

The Impact of Gender on the Relationship between Coping, Self-Validation, and  
Suicidality Among Earthquake-Affected Adolescents in Nepal

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in the Duke Global Health Institute  
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ABSTRACT

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## Abstract

**Purpose.** Suicide is the second leading cause of death globally among young adults 15-29 years old. Addressing adolescent suicidal thoughts and behavior (STB) is especially important in low and middle income countries (LMIC) where 46% of suicides occur before 25 years of age. This burden is highest in Asia, with adolescent rates two times greater than the global average. This study examines the role of gender in influencing the relationship between coping dysfunction, self-validation, and suicidality among adolescents in the context of a school-based mental health promotion program in post-earthquake Nepal.

**Methods.** In this mixed-methods study, adolescents ( $N = 102$ , 50% female) attending secondary school (12 – 18 years old, average age 14.3 years) in a highly earthquake-affected region near Kathmandu, Nepal, completed the Ways of Coping Checklist, Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation Questionnaire, and the Suicide Screener Questionnaire. Participants of semi-structured interviews included 22 students, 2 teachers, and 3 caregivers. Gender-stratified focus group discussions ( $n = 2$ ) were also conducted among students.

**Results.** The stressor that students identified most frequently (71.4% of interviewees) in qualitative interviews was academic-related sources. Scores on the Ways of Coping Checklist skills and dysfunction scales did not differ significantly by gender. However, girls scoring high in coping dysfunction ( $t = -2.511, p = 0.015$ ) and low in self-validation ( $t = 2.916, p = 0.005$ ) were significantly more likely to endorse suicidal ideations in the past two weeks compared to boys with similar dysfunction ( $t = -0.237, p = 0.813$ ; and self-validation scores  $t = 1.087, p = 0.282$ ).

**Conclusions.** Although gender differences in coping skills and coping dysfunction were not quantitatively observed, qualitative analyses revealed that dysfunctional coping was more frequently reported by girls. Future studies should examine the temporal relationship between coping strategies and suicidality. Suicide risk reduction programs should evaluate enhancing adaptive coping skills usage as a mechanism of action to reduce suicidality among girls. Additional research is needed to identify salient risk factors for boys.

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the youth who participated in this research study and the families who opened their hearts and homes to us during our time in Nepal. With sincere appreciation, thank you for your compassion, patience, and willingness to share your time and stories with us.

# Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Acknowledgements.....	xi
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Methods.....	3
2.1 Setting.....	3
2.2 Study Participants.....	4
2.3 Ethical Considerations.....	4
2.4 Measures.....	5
2.4.1 Quantitative Measurements.....	5
2.4.1.1 Ways of Coping Checklist.....	5
2.4.1.2 Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation Questionnaire.....	6
2.4.1.3 Suicide Screener Questionnaire.....	6
2.4.2 Qualitative Measurements.....	7
2.4.2.1 Participant and Key-Informant Interviews.....	7
2.4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions.....	7
2.5 Data Analyses.....	7
2.5.1 Statistical Analyses.....	7
2.5.2 Qualitative Measures.....	7
3. Results.....	9
3.1 Baseline Characteristics.....	9
3.2 Stressors.....	9
3.2.1 Academics.....	9

3.2.2 Finances.....	11
3.2.3 Family.....	11
3.2.4 Early Marriage.....	12
3.2.5 Earthquake.....	12
3.3 Gender and Coping.....	13
3.3.1 WCCL.....	13
3.3.2 Confiding in Others.....	14
3.3.3 Distracting.....	15
3.3.4 Self-Invalidation.....	15
3.3.5 Violence.....	15
3.3.6 Avoidance.....	16
3.3.7 Substance Use.....	16
3.3.8 Suicidality and Self-Harm.....	16
3.3.9 Focus Group Discussions.....	17
3.4 Self-Validation, Coping Dysfunction, and Suicidality.....	17
4. Discussion.....	19
4.1 Stressors.....	19
4.2 Coping.....	20
4.3 Implications for Future Research and Interventions.....	20
4.4 Limitations.....	21
5. Conclusion.....	23
Appendix A - Coding Queries.....	24
References.....	44



## List of Tables

Table 1: Student Demographics.....	9
Table 2: Tests of independence of suicidality endorsement against self-validation and coping dysfunction scores by gender.....	18

## List of Figures

Figure 1: WCCL Mean Item Response Value.....	14
Figure 2: Adolescent coping mechanisms as qualitatively reported in FGDs.....	17

## **List of Abbreviations**

DBT – Dialectical Behavior Therapy

FGD – Focus group discussion

HDI – Human Development Index

LMIC – Low and middle income countries

RA – Research assistant

SSQ – Suicide screener questionnaire

STB – Suicidal thoughts and behaviors

SVSI – Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation Questionnaire

TPO-Nepal – Transcultural Psychosocial Organization-Nepal

WCCL – Ways of Coping Checklist

WCCL-D – Ways of Coping Checklist, dysfunction subscale

## Acknowledgements

With appreciation, I would like to acknowledge the members of my committee, Dr. Brandon Kohrt, Professor Kearsley Stewart, Dr. Eve Puffer, and Dr. Bonnie Kaiser, for their support, encouragement, and guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Larry Park for his hours of statistical and motivational aid, whose genuine passion for helping students to excel has proven invaluable in the creation of this work. I extend my gratitude to the faculty and staff at the Duke Global Health Institute for your teaching, your assistance, and for funding this research.

In addition, thanks to Kiran Thapa, Manjila Pokharel, and Susanna Sharma for their assistance with data collection and management, and the entire staff of TPO-Nepal, particularly Mr. Suraj Koirala, for their support. We also thank Mr. Rushan Bassi for facilitating the implementation of this study at his school, and Mr. Sujen Shrestha and Ms. Samita Shrestha for their help in acquainting us with the culture and the people of Sankhu.

I thank Martha Berg for being a wonderful partner and friend over the past year – I'm so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with you. Finally, I would like to thank my patient, loving, and handsome husband for being so great while I pursued this degree – thank you for cheering me on, proofreading more than your share of papers, and learning to cook. This would not have been possible without all of you.

## 1. Introduction

It is estimated that between 10 and 20% of the world's adolescents suffer from some form of mental health problem, with many Asian countries impacted by much higher rates (e.g., India = 30%; Pakistan = 34-36%). [1]. Recent research indicates that Nepali adolescents facing a significant psychosocial stressor (e.g., one or more parents having leprosy, changes in family structure, parental substance abuse) suffer from impaired self-esteem, increases in depressive symptoms, and increases in community-identified behavioral problems [1, 2]. Understanding of what means adolescents in Nepal use to cope is still limited, but there is evidence that boys and girls do not differ significantly in self-reported coping mechanisms used (such as praying, apologizing, acting to resolve the problem, and drawing, writing, or reading) when experiencing fear [3]. Nepali adolescents also suffer from remarkably high rates of depression, mental illness, and suicidality; this is particularly problematic among Nepali females who experience higher rates of anxiety and depression than males [4]. Factors associated with this gender disparity include the prevalence of women victimized by domestic violence, early marriage, and expectations of role fulfillment [5].

Suicide accounted for 804,000 deaths worldwide in 2012 and was the second leading cause of death globally among young adults aged 15-29 years. These young adult suicides constitute 46% of suicides in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with the greatest burden in Asian countries [6]. Available statistics indicate that the incidence rate of suicide in Nepal has risen dramatically over the past two decades and is now the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age, accounting for 16% of mortalities for this population in 2009 [7]. This proportion is likely an underestimate, as many South Asian suicide metrics are believed to be grossly underestimated due to inaccurate and absent reporting and monitoring methods [8, 9].

To date, no studies have examined the relationship between gender, stressors, coping mechanisms, and suicidality among Nepali adolescents. Understanding how gender influences these factors could have important implications for future mental health interventions and research. Furthermore, pursuing an understanding of these associations within the Nepali context is critical; recent research has illuminated a multitude of justifications for the cultural adaptation of evidence-based psychological interventions prior to implementation. Some of these rationales include the unique: (1) expressions of symptoms related to common disorders (e.g., different experiences of certain symptoms of panic attacks among southeast Asian refugees); (2) risk factors of the development of psychopathology (e.g., low levels of assertiveness more highly associated with poor mental health outcomes among Western children than among Chinese children); and (3) manifestations and effects of resiliency (e.g., certain characteristics being more protective than others) between cultural groups [10]. In order to inform culturally salient and sensitive interventions, this study seeks to assess gender disparities in causes of tension, coping skills and dysfunction, self-validation, and suicidal ideation and behaviors among adolescents in a Nepali village.

