



## FACT SHEET - PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

There has been little work done on masculinities, both as a field of inquiry and site of advocacy, in Sri Lanka. To address the gap in evidence-based studies of masculinities, CARE Sri Lanka undertook a study on men's knowledge, practices and attitudes toward gender and gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombo, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya and Batticaloa districts. The study is part of the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence, coordinated by Partners for Prevention, a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV regional joint programme for gender-based violence prevention in Asia and the Pacific, which explores gender-based violence and masculinities to inform evidence-based violence prevention interventions.

The need for closer collaboration with the private sector in work on prevention of violence against women is undeniably important. The study findings illustrate the impact of workplace environments on men's stress and health and the need for workplace policies that provide the space for men to be caregivers and present as fathers. The study also shows a lack of workplace and community activities that raise awareness on violence against women and girls.

### Key findings

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#### WORK-RELATED STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

- ❖ Economic pressures resulting from inadequate income, lack of economic assets and financial responsibilities as breadwinners and male heads of households were found to be amongst the primary causes of male stress and lack of well-being.
- ❖ Overall, 56% of men reported work-related stress.
- ❖ Sixty percent of men reported being frequently under stress or depressed due to inadequate income. The highest proportion of men reported income-related stress in Nuwara Eliya (68%) and men in Colombo reported the least income-related stress (47%).
- ❖ Forty-six percent of men reported frequently feeling stressed or depressed because they do not have a job that suits their education and/or experience. Sixty-two percent of men in Nuwara Eliya reported feeling stressed or depressed for this reason, compared to 53% in Batticaloa, 38% in Colombo and 22% in Hambantota.
- ❖ Eight percent of men had moderate depressive symptoms, while 6% showed signs of high depression. Rates of male depression were highest in Nuwara Eliya, where 28% of men reported depressive symptoms, followed by Batticaloa (12%) and Colombo (6%), with men in Hambantota reporting the lowest rates of depression (4%).
- ❖ Men with less education were at highest risk of depression and suicidal thoughts, possibly due to fewer opportunities for employment and social mobility available to men with less education.



# BROADENING GENDER: WHY MASCULINITIES MATTER – Attitudes, practices and gender based violence in four districts in Sri Lanka

## IMPACT OF WORK STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

- ❖ Men's work stress had a direct bearing on their mental health and well-being, as 49% of men reported that they sometimes feel ashamed to face their family because they are out of work and 17% reported that they sometimes drink or stay away from home because they cannot find work.
- ❖ About half of all men do not own their own home and over a third rely on parental income. These are factors that have a knock-on effect on men of employable age who may feel inferior or at least 'compromised' in their masculinity because of an inadequate economic, and thereby, social, status.
- ❖ Depression directly affects people's productivity at work - for example, 28% of men reported that they had trouble keeping their mind on what they were doing over the past week.
- ❖ Fifty-one percent of men migrated out of their home district for work. It follows that men who are fathers reported spending less time with their children and being absent from their homes due, in part, to migration for work. Approximately 60% of men in Nuwara Eliya and Batticaloa had migrated for work, compared to 50% in Colombo and Hambantota.

## WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT WITH VAW PREVENTION

- ❖ Only 15% of all men had participated in community or workplace activities on violence against women. This points to the lack of commitment on the part of employers and community leaders to mainstream such programmes and make them compulsory for employees and members of the community.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in IPV perpetration rates across different income brackets or education levels, dispelling the common assumption that men from lower income backgrounds or with less education are more violent.