

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# IMPACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WORKPLACES IN NEPAL



Western

Centre for Research & Education on  
Violence Against Women & Children



# **This Executive Summary was prepared for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC).**

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The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is a democratic, affiliate-led federation recognised as the world's leading transport authority. We fight passionately to improve workers' lives, connecting more than 700 affiliated trade unions from 150 countries to secure rights, equality and justice for workers' globally. We are the voice for nearly 16.5 million transport workers across the world.



The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC) was founded in 1994 as a collaborative venture between The University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe College and the London Coordinating Committee to End Women Abuse. The Centre was established in response to a federal study on the problem of violence against women, prompted by the 1989 murder of 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence and harassment in the world of work is a human rights violation. It is a threat to equal opportunities and incompatible with decent work. In June 2019, the ILO adopted Convention No. 190 (C190), the first international treaty to recognize the right to work in an environment free from violence and harassment. This Convention recognizes that gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affects women and girls and asserts the need for responses to tackle underlying causes and risk factors including gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and the lack of gender-responsive approaches in society more broadly. This Convention also recognizes the effects of domestic violence (DV) in the world of work. Violence in workers' homes, families, and relationships affects multiple aspects of work including employment opportunities, productivity, and workplace health and safety. C190

also references the important role that governments, unions, employers, workers' organizations, and labour market institutions have in recognizing risks associated with DV, responding to and addressing the impacts of DV, and ensuring that world of work is a place of safety for all.

The current study is one of a series of incidence and impact studies from across the world including India, Australia, New Zealand, Türkiye, the Philippines, Sweden, Canada, and the United States. It was conducted by the Centre for Research and Education of Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) at Western University in partnership with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). Representing the experiences of 3785 Nepalese women employed in the transport sector, it contributes significantly to our understanding of the experiences of Nepal's workforce.



Volker Meyer: Kathmandu, Entwicklungsregion Mitte, Nepal. pexels.com

## Key findings include:

- **Most women employed in Nepal's transport sector (72%) have experienced DV.** For over one third of all participants (37%), this experience is current (i.e., within the past 12 months).
- **Almost all women who experienced DV victimization (95%) report that it impacted their ability to work.** Frequent impacts include being late for work or having to miss work due to others' perpetration of DV against them.
- Perpetrators of DV also impact the workplace directly through actions such as abusing or monitoring their partner during workplace hours and using workplace resources (Scott et al. 2017). Consideration of these dual impacts is critical for the Nepalese transport sector where **one quarter (26%) of women victims of DV report that the perpetrator of abuse against them work in the same workplace.**
- **Most women (79%) have discussed their experience with others in the workplace; most often with co-workers, though a third of the time, with the union representatives.** Women often reported positive responses following discussions of DV in their workplace and they shared many examples of how union officials helped them through providing information and support. Still, women identified that disclosing DV can make workers more vulnerable to being judged, to being taken advantage of by other male workers and to losing their jobs.
- **Close to two thirds of respondents knew of a co-worker who they suspected or knew was experiencing DV (61%).** Workers expressed concern about their co-workers' experiences of DV and identified the negative impact of DV on their co-workers.

They also identified how DV perpetrators against co-workers impacted their work directly (e.g., having to respond to abusive calls) and indirectly (e.g., having to work longer hours due to a co-worker being injured due to DV).

- **Respondents were strongly in support of having workplaces and unions involved in supporting workers who are experiencing DV.** Particularly strong support was endorsed for having workplace policies that support survivors of DV, training on DV within workplaces as well as for counselling service availability for victims and accountability measures for workers perpetrating DV.
- **Fewer than half of women reported their experiences of DV outside of the workplace. When they reported, they most often did so to healthcare professionals, followed by police, and social workers.** Women explained that experiences of DV were often not taken seriously by these professionals, that laws are either inadequate or not enforced, and that as a result, perpetrators were neither restrained from violence nor punished for perpetrating DV.

Results of this study suggest that unionized Nepalese workplaces are critical locations to educate both men and women about DV, create an environment of safety, support women in finding safety, promote accountability and change in workers perpetrating DV, and encourage men and women to speak out against DV. There should be no silent spectators. Further, this study underscores the value of women union activists and leaders trained to support women experiencing DV. Recommendations focus on how employers and unions can work alongside other social institutions to shift social norms about DV and to help recognize, respond to, and address the impacts of DV.

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