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## 2. Methods

### *2.1 Setting*

Situated between India and China, Nepal is a low-income country with a rich cultural and ethnic diversity. When compared to other South Asian countries, Nepal had the second lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in 2011 (0.458) due to short life expectancies, low literacy levels, and poor standards of living. The Gender Development Index geometric mean was 0.482 and was impacted by significant gender disparities in literacy rates (women = 56.39%, men = 78.86%) and years of education (women = 3.85, men = 5.13) [11].

The wage gap between men and women is significant, with male laborers often making 100% more than female laborers [12]. Although the younger generations are nearing equality in other areas, such as attendance in primary school (boys = 86%, girls = 74%), females still have poorer predictors of health, including higher rates of secondary school drop-out [12] and early marriage, with 41% of Nepali women married prior to age 18 [14].

Although legally disbanded in 1963, 1990, and again in 2007, the Nepali caste system continues to be an important means of social stratification [13]. The Brahman and Chhetri belong to upper caste groups, often with higher HDIs than other castes [12] and holding occupations as Hindu priests, rulers, and military leaders [15]. The Newari ethnic group is predominately Buddhist and has an independent caste system, ranging from the lowest, 'untouchable' group to higher statuses, mirroring the traditional Nepali caste system. Tamang individuals are an ethnic minority group of Tibetan migrants, often living in mountainous areas and primarily working in the agriculture industry [16].

This study took place in a public school located in Sankhu, a rural village located within the Kathmandu valley. This study site was selected due to its proximity to the epicenter (154 km) of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred in April 2015, approximately one year prior to the implementation of the program. The earthquake severely affected this region of

Nepal, causing over 8,700 fatalities and destroying nearly all homes in rural areas of the valley [17]. This program was implemented in this setting to promote positive mental health and to help students develop skills to effectively respond to stressful life events, and is based on a more intensive Dialectical Behavior Therapy adaptation developed for suicidal and self-harming women in a rural district [18].

## ***2.2 Study Participants***

Participants included adolescents in grades 7, 8, and 9 at a government-run secondary school in Sankhu. All students within these grades were included in the study. In accordance with current literature on reaching meaning saturation in qualitative research, a subsample of 22 students were selected for participation in semi-structured interviews [19]. A separate subsample of students participated in gender-stratified focus group discussions. School principals and faculty members assisted in identifying teachers and caregivers for participation in qualitative interviews.

## ***2.3 Ethical Considerations***

This study received ethical approval from the Duke University Health System Institutional Review Board and the Nepal Health Research Council. All minors provided written informed assent and were compensated for their participation with snacks or school supplies. Their caregivers and teachers provided verbal or written informed consent based on literacy levels. Teachers were compensated with office supplies and parents were given chocolates. Compensatory items for participants of all ages valued less than \$5. Local research assistants were consulted at all points of the study to ensure that the research was being conducted in a culturally sensitive manner. Research activities were conducted in conjunction with Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Nepal, an entity that works to improve psychological and social wellbeing for Nepalis. Participants who endorsed suicidal ideations



or behaviors were referred to counseling with a trained mental health professional through TPO Nepal.

## **2.4 Measures**

### **2.4.1 Quantitative Measurements**

Demographic and background information was collected from all participants. In addition, all participants completed a transculturally-adapted assessment of coping, self-validation, suicidality, and other psychometrics. These measures were translated into Nepali and transculturally adapted using a procedure validated by van Ommeren et al. [20]. They were then back-translated into English to ensure the measurement of intended constructs. Data were collected on Samsung Galaxy tablets using Open Data Kit software, Version 2 [21]. All questions were presented in Nepali and students independently completed the assessments on the tablet.

#### **2.4.1.1 Ways of Coping Checklist**

The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Ways of Coping Checklist (WCCL) [22] was piloted in a population of women exhibiting suicidal tendencies in rural Nepal [18]. The scale was then modified following a focus group discussion with Nepali mental health counselors to reduce redundancy and improve comprehensibility, acceptability, and completeness. In this form, the WCCL is comprised of 18 items produced from two subscales: coping skills and coping dysfunction. Participants were asked to rate the frequency of which they have utilized given coping mechanisms over the past two weeks. Response values range from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*a lot*). Items include the following (*dysfunction items are indicated with a \**): (1) Thought about good things, payed less attention to negative thoughts and feelings; (2\*) Blamed or said negative things about myself; (3\*) Isolated so others did not know my feelings; (4) Took responsibility for my thoughts or feelings; (5) Talked to someone about my feelings; (6) Sang or listened to happy songs; (7) Looked at something beautiful to feel better; (8) Smelled

something nice to feel better; (9) Tried to calm down before making a decision; (10) Felt something pleasurable to touch to feel better; (11) Tried to focus on one thing at a time; (12) Did something to feel a different emotion (e.g., doing something fun even when sad); (13) Took care of my body so I was less emotionally sensitive; (14\*) Avoided my problem; (15) Thought about potential consequences before acting; (16) Made and followed a plan of action to solve my problem; (17) Worshipped; and (18) Asked for something I wanted. In this study, the WCCL held strong internal reliability as measured by the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.832$ ).

#### ***2.4.1.2 Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation Questionnaire***

The Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation Questionnaire (SVSI) [23] is a 10-item self-report scale that measures the frequency of which the participant engaged in self-validating or -invalidating cognitions or behaviors throughout the past two weeks (e.g., self-criticism, valuing own desires). Participants are asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale with response values ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*all the time*). Invalidating items are reverse-scored to produce a raw total score. The internal reliability of the SVSI in this study was strong ( $\alpha = 0.802$ ).

#### ***2.4.1.3 Suicide Screener Questionnaire***

Participants were asked to complete the Suicide Screener Questionnaire (SSQ) [24] in order to identify prevalence of suicidality and parasuicidality within the population. This article focuses on the second of the four items (In the past two weeks, have you had thoughts of wanting to die or to hurt yourself (e.g., taking poison, harming yourself, cutting your hands, banging your head against the wall?)) as it, the WCCL, and the SVSI refer to a timeframe of the past two weeks. Response options to this questionnaire are dichotomous, yes or no, to indicate endorsement or denial of indicated symptoms.

## **2.4.2 Qualitative Measurements**

### ***2.4.2.1 Participant and Key-Informant Interviews***

A subsample of students and a sample of caregivers and teachers completed 60-minute, semi-structured interviews regarding their perceptions of gender disparities in adolescent stressors and coping mechanisms. Qualitative assessments were conducted by the first and second author with the assistance of bilingual research assistants (RA) native to Nepal, or independently by an RA. Interviews were translated on the spot and recorded in both English and Nepali. Interviews were transcribed in English and coding was completed with English-language transcripts. RAs were gender-matched to interviewees in order to encourage participant comfort and openness.

### ***2.4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions***

Two gender-stratified focus group discussions (FGDs) were facilitated and moderated by Nepali research assistants with a subsample of students. FGD participants were then asked about gender norms for adolescents within their community as well as perceptions of stressors and coping mechanisms for their own and the opposite sex.

## ***2.5 Data Analyses***

### **2.5.1 Statistical Analyses**

T-tests were conducted to assess for differences between boys' and girls' mean scores on the WCCL, SVSI, and SSQ. Pearson correlations were used to examine the relationship between self-validation and self-invalidation against coping skills use. Hypothesis tests were two-tailed and a p-value of 0.05 or smaller was used to indicate significance. All statistical analyses were conducted using Stata/SE 14.2 [25].

### **2.5.2 Qualitative Measures**

A collection of codes was developed using themes that arose organically from the transcripts or that were related to the primary research questions. A codebook was then

developed that included the code's theme, definition, exclusion criteria, as well as an example from the text. Transcripts were then coded and compared by the first two authors. The codebook was refined until achieving an inter-coder agreement of 90%. In accord with recent efforts for greater transparency in dissemination of qualitative research [26], the coding queries are provided as a supplemental file. Qualitative data were coded and analyzed using MaxQDA 12 [27].

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Baseline Characteristics

The final sample included 102 (50% female) adolescents in grades 7, 8, and 9. The average age of females was 14.2 years and males was 14.4 years (see Table 1 for additional demographics). A total of 22 students agreed to participate in interviews; however, one female declined the request to have her interview be audio-recorded, so a total of 21 semi-structured interviews (11 male) were included in the analyses. Nineteen students (9 females, 10 males) participated in focus group discussions.

