, researchers and civil society activists); one focus group discussion (FGD) with a mixed group of MA students. The respondents covered women of different professional profiles including those working in government jobs, politics, national and international NGOs, private sector and academia and also housewives.

Dissemination workshop activity for ALIGN

The dissemination workshop activity consisted of the following steps:

1. First of all, an agenda for the workshop and invitation letter was prepared to be sent to the participants.
2. Next, a name list was *made* including all the study participants and other important stakeholders for whom the study might be useful. Then selected 45 participants were invited through email and phone contacts, out of which 21 confirmed to attend the workshop.
3. Necessary logistics and arrangement for the venue was done.
4. Finally, the dissemination workshop was held on 12th July, 2019 at Hotel Summit from 10:30 am-1pm. Unfortunately, due to the bad weather (heavy monsoon and flooding in Kathmandu since the previous two days) only 11 participants joined (Annex 1). Some respondents expressed apology later, for not being able to come to the workshop due to the heavy rain.

Main agenda of the workshop

The main agendas of the workshop were:

1. To share the research findings to the study participants and other relevant stakeholders who were local government officials, politicians, civil society and other institutions.
2. To discuss and hear from their side about our understanding of the findings that was derived by interviewing them during the field work, and also through literatures, so as to get valuable inputs on how to make research findings concise and more useful.

Workshop activities in detail

1. Opening

The workshop started by welcoming the participants by a NISER team member, Tulasha Khadka. The objective of the workshop was made known, and also the initiative was taken to thank the participants for accepting the invitation and their participation as well as for their warm response during our fieldwork in November 2018.

2. Presentation and Discussion

Next, the Director of NISER, Ms. Anita Ghimire, gave a briefing about the ALIGN project and reminded the study participants about the 'History and Change Series' research undertaken by NISER.

Then, findings of the study were shared based on powerpoint prepared by Carol. To ease discussion, findings were shared in Nepali. After the presentation, there was an introduction round by the participants after which the session was made open for discussion and recommendation.



The following discussions and recommendations were made:

- i) Participants shared that at other times, they give interviews and people forget them but in ALIGN they were pleasantly surprised and happy to be invited to the sharing and to know where the study was heading to. *"I am retired now and sitting at home doing nothing. I was so happy to get the invitation and to come here and share something and learn something. People take interviews and go and never keep in touch again but this was different."* Participant representing health sector.
- ii) Some participants were very touched by the fact that we interviewed their mothers (older women). They shared that they had never seen their mothers, mother-in-laws so happy as they were after the interview. Older women, they shared were proud that for someone their stories and experiences were important. *" That smile on the face of my mother..... I had never seen her*

smile like that whatever we did..... thank you so much" Participant representing women activist talking about her mother.

- iii) Women are still far behind in development mainly due to the traditional marriage system where a wife has to move to the husband's house to start a completely new life. Many have to give up their education, job placement in their maternal home and struggle to get new jobs. This system needs a total change.

- iv) Women still have restriction on reproductive choices. There is still son preference in the society. A family which only has daughters still refuses to give parental property to the daughters and give it to close kin instead. But for full economic empowerment, the daughters also should get full rights over parental property. When a woman has economic power, she need not face any other problems. Now, legally there is access and use to parental property but does the patriarchy actually give access and use to the daughters in practice?- no. This is still a question which needs to be addressed?



- v) A participant inquired if we saw actual change in division of household work.

Our response was: In the grandmother's generation, women did all the household work without question. Now in the modern society, the husband/brother/son helps women in household chores. However, hhchores are still regarded as responsibility of women. Men take it as 'giving a helping hand' and never really considers household work as a part of everyone's duty. Another participant from Indigenous community added that in their house, both men and women equally do hh work and there is no gender division of roles.