**Table 1** Student Demographics

Variable	Female ( <i>n</i> =51) <i>n</i> (%)	Male ( <i>n</i> =51) <i>n</i> (%)	Total (102) <i>n</i> (%)
<b>Caste/Ethnicity</b>			
Brahman/Chhetri	9 (17.65)	8 (15.69)	17 (16.67)
Newari	8 (15.69)	5 (9.80)	13 (12.75)
Tamang	29 (56.86)	31 (60.78)	60 (58.82)
Other	5 (9.80)	7 (13.72)	12 (11.76)
<b>Age</b>			
12-13	13 (25.49)	15 (29.41)	28 (27.45)
14-15	30 (58.83)	26 (50.98)	56 (54.90)
16-18	8 (15.68)	10 (19.61)	18 (17.65)
<b>Class</b>			
7	19 (37.25)	17 (33.33)	36 (35.29)
8	11 (21.57)	15 (29.41)	26 (25.49)
9	21 (41.18)	19 (37.25)	40 (39.22)

#### 3.2 Stressors

##### 3.2.1 Academics

In qualitative assessments, students and adults reported that girls and boys have similar stressors, with academic-related stress being the most frequently endorsed source of tension reported by adolescents (70% of girls, 82% of boys). Primary academic-related

stressors reported by males and females included grades, homework, performing in front of the class, and friendships.

However, there were variations between genders in specific facets of their school lives that were causing them stress. Females reported that preferential treatment of sons by caregivers caused them tension within the school setting. Participants stated that this often took the form of sending sons to private boarding schools where they had access to better education than they were provided with in the government-run, public schools. Two female students reported caregivers giving daughters higher workloads than their sons with the intent of interfering with their schooling.

...At home, they have their grandmothers who are old-fashioned and think that girls should work so they will give their daughter so much work that they can't pay attention to their studies. [Female, grade 9]

In addition, the same two students also discussed how preferential treatment towards boys by teachers impacted their academic performance:

Suppose, teachers usually teach the boys more and dismiss the girls even when we ask. That causes problems. Say, I want to study in math but if the teacher doesn't teach me then I think I can't do well and have tension. [Female, grade 9]

Fear of being unenrolled from school due to gender norms was endorsed by two females.

When asked about how she feels when she worried about her grades, one female stated:

So when that happens I, because I'm a girl, I won't get to study more. They'll probably send me off, marry me off, and not provide me with education. [Female, grade 9]

A teacher also described this cycle:

...[Girls'] daily activities include household chores like cutting grass, carrying firewood, working in field, helping parents in all of their works, looking after children and many more. Because of these, they are not able to concentrate on study despite their will and remain backward. Due to this reason, their study keeps degrading...Because of this, they marry early, leave school and work to earn money... [Male, teacher]

Another academic stressor unique to females within the population is menstruation. Both teachers stated that females tend to have higher rates of absenteeism and exhibit difficulties focusing on their education during their menstrual cycles.

Though there is provision of separate toilet for female students, they are not well managed. For [grade] 6, 7, 8 students, because of menstruation, they have to skip the classes and this lead[s] to school absenteeism. [Male, teacher]

### 3.2.2 Finances

For several adolescents ( $n = 4$  females,  $n = 1$  male), the insecurity of household income and the ability to afford necessities is also a major source of stress. A teacher described the tendency of sons in these situations to seek outside work in order to contribute to the family income:

For male students who have some responsibility towards their home, they get tensed thinking how they could improve the economic condition of their home. In doing so, we can see that they work in field, do other works to earn extra income and try to stave off household economic problems. [Male, teacher]

For females, tension due to economic conditions typically was focused on longer-term ramifications, such as being able to pursue higher education or certain lines of work. Students and adults also described how financial strife disproportionately affected males and females.

One student elaborated on this:

Respondent (R): I have many beautiful dreams but I don't think they'll come true. I want to be a staff nurse in the future but I don't think I'll be able to be that.

Interview (I): Why is that?

R: We are many of us at home and we are also economically weak and we have a problem of hand to mouth so I don't think they'll be able to make me a staff nurse in the future because they can't afford actually...

I: How about your younger brother? Do you know what he wants to do in the future?

R: He has an aim of being [in the] British Army and my family also has said that they will support him in every ways even if they have to take a loan for it. [Female, grade 7]

### 3.2.3 Family

Familial conflict was the second most reported source of tension for both males ( $n = 9$ ) and females ( $n = 4$ ). Other family stressors for males and females included parental expectations of their children, family members living abroad, and fathers taking a second wife.

A source of tension within the family that was unique to females was the perception of their ‘corruption.’ In interviews and the FGD, females stated that if a female interacts with a male in a manner that is considered inappropriate, caregivers and the community may say that the daughter has become ‘corrupted,’ a label that may cause the individual to incur a host of societal and familial consequences. In an interview with a student who had directly experienced this, she stated:

I felt very bad. I was so frustrated to see the community’s reaction. I kept on thinking that because I am a girl I can’t have any boy friends. So these days I’ve stopped talking to the boys, at least in front of the community people... I just felt that I shouldn’t have been born [as] a girl [Female, grade 7]

### **3.2.4 Early Marriage**

Study participants reported that females are more often expected to get married at a young age than males within this village. Although some girls consider it auspicious to find a husband at an early age, one female participant cited the prospect of her parents arranging her marriage as a substantial source of stress. One teacher reported that it was not uncommon for females in Sankhu to drop out of school and get married as early as 7th grade:

...as this is a rural area, the students after 15, 16, 17 years, the tradition of wanting to marry early among girls still exists in our community. The tradition of marrying a little early is still there among girls [more frequently] than boys. So, when girls turn 16, 17 or 18, the idea of marrying their girl child has already come up in the mind of parents. [Male, teacher]

Although early marriage is traditionally more commonly practiced among females, males are not immune to stress caused by the practice. In the FGD, boys reported that if a girl was not married, the ultimate responsibility fell upon the adult male for not marrying her:

Girls marry early. They escape early. Boys take them. If boys don't take them, girls don't escape. It's the boy's fault then. [Male, FGD]

### **3.2.5 Earthquake**

Despite the widespread impact of the 2015 earthquake, the natural disaster was rarely discussed throughout student interviews, and when it was mentioned, it was only by boys. Each of the four students who discussed the earthquake only identified it as a prior, and not



a current, stressor. While discussing his experiences with tension during the earthquake, one boy said:

We didn't have a place to live. So, I felt like where [would we] live, what [could] we eat... [Male, grade 8]

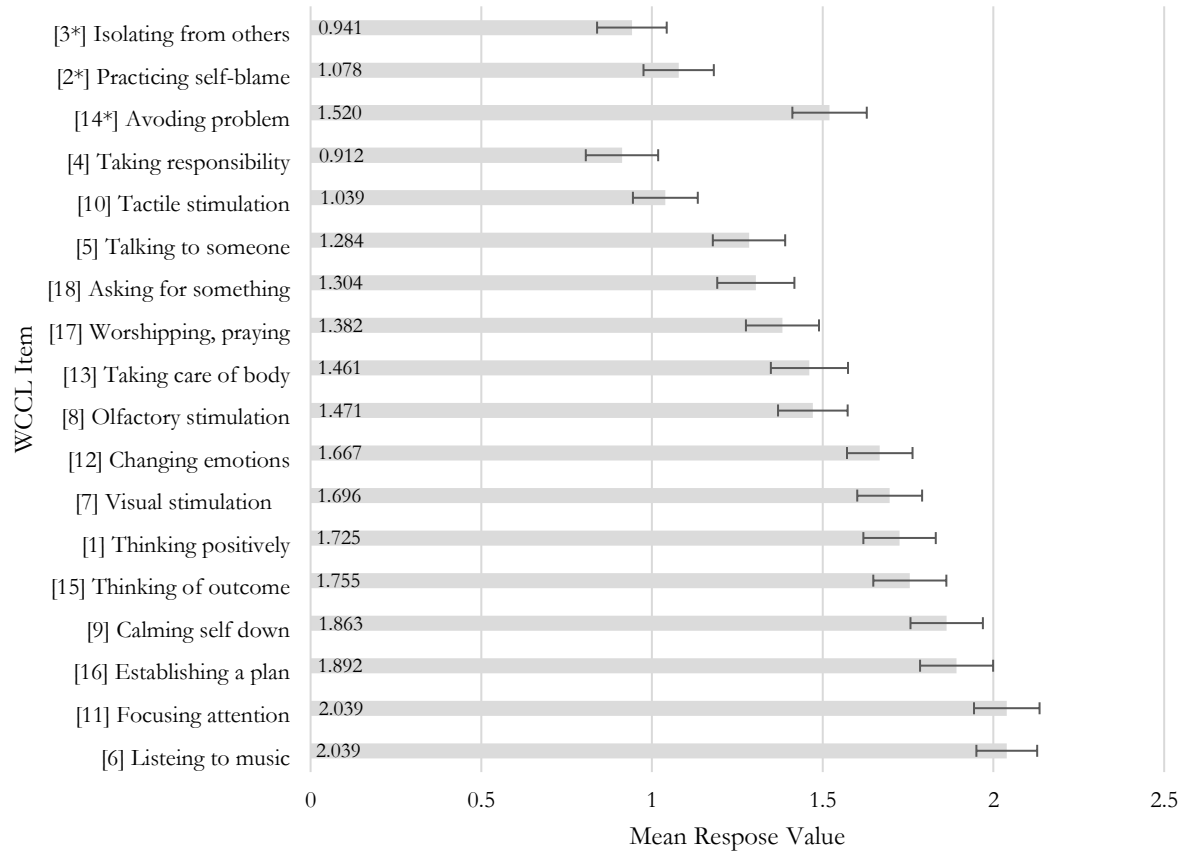
When asked to describe how he felt once his tension began to cede following the earthquake, a student said:

I felt that the earthquake will not come again. And I hoped that [an] earthquake never comes again and we [will] have fun again as we had before and we [can] live as we lived before. [Male, Grade 7]

### ***3.3 Gender and Coping***

#### **3.3.1 WCCL**

Tests of independence revealed that boys' and girls' scores on the skills use ( $p = 0.259$ ) and dysfunction ( $p = 0.315$ ) subscales of the WCCL were not significantly different. This suggests that males and females tend to use similar coping mechanisms found on the WCCL at similar frequencies. Mean scores for all participants are presented in Figure 1. Skills that were endorsed as being used the most frequently included singing or listening to music, focusing on completing one task at a time, making and following a plan of action, and trying to calm down before making a decision. Participants tended to endorse using dysfunction items less frequently than skills items, with avoidance of the problem reported as being used most often. Taking responsibility instead of blaming others (skill) and isolating oneself to prevent others from knowing their feelings (dysfunction) were reported as used the least frequently.



**Figure 1** WCCL Mean Item Response Values  
 \* indicates coping dysfunction subscale item

### 3.3.2 Confiding in Others

Several interview participants indicated that confiding in others was a coping mechanism that they either currently use or would use when experiencing stress ( $n = 4$  females, 7 males). However, choosing not to confide in others was also commonly endorsed, with 60% of females and 36% of males stating that they would not share their stressor or emotions with others.

In Nepal, the family's reputation or social standing is referred to in Nepali as *ijjat*<sup>a</sup>. The threat of impairing one's *ijjat* was reported as often impacting the coping mechanisms that an individual chooses to use, particularly sharing one's feelings with others. Two caregivers commented on this:

Though we are poor and we feel bad, after sharing with others also it will not be solved nor we'll get anything so it's good to keep your pain in *man*<sup>b</sup> and try to solve them on our own. Also we have different kinds of neighbours so if we share our problems they might try to humiliate us or enjoy with that so it's better not to share anything with anyone. [Female, caregiver]

I: Okay and when somebody does lose their *ijjat*, if somebody does something bad and that causes them to lose their *ijjat*, what kind of emotions might they feel?

R: Such people might leave a place and go abroad, or find places to hide, or think of suicide so that they don't have to face people. [Female, caregiver]

### 3.3.3 Distracting

Different means of distracting oneself was one of the most frequently endorsed coping mechanisms by both males and females ( $n = 6$  females, 7 males). Common methods of distraction included playing with friends, reading a book, playing sports, and thinking of other things unrelated to the stressor.

### 3.3.4 Self-Invalidation

Endorsement of engaging in self-invalidating thoughts and behaviors during interviews was unique to female participants ( $n = 2$ ). One student described the self-invalidating cognitions that often arose when she experienced tension:

I think as if I am the only one that's struggling. Everyone is doing well, while I am the only one that's upset. That's it. [Female, grade 9]

### 3.3.5 Violence

Violence as a means of coping with stress was endorsed in interviews by both females and males ( $n = 3$  females, 3 males). Acts of violence were commonly targeted towards friends and siblings. In describing this, a girl said:

So when there is a lot of arguments in the house...I just can't deal with all of that because I already have enough tension in my mind and so that just adds to it and I get really angry and sometimes I will beat [my siblings] up or sometimes I won't. But it just feels like it's just too much. [Female, grade 7]

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<sup>a</sup> *Ijjat* – A Nepali idiom referring to social status. An individual who acts in a manner that is incongruent with socially accepted norms can dishonor his or her family, causing them to lose their respectability within the community (*ijjat gayo*) [28].

<sup>b</sup> *Man* – A Nepali idiom of the heart-mind [28], man commonly refers to one's mind or feelings [29].

### 3.3.6 Avoidance

Interviewees reported using both cognitive and behavioral means of avoidance when experiencing tension ( $n = 4$  females, 4 males). Techniques included avoiding the individual who had upset them, sleeping, and ignoring the issue in hopes that it would go away. One student described her experience with the latter:

I: Does that work, when you try to forget it, when you don't pay attention to it?  
R: I try to cope with it, but if it doesn't work, then I just ignore it and ultimately forget it. [Female, grade 9]

### 3.3.7 Substance Use

The use of substances to cope with stress was very rarely endorsed in interviews ( $n = 1$  female); however, in both FGDs, participants stated that other female and male adolescents within the community use substances both recreationally and as a coping mechanism. The one participant who endorsed substance use in her interview described how alcohol helped her to relieve her stress:

After you drink alcohol, you don't know where your brain is, so you don't realize your tension. [Female, grade 9]

### 3.3.8 Suicidality and Self-Harm

Three females and one male reported using self-harm behaviors to relieve tension or the presence of suicidal ideations as a result of stress. FGD participants also stated that suicidality and parasuicidality (e.g., cutting hands and wrists) are common in the community among adolescents who experience high levels of stress. After being asked to reflect on any changes that she may have experienced as a result of a recent stressor, one participant stated:

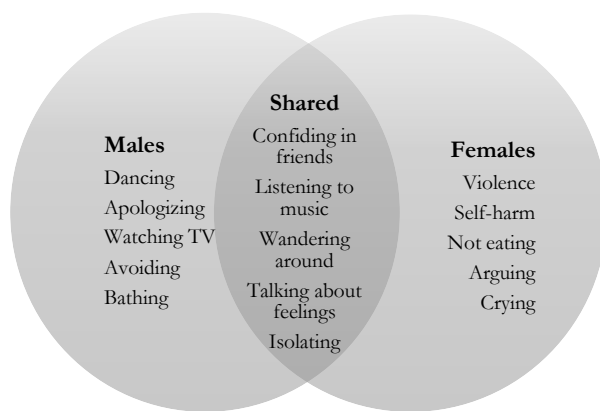
I think of committing a suicide. I thought that if I would commit suicide I would not have to listen to all these negative comments and all my problems and tensions will also come to an end and everything will be fine. [Female, grade 7]

I: When you have tension in the heart-mind, do you have a lot of different thoughts? Like what you just said about how you're the only one that's upset, everyone else is doing well. What other types of thoughts comes into mind?  
R: Suicidal thoughts...I get the feeling of wanting to take poison and die.  
I: ...What kind of tension causes you to think those thoughts?

R: Whenever I have problems from home, that's what I think. Like when I think they will do good for my younger brother, but not do good for me, I get those kinds of thoughts. [Female, grade 9]

### 3.3.9 Focus Group Discussions

In the FGDs, participants were asked to identify which coping mechanisms were most commonly used by their own gender. Findings for coping mechanisms that were reported as being used by females, males, and by both females and males are reported in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Adolescent coping mechanisms as qualitatively reported in FGDs

### 3.4 Self-Validation, Coping Dysfunction, and Suicidality

Table 2 presents the association between self-validation (SVSI) and dysfunctional coping (WCCL-D) when stratified by gender. Girls who scored high in dysfunctional coping ( $t = -2.511, p = 0.015$ ) and low in self-validation ( $t = 2.916, p = 0.005$ ) were significantly more likely to have endorsed experiencing suicidal ideations within the past two weeks than males with similar dysfunction ( $t = -0.237, p = 0.813$ ) and self-validation scores ( $t = 1.087, p = 0.282$ ).