- vi) Women started to show up as combatants or armies during the uprising. There was mobility. But then again, we have been pushed back to household chores after the revolutions. Does this mean there needs to be an uprising/political revolution to bring women to the front? Maybe we women do not prefer this 'peace' because it has pushed women in the war back to the kitchen. The case of single women is still worst.
- vii) There is discrimination in the National Anthem itself as a particular lines says 'By the blood of the brave men', it could be easily changed into 'by the blood of the brave men and women' but women's work is not acknowledged. Women's contribution has gone in vain.

viii) A participant notified us to highlight the role of Inter-Party Women's Network in giving the first and so far the most important step for women to negotiate gender issues in the political parties. This led to formation of women's caucus and because when they came into inter-party network women became so strong in negotiations of women's right within their own party that later the women caucus was not allowed to be formed after the first few years.

ix) The Federal structure has given 40% reservation to women in the local government and 33% at the Parliament. But as expressed by 2 of the participants from local level government, 'we are just headcounts, we have no voice'. They do not have voice in policy or planning even for their own ward level. The women representative or the Dalit women representative is sent to every meeting about women's issues. Men do not go and do not learn. When they come with ideas, they are side-lined saying "again.....all you talk about is women".



All of the 5 local representatives have never sat for training on gender issues together or discussed gender issues. They made recommendations that both men and women representative should be invited, made to participate in trainings, sit together for planning and discussion.

x) In the name of gender inclusion, women were limited to the post of deputy-mayors in all the provinces and not even a single woman has been elected as a ward chairman throughout the country which is the major drawback for the country and shows the status of women in the country.

xi) Both men and women should attend programmes on gender issues together. Mostly women and girls are taught about gender violence which is wrong. Both men and women should be taught about gender based violence.

xii) Identity and citizenship case still remains discriminatory. A woman always gets identity by the name of the father or her husband. But there is no man who gets identity in the name of his wife. Again, a daughter-in-law of another caste or country is easily accepted by the in-laws as being brought by their 'male figure' (son) in the house. But if a women marries a foreigner, she is not allowed to give him an identity and so cannot make a citizenship for him. So they cannot stay together

xiii) Still, there are many cases where a child born of Nepali woman and a foreign national is denied citizenship in the name of the mother. This is still a big loophole which needs to be overcome.

xiv) Things have also moved backwards: For example, there was a straight statement that in rape case, there will be 20 years of imprisonment if the victim is of 10 years or below. But now it has been changed to UPTO 20 years which means people can be freed after a few days.

- xv) According to one of our participants, situation has improved very much for women in Armed Police Force. They are respected among their fellow workers and sexual violence is almost non-existence which was not the case before.
- xvi) While looking at the health situations, women faced so many problems during the insurgency, some many died during delivery. But women are advanced now and have better access to health facilities. Still so many targets are yet to be met especially for rural women.
- xvii) Due to programmes and orientation classes, women all around have started to make savings. There will be no change without self-realization and one should not keep oneself in darkness.
- xviii) Another participant emphasised on the support of family for empowerment of women. Nepali women cannot move forward and face obstacles unless she has full support by the family.

Conclusion and thanksgiving session

The workshop concluded with a well round of discussion and recommendations to further improve the research findings. All the participants expressed their gratitude to NISER team for inviting them to share the research they were part of. They also expressed that they had not been invited before to share the research they were interviewed, 'People just came and interviewed us; few hardly bothered to share the final reports but none invited us to share the research findings like you did'.

The team is thankful for their response and as majority were absent and do not understand English, we have proposed that we will further make '1-page main findings in Nepali ' and share to the concerned stakeholders and study participant, also including the final report once it is published.

Annex 1

List of Participants

S.N.	Respondent	Profession	Designation/ Organization
1.	Agu Nyaphhyon	Development Worker	Sector Manager/Swiss Contact
2.	Indra Shreesh	Local Level Representatives	Women Representative at Ward Level (Ward 24- Dhapakhel, Lalitpur Metropolitan)
3.	Jamuna Gurung	Police	Police/Armed Police Force (APF) Nepal
4.	Karan Kunwar	Development Worker	Senior Consultant/Swiss Contact
5.	Kunda Sharma	Development worker	Chairperson/ Women for Human Rights (Single Women)
6.	Meera Dhungana	Lawyer	President, Forum for Women Law and Development (FWLD)
7.	Nisha Malbul	Local Level Representatives	Dalit Women Representative at Ward Level (Ward 24- Dhapakhel, Lalitpur Metropolitan)
8.	Rachana Khadka	Political activist	Politician/ Communist Party of Nepal- United Marxist Leninin
9.	Sumina Pradhan	Development Worker	Project Coordinator, Foreign Employment World Welfare Fund
10.	Swasthani Magar	Health Worker	Retired Mid- Wife (Govt. Service)