**Table 2** Tests of independence of suicidality endorsement against self-validation and coping dysfunction scores by gender

SSQ-2 <sup>a</sup>	Male ( <i>n</i> = 51)			Female ( <i>n</i> = 51)		
	No	Yes	<i>t</i>	No	Yes	<i>t</i>
SVSI ( $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>b</sup>	31.233	29.250	1.087	32.625	28.727	2.916**
DBT-WCCL-D ( $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>c</sup>	3.302	3.500	-0.237	3.400	5.000	-2.511*

<sup>a</sup> SSQ – Suicide Screener Questionnaire, second item; <sup>b</sup> SVSI – Self-Validation/Self-Invalidation scale mean score;

<sup>c</sup> DBT-WCCL-D – Dialectical Behavior Therapy Ways of Coping Checklist, dysfunction subscale mean score

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

When stratified by sex, pairwise correlational analyses between scores on the SVSI and the DBT-WCCL skills use subscale yielded statistically significant *p*-values (males:  $r = 0.451, p = 0.0009$ ; females:  $r = 0.482, p = 0.0003$ ), demonstrating a strong relationship between self-validation and skills use for both males and females.

## 4. Discussion

### *4.1 Stressors*

In a sample of 102 school-going adolescents in an earthquake-affected region near the Kathmandu valley, stressors, ways of coping, self-validation, and suicidal ideations were evaluated. Responses provided in interviews and focus group discussions revealed that there is little gender-based variation in stressors for girls and boys within this population. Academic-related stress (including grades, exams, performing in front of the class, and friendships) was the most common stressor among this population, endorsed by 71.4% of interviewees. This trend is congruent with observations throughout Asia - for many secondary school students in Asian countries (i.e., India, Korea, and Japan), societal pressures to excel academically and on exams is a significant stressor for individuals in this age group [30].

Stressors unique to girls included specific aspects related to school life and academic performance: teachers targeting instruction towards boys, parents unenrolling daughters from school due to preferential treatment towards sons, poor attendance due to menstruation, and being forced into early marriage due to having received poor grades. The prevalence of patriarchal gender norms within this society has long impacted females' ability to pursue an education and regularly attend courses. Recent research indicates that challenging such cultural norms in academics (e.g., increasing the number of female teachers, providing separate toilets for males and females) may prove to be successful in retaining females in the Nepali school system [9].

Although only reported as a prior and non-current stressor, tension related to the 2015 earthquake was solely identified by four male students in interviews. It is possible that the infrequency of which the earthquake was discussed may have been due to its lack of saliency as a current stressor, or due to lingering fears cultivating reluctance to discuss the topic. Miller and Rasmussen [31] proposed a model that may also be used to understand the

disaster's effect on long-term mental health among this population: when examining how the earthquake may impact psychological outcomes, one may take a holistic perspective and analyze daily stressors that the adolescent may incur as a result of exposure to the disaster. These daily stressors may include exacerbated financial stress due to parental loss of home or occupation, increased familial conflict due to rising tension, and difficulties in accessing necessities, each of which were reported to be stressors for adolescents by students, teachers, and caregivers in interviews and focus group discussions. Under this model, it could be inferred that while it was uncommon for students to explicitly identify the earthquake as a source of stress, it may be an indirect causative factor.

#### ***4.2 Coping***

Quantitatively-identified coping mechanisms and the frequency of their usage did not differ significantly between males and females. This finding supports prior research among school-going Nepali pre-adolescents, among whom there were not significant differences gender disparities in coping [32]. However, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions yielded slight variations in dysfunctional and skillful coping: girls were more likely to report engaging in dysfunctional coping, including not confiding in others, self-invalidation, suicidal and parasuicidal behaviors and ideations, while boys were more likely to report confiding in others to manage stress.

#### ***4.3 Implications for Future Research and Interventions***

Suicidality and self-harm among Asian adolescents is a growing concern, and Nepali adolescents seem to be particularly vulnerable to these cognitions and behaviors [8]. The relationships between gender, stress, coping, and suicidality among adolescents are still poorly understood, particularly in the context of rural Nepal. This article provides an important first step in beginning to understand these relationships.



One significant quantitative finding produced through this study was that girls with high dysfunction scores and low self-validation scores were significantly more likely to endorse recent symptoms of suicidality than males with similar levels of dysfunction and self- invalidation. These results demonstrate opportunities for further research as well as future mental health interventions for female adolescents. Prior literature has demonstrated that adolescent involvement in school-based psychosocial interventions in Nepal may be effective in improving psychological outcomes. In a sample of adolescents who were currently or formerly under stress due to exposure to armed conflict, researchers found that engagement in one such intervention was effective in reducing aggressive tendencies among boys and increasing prosocial behaviors among girls [33]. Similar interventions that aim to reduce dysfunctional coping and self-invalidating cognitions and behaviors, particularly among girls, may result in suicidality reductions.

#### ***4.4 Limitations***

There are several limitations that were present in the conduction of this study. The primary of these is the limited generalizability of findings due to the sample size and the context in which the research was conducted. The global mental health community would greatly benefit from scaling up and replicating this research with more diverse students from additional earthquake-affected regions. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, this study is unable to determine whether suicidal ideations precede dysfunctional coping or if dysfunctional coping leads to suicidal ideations among this population. In addition, statistical inferences drawn from this research are weakened as analyses regarding suicidal ideations were conducted using a single item from the SSQ, a measure that has yet to be validated.

Finally, responses to quantitative and qualitative assessments may have suffered from bias due to social desirability. Prior research findings indicate that adolescent Palestinians living in a Lebanese refugee camp under-report engagement in behaviors that could be

considered maladaptive within their community [34]. As many dysfunctional coping mechanisms may be considered socially undesirable in this setting, responses to quantitative and qualitative assessments may have suffered from bias due to social desirability.

## 5. Conclusion

Quantitative analyses demonstrate that selection and usage of coping mechanisms and self-invalidating thoughts and behaviors may not significantly differ between males and females in this population. However, qualitative data illuminate subtle gender disparities in stressors and coping dysfunction. This study also shows that these elements play an important role in the presence of suicidal ideations among females, which underscores the cruciality of conducting further research in the area to inform future mental health interventions for this population. Fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between stress and coping, self-validation, and suicidality for male and female Nepali adolescents may result in the development of effective means of suicide prevention for this population.

## Appendix A – Coding Queries

### Females

#### Stressors:

##### 🚩 School Stressors

- ≡ Homework, grades, and exams – 6 (014, 017, 019, 022, 023, 029)
  - » I was worried about my exams. I was thinking what would happen if I couldn't write well in exams and also was worried about my marks that I'll get and also thought about the people about how would they think about me and gossip about me if I get very bad or low scores in the exam. (029)
  - » Sick so missed 1-2 months of school (023)
  - » Sometimes, at school when I haven't done the homework I get tension. I feel like the teachers will beat me up or cane me or something like that. (022)
  - » I: And then how do you feel when you first feel stress about your grades? How does it feel?
  - » R: So when that happens I, because I'm a girl, I won't get to study more. They'll probably send me off, marry me off, and not provide me with education. (014)
- ≡ Not being allowed to study – 2 (014, 019)
  - » ...At home, they have their grandmothers who are old-fashioned and think that girls should work so they will give their daughter so much work that they can pay attention to their studies. (019)
  - » Because of work that I have at home and chores that I have to do at home I'm not able to finish the homework that I'm assigned, so therefore I will do the homework in the morning and not complete it and I get yelled at. (014)
- ≡ Teachers selectively instructing – 2 (014, 019)
  - » Teachers favor those who perform well academically (014)
  - » Suppose, teachers usually teach the boys more and dismiss the girls even when we ask. That causes problems. Say, I want to study in math but if the teacher doesn't teach me then I think I can't do well and have tension. (019)
- ≡ Daughters sent to public school, sons sent to boarding school – 2 (014, 019)
  - » So in boarding school, they tell you the questions that's going to come up on the exams, so then you can study the questions and there's not that much stress there...So the teachers that are in the boarding school know a bit more, they're a bit more knowledgeable, and they don't really focus on Nepali as much as they focus on English courses, but the ones in the public school, they're less knowledgeable and they teach a lot more in Nepali as well. (014)
- ≡ Performing in front of class – 1 (019)
  - » The other day in class, I had to go to the whiteboard and write in Nepali. I am bad at writing Nepali so when I didn't know how to write, my friends teased me. Then I yelled at them. I told them things like, if they knew it, then they should have gone up there. (019)
- ≡ Friendships – 5 (014, 019, 022, 023, 024)

- » Worried friends will feel tension if they know participant is having tension (022)
- » Friend blaming participant for stealing things (019)
- » Teasing goes too far (023)
- » R: When I know the typing and my friend doesn't, she will ask for help from me. But I also have other things I need to do as well. And when I'm busy in that, my friend will get angry with me.  
I: And that causes you stress?  
R: I feel tension myself because it's because of me my friend is angry, and I feel bad.

#### ✚ Financial Stressors - 4

##### ≡ Academic costs – 3 (014, 019, 027)

- » R: I have many beautiful dreams but I don't think they'll come true. I want to be a staff nurse in the future but I don't think I'll be able to be that.  
I: Why is that?  
R: We are many of us at home and we are also economically weak and we have a problem of hand to mouth so I don't think they'll be able to make me a staff nurse in the future because they can't afford actually...  
I: How about your younger brother? Do you know what he wants to do in the future?  
R: He has an aim of being a British Army and my family also has said that they will support him in every ways even if they have to take a loan for it. (027)
- » So my parents are working really hard to provide me with money so that I can go to school. And since I am kind of struggling [academically], since I am kind of weak, I get worried because of that. (014)
- » R: I wanted to be a doctor, but becoming a doctor is very expensive and because of it I can't do it.  
I: Why do you think you can't do it? Because of financial reasons at home, not getting enough good grades, why?  
R: Because there's not enough money. (019)

##### ≡ Necessities – 3 (019, 027, 029)

- » I: So when you have to work in the fields and people might say negative things, how does that make you feel?  
R: At that time I think that if I don't help my parents in field we'll have problems of getting something to eat. (029)
- » Sometimes my dad doesn't have work. He is sick right now and so sometimes there is problem with getting enough to eat and clothes. Dad builds houses and sometimes there is work, sometimes there isn't (019)
- » They want me to study hard. They say that I don't need to do any works in the house but then my father is sick, he cannot do anything and my mother goes to work early in the morning and its quite difficult just to depend upon my mother for everything. (027)

##### ≡ Wage gap – 1 (019)

- » For example, say both a guy and a girl are planting rice. When planting rice, they will pay the girl less than the boy, even though they do the same work. (019)
- ≡ Other financial stressors – 1 (027)
  - » Last time during holidays my friends planned to visit [nearby temple name]. So I also planned to go with them and have fun. Everybody had to contribute Rs. 100 and I didn't have that much money with me and my mother only gave Rs. 50 to me and because of that my friends were also very angry with me. Also my parents started telling many things regarding that. They said "you just spent that amount of money lavishly and it could have been used for the school lunch expense for the next day," and I felt bad. This caused a lot of tension in me. (027)
  - » Yes I do. Actually long time back my father went to Malaysia to earn some money but he couldn't earn anything and came back sick and both his legs don't work. So, because of that all my other relatives like my grandparents, my uncle, aunt don't behave well with us and they keep on saying things like we're poor and we can't do anything and stuffs like that and that makes me feel very bad. (027)

#### ✚ Family Stressors

- ≡ Early marriage –
  - » I: ...And then how do you feel when you first feel stress about your grades? How does it feel?  
R: So when that happens I, because I'm a girl, I won't get to study more. They'll probably send me off, marry me off, and not provide me with education. (014)
- ≡ *Ijbat* – 2 (027, 029)
  - » I: Do you ever worry about *ijbat*?  
R: Yes sometimes.  
I: And what do you worry about?  
R: If I do something and it goes wrong then I worry about people if they would talk negative things about me.  
I: What kind of things would make people talk negative way, if you want to mention?  
R: Sometimes, when my school is closed, in the day time I've to go and work in the fields and help my parents. So at that time people tease me saying that I come and work in the field. That makes me feel bad. (029)
  - » When my parents tell me that if I do something wrong I'll lose my *ijbat* and that makes me think about the time if I do something wrong and lose my *ijbat* no one is going to think good about me and no one is going to behave well with me and thinking about this causes tension. (027)
- ≡ Parental expectations – 2 (022, 025)
  - » Comparing her to other girls, wish worked better like them (025)
  - » Worried won't achieve parents' expectations (022)
- ≡ Conflict – 3 (019, 022, 029)
  - » Parents yell at participant frequently (019)
  - » So, sometimes my mom would also be in a lot of tension and she would be like, "Don't talk to me, I am in a lot of tension," and she wouldn't really interact with us too much. Because of that I get tension

- and I am like worried about future and what's going on and what's going on with my mom and then I will get together with my friends and talk about it and try to figure out what it could mean... (022)
- » Grandparents threaten to kick mother out of the home (022)
  - ≡ Family member living abroad – 2 (017, 019)
    - » Mother working abroad in Dubai (019)
  - ≡ Remarriage – 1 (019)
    - » I don't know. My dad says that if we can get along [with his new wife and son], then we stay together, otherwise my mom and I will live separately. (019)
  - ≡ Moving – 1 (019)
    - » My older brother left. And because of that, my dad thinks, 'he left like this, now his sister is going to leave too.' (019)
  - ≡ "Corruption" – 3 (019, 024, 027)
    - » They tell me that I will not study as much as my sister does and I might run away with some guy at my early age before completing my studies. (027)
    - » R: I had a friend who was a boy. I used to meet him, talk to him and roam around with him. The community people saw me with him and said that I had a boyfriend and they went and talked to my parents and made my parents very upset. So, now I don't meet him. I don't talk to him either. So, its not like that now.  
I: Okay! So is it unacceptable within your community for a girl to have a friend who is a boy?  
R: No, it is still not acceptable.  
I: So, when the community members went to your family and said these things, how did that make you feel?  
R: I felt very bad. I was so frustrated to see the community's reaction. I kept on thinking that because I am a girl I can't have any boy friends. So these days I've stopped talking to the boys, at least in front of the community people... I didn't experience anything much but I just felt that I shouldn't have been born being a girl (024)
    - » R: I went and yelled at her a lot. She hangs out with boys a lot these days. And because of that, mom and dad at home tortures me for it. They say, 'your friend is like this' and yell at me. So then I always go and yell at her for it.  
I: So when she goes out and does things and hangs out with boys, you mom and dad yell at you?  
R: Yes.  
I: Oh okay, why is that?  
R: It's like this, they say 'your friend is this type of way, you might be like that' and yell at me. (019)

#### ✚ Other stressors

- ≡ Walking home – 2 (023, 025)
  - » Uncle died in flood, now afraid every time cross bridge
  - » Hear scary noises (023)

#### Coping:

#### ✚ Coping Dysfunction

- ≡ Isolation – 5 (017, 019, 022, 023, 029)

- » Using when angry (017, 019, 029)
- ≡ Dietary changes – 1 (019)
  - » When I am angry, I either don't eat or I get angry with my friends and sit in the classroom. If I am at home, there's no one to get angry with so I go outside and sit by myself. That's it. (019)
  - » ...I eat whatever is at home... (019)
- ≡ Violence – 3 (017, 019, 022)
  - » I: And...when you feel *dimaag fuskayo* what does that feel like?  
R: So when there is a lot of arguments in the house...like either my brother or sister they make me angry...I just can't deal with all of that because I already have enough tension in my mind and so that just adds to it and I get really angry and sometimes I will beat them up or sometimes I won't. But it just feels like it's just too much. (022)
  - » Friends throw pots and pans, yell at others (017)
  - » I sit by myself and sometimes my anger dies down. If it doesn't die down, then I beat up whatever I find. (019)
  - » When somebody backbites about me, when someone unnecessarily blames me and when someone scolds me in my face, I become very angry and want to hit that person. (028)
- ≡ Self-invalidation – 2 (017, 019)
  - » I think as if I am the only one that's struggling. Everyone is doing well, while I am the only one that's upset. That's it. (019)
  - » I: Let's say something happens and you get really angry, what do you do to make yourself feel better?  
R: I tell myself that I shouldn't do this, if I do this then my family will have tension. (017)
- ≡ Substance use – 1 (019)
  - » After you drink alcohol, you don't know where your brain is, so you don't realize your tension. (019)
- ≡ Suicidality – 3 (017, 019, 027)
  - » I think of committing a suicide. I thought that if I would commit suicide I would not have to listen to all these negative comments and all my problems and tensions will also come to an end and everything will be fine. (027)
  - » I: So when you feel tension, like when your parents are scolding you, what happens in your *man*?  
R: Sometimes those things make me feel like attempting a suicide but then again I realize that it's not good to attempt a suicide because all these things goes on everyday in my life, it's a part of my life and I'm used to it and I control myself. (027)
  - » R: I get the feeling of wanting to take poison and die.  
I: Oh okay, when you have tension? What kind of tension causes you to think those thoughts?  
R: Whenever I have problems from home, that's what I think. Like when I think they will do good for my younger brother, but not do good for me, I get those kind of thought[s]. (019)
  - » R: This one time, I was in an argument with my grandmother. She always yells at me and that time, I went and cut my hand. Now she doesn't yell at me anymore.



I: When you cut your hand, does that reduce your tension?

R: A little bit. It hurts, then I forget about the thing. It's hurting me, then I forget about it, and once I forget about it, I go home and hide it. When it's cured, then I show it to others. (019)

» Friends self-harm when they were yelled at our failed exams (017)

» R: For girls, suppose if they fail in SLC, most of them will have thoughts of hanging and dying, taking poison. These kinds of thoughts...

I: Why doesn't that happen with boys?

R: Boys don't think that.

I: Why is that?

R: If they fail in SLC, their mom and dad will allow them to study again. Most of the time if the girls fail, then they don't allow them to study again. That's why.

≡ Avoidance – 4 (014, 019, 022, 024)

» Ignoring people arguing with (024)

» I get worried and walk out, thinking mom and dad look down on me and so I walk to a place where they can't find me. (019)

» Wandering, working, reading (022)

» Sleeping (019, 022)

» R: So whatever is giving me tension, I try to remove it. And hope that it doesn't come back.

I: How do you remove it?

R: Sometimes I just don't think about the tension itself, and I just pay attention to studies or work.

I: Does that work, when you try to forget it, when you don't pay attention to it?

R: I try to cope with it, but if it doesn't work, then I just ignore it and ultimately forget it. (014)

#### ✚ Cognitive Coping

≡ Self-comparisons – 1 (017)

» R: When I feel ashamed?

I: Yes.

R: I tell myself, that I shouldn't be ashamed. I am myself. Brother, sister, mom and dad, they're all like me, why should I be ashamed. I think those thoughts. (017)

≡ Positive self-talk – 2 (014, 017)

» ...for example, I didn't do so well on an exam, got low scores, and then I tell myself next time I'll do better, I'll study more (014)

» If I do work like this, my thought that I have will help me reach my goals. (017)

≡ Planning – 1 (017)

» I want to sit by myself and think about how I should study. That's it. (017)

≡ Letting go of worries – 1 (022)

» Reducing number of thoughts to help fall asleep (022)

≡ Thinking positively – 1 (029)

#### ✚ Behavioral Coping

≡ Apologizing – 1 (019)

- » After arguing with someone (019)
- ≡ Crying – 1 (019) 14 & 17?
  - » When feeling suicidal (019)
- ≡ Distracting – 6 (017, 019, 022, 023, 027, 029)
  - » Friends distract each other when they are sad by making each other laugh (022)
  - » I: Similar to that, what do you do when you're sad to make yourself feel better?  
R: To make myself feel better? I do some work and try to forget about it. Sometimes I sing songs, even if I don't know them, I sing short songs. (017)
  - » When friends are sad, will work, wash faces or shower (017)
  - » Drinking cold water because "it cools down your *jū* as well as your mind." (022)
  - » Books, games/sports (023, 027)
  - » TV, poetry (022)
- ≡ Isolation – 1 (017)
  - » I don't want to talk to anyone. I like to sit by myself and think. That's it. (017)
- ≡ Confiding in friends – 4 (014, 024, 028, 029)
  - » Will confide if won't risk *ijjat* (024)
  - » When I share with my friends, they help me. So after just sharing, they help me and that makes me feel better.
- ≡ Not confiding to friends – 6 (014, 017, 022, 024, 025, 027)
  - » Won't confide if may risk *ijjat* (022, 024, 025)
  - » I actually don't share my tensions with anyone because during the time I share my problems they pretend like they're listening but then later on they go and tell it to other people and I feel very bad. (027)
  - » Won't confide to friends unless they first confide about something (025)
  - » R: Sometimes with my house problems, and house reasons, I don't want to share.  
I: Yeah, what are you worried about that you don't share?  
R: Sometimes if there are some bad things going on in the house, mom and dad would tell me not to tell others. (014)

## Impacts of Stressors

### ✚ Depressive Symptomatology

- ≡ Lack of motivation – 1 (014)
  - » R: Sometimes when you don't know how to do something, it becomes uncomfortable. It's hard to do it when you don't know how to. So when you know how to do it, you feel happy. Like when I learned how to type, I felt happy. But they didn't, so they felt uncomfortable.  
I: Right. So when your friends had trouble learning how to type, and felt stressed by that, how do you think that stress affects what they have to get done or want to do?  
R: So sometimes when you're not able to do one thing, you don't want to do anything else. And that can become difficult.

## Males

### Stressors:

#### ✚ School Stressors – 9

- ≡ Grades, exams, homework – 2 (031, 033)
  - » After some time, the shops were opened. And I became less worried. Now, I am worried about my fathers' legs thinking when would he be fine. I wish that I could study well. I am also worried thinking about if I failed the exam. (031)
- ≡ Performing in front of class – 3 (012, 016, 020)
  - » At the beginning, when somebody calls me in front, I am little afraid because I had never done such before. So, my legs tremble as I go in front for the first time. (012)
  - » R: Every Friday, teacher tells us to tell jokes, stories, sing a song, etc in front of the classroom. And I, including my friends, feel shame.  
I: And what do you do then?  
R: I can't tell anything or sing. I like to laugh when I feel shame. (016)
- ≡ Friendships – 5 (013, 015, 018, 020, 026)
  - » When I do class work, they disturb me and in the break, they beat me for no reason. (013)
  - » Getting teased by girls – 1 (020)
  - » Arguments with friends – 4 (015, 018, 020, 026)
    - It was three weeks ago like when we were playing football he used to call us like 'little boy' and stuff like that and he used to hit my brother and he used to play like badly at football like doing fouls, so after he did that we got into an argument. (026)

#### ✚ Financial Stressors

- ≡ Academic costs – 1 (031)
  - » R: Those affect my *dimaag* badly. I think like I would not be able to study because of these worries.  
I: Why not? Why couldn't you study?  
R: For up to grade 8, it's free here in school. But, after 8, I think we have to pay including examination fees. My father is so ill and all the money would be spent to buy for his medicines. So, I think I couldn't study.  
I: So are you worried that you won't be able to continue to class 9?  
R: Yes

#### ✚ Family Stressors – 9 (012, 013, 015, 016, 020, 026, 030, 031, 032)

- ≡ Talking in front of others – 1 (015)
- ≡ Eating in front of others – 1 (015)
- ≡ Family member abroad – 2 (030, 032)
  - » My brother's friends are also in Malaysia. They once met in [place's name] and they were the ones because of whom my brother was able to go to Malaysia. When he was trying to send money from Malaysia to home, his friends saw that and he was chased and they tried to beat him. This is said by my brother. He called my grandmother and said that he doesn't want to live there and wanted to come back. When my grandmother asked why he didn't want to live there, he said that somebody wanted to beat him and he wanted to work here coming back. (026)

- » He [dad] is far away from us [in Saudi Arabia]. If anything happens, he couldn't come to us. Sometimes, he calls/phones us. He doesn't speak so properly because he might be exhausted. (032)
- ≡ Morbidity/mortality – 3 (015, 016, 031)
  - » Yes. My mother is diabetic and she took foods that were restricted for her to eat, so her sugar increases. So, she has to buy and take medicines. So, these problems exist. (015)
  - » Father passed away (016)
  - » Father paralyzed (031)
  - » Disabled brother (031)
    - I: How old is your brother?  
R: 17 years...
    - I: Oh, he is also in class 8?  
R: Yes. Because of his legs, it's difficult for him to study in high grade, so he is in lower grade.
    - I: And how do you like that? What's it like being in the same class with your brother?  
R: Though I don't feel good, nobody belittles him when he is with me. If someone belittles him, I can reply them. (031)
- ≡ Responsibilities – 2 (015, 032)
  - » My family consists of my dad, mom, my elder sister, my elder brother, younger brothers, uncle, aunt, their son, myself. My grandfather died recently. My father works in plastering and my mother works in field and has gone to village to sow rice. She'll come back later. Dad comes home sometimes. This way, we live. My elder brother studies. He gave SLC this time. Now, he is in the village with my mom. My elder sister used to study but she left now. My younger siblings study. They go to school to give exams at 6 in the morning, so I cook food for them. They come back at 10 in the morning and after eating meal, they study. And whenever there is vacation, I go to work, wash my sibling's clothes, and help with work in my uncle's house. We have some fields. We grow crops there. If there are grasses there, I pull them out. Sometimes, I go out with my friends, watch TV and study a bit, and help my younger siblings in their study. (015)
  - » I: Do you like being a big brother?  
R: No  
I: Why not?  
R: Because being an elder brother, parents tell me to do most of the works and I have to most of the works at home. (032)
- ≡ Conflict – 5 (013, 015, 016, 020, 026)
  - » When I spoil the work, they [my brothers] shout at me. That makes me a little frustrated. (016)
  - » Parents yelling at participant – 2 (013, 020)
  - » Parents fighting with each other – 1 (015)
    - I: What are some other examples of things that your parents might do that cause you tension?  
R: Yes. Sometimes, there is argument between them. Then, they don't speak with each other for a while. But later, they

apologize with each other saying they did a mistake and won't happen again.

I: And when your parents fight with each other, does that make you feel bad too? ...

R: When they fight, I try to separate them and ask for the reason for their fight. Then, I try to unite them. (015)

≡ Sisters walking in while changing – 1 (012)

≡ Earthquake – 4 (012, 013, 030, 031)

» Former tension due to earthquake – 4 (012, 013, 030, 031)

- We didn't have a place to live. So, I felt like where we would live, what we eat, etc. (031)

» I: Was there any tension that you felt after the earthquake that got better after the program?

P: Yes.

I: How would you describe how that tension felt?

P: I felt that the earthquake will not come again. And I hoped that earthquake never comes again and we have fun again as we had before and we could live as we lived before. (012)

#### ✚ Other Stressors

≡ Nightmares – 1 (030)

» I felt like whether my brother would return or not. In my dreams too, I saw my brother dead. He had called us the day before yesterday, so I told him to come back soon. (026)

≡ Walking Home – 1 (012)

» Fear of tigers – 1 (012)

≡ Hostel – 1 (012)

» Checking slippers – 1 (012)

≡ Not fulfilling dream – 1 (013)

» Becoming a doctor – 1 (013)

≡ Getting killed in battle – 1 (012)

» Not like that but sometimes I think like - when I become an Army and go in a battle, I am afraid I might die. (012)

≡ Gossip – 2 (015, 036)

» Friends and village gossiping about relationships, family (015, 036)

≡ Ghosts – 1 (026)

» I: Ghost means that scares us. After the earthquake too, it scared me at night. When I and my friend named [friend's name] were walking in [place's name] - where there are many ghosts and dead people are burnt- we were watching YouTube videos in mobile by the side of river. At that time, a voice screamed from the forest and we went home because we were afraid and we were at the bottom- nobody were below us.

I: And so the *aatma*, the ghost, was that the noise that screamed from the forest?

P: Yes, we think so.

I: And why do you think so? Why do you think there was the *aatma* or the ghost in the forest after the earthquake?

P: My grandmother said that in past time, when a person went in the forest, he was eaten by the tiger. After that, his *aatma* often comes to

look for his son but couldn't come out of the forest. So, the *aatma* screams from there. My grandmother says this but I don't believe in such things. But once, I heard about it. In an earthquake of Baishak 12, I was sitting with my friend in his camp. My grandmother had gone to the city and I slept in my friend's camp. I and my friend were not sleepy, so we were watching ghost film in mobile because we like ghost films. In the backside of the camp, there is a big stone. And it is said that a ghost comes from that stone riding a horse. Once when I was going to toilet, I saw a person in white clothes. And I ran away without going to toilet. Thereafter, I am afraid to go to toilet at night. (030)

#### Coping:

- ✚ Coping Dysfunction – 2 (012, 013)
  - ≡ Violence – 3 (015, 018, 026)
    - » Beating friends when angry (018)
    - » R: Sometimes, I like hitting wall with my hand.  
I: So when you hit the wall, does that make you feel better?  
R: No  
I: So what happens that makes you hit the wall?  
R: Sometimes when friends talk bad about me or when somebody talks bad about my family (015)
  - ≡ Suicidality – 1 (015)
    - » I: ...And another thing that sometimes happens to a lot of people, a lot of people your age feel like they like to die. Do you know anyone who has experienced that?  
R: I know. My brother experienced. Once there was an argument between my elder brother and his girlfriend. Then, he took medicines, vomited a bit and he was admitted to hospital. (015)
    - » I: ...Sometimes people your age, when they feel too many thoughts in their *man*, they feel like they want to hurt themselves. Do you know anyone who's experienced that?  
R: Yes, that happens sometimes. It has happened to me.  
I: Can you describe how that felt a little bit?  
R: I can't say that. I don't have courage to say that. (015)
  - ≡ Avoidance – 4 (012, 013, 015, 020)
    - » Avoiding people who upset with (015)
    - » Sleeping – 2 (012, 013)
    - » Covering face when ashamed – 3 (013, 015, 020)
  - ≡ Isolation – 4 (012, 013, 015, 020)
    - » Stay alone when sad (012), angry (013, 020), ashamed (015)
- ✚ Cognitive Coping
  - ≡ Planning – 1 (013)
    - » I think about what to do and what's right to do. – (013)
- ✚ Behavioral Coping
  - ≡ Crying – 2 (015, 016)
  - ≡ Laughing – 2 (015, 016)
  - ≡ Teasing friends – 1 (020)
  - ≡ Stare at one point – 2 (013, 018)
  - ≡ Distracting – 7 (012, 013, 015, 018, 020, 026, 033)

- » Having fun – 1 (033)
- » Playing with friends – 4 (012, 013, 026, 036)
- » Drink cold water – 3 (012, 013, 015)
- » Wash face – 2 (018, 036)
- » Playing cell phone games – 1 (020)
- » Read a book – 1 (012)
- ≡ Confiding in friends/family – 7 (013, 016, 026, 030, 031, 032, 036)
  - » I: Why do you choose to tell your best friend about your tension?  
R: Because he understands me and that thing will be shared only between the two of us so that no other person can know about what I am feeling. (026)
- ≡ Not confiding in friends – 4 (012, 030, 032, 036)
  - » Does not talk about bad things with friends (012)
  - » Only talks about emotions, not issue, with friends (030)
  - » Won't share due to *ijjat* (032, 036)
- ≡ Looking into a mirror – 2 (012, 015)
  - » R: When looking at the mirror - we had also psychological first aid training for three days before. As we were said there, first close our eyes for a while and feel like there's a mirror in front of us. Then keep all the bad things in there. Then keep the mirror we imagined far with our hand and drop that.  
I: Can you talk a little bit more about that program where you learned that?  
R: During earthquake when there were accidents and people were serious, we had done a drama. We helped them in different ways by asking the family members, by being doctor in drama, treating patients, etc.  
I: And this was just in your home or in your community, who did the role play?  
R: In the home. All were older; they were older than 13 years.  
I: And did you learn the skills just for when you're angry or were there other emotions that you use that for too?  
R: There was for anger and also for laughter. There was a foreigner who had no legs and he/she showed us how to stand up when we fall. (012)

## Teachers

Stressors:

✚ Males

- ≡ For male students who have some responsibility towards their home, they get tensed thinking how they could improve the economic condition of their home. In doing so, we can see that they work in field, do other works to earn extra income and try to stave off household economic problems. I don't think there are many others that cause tension to them because they are not given much works at home. But still there might be some who engage with illiterate people, or older people or bad peers who smoke, use alcohol, etc. These too are causing them problems, I think. But we haven't done any research or made conclusions about the extent such problems exist- I just think this might be also the case. (034M)

- ≡ I make the boys stand in their own place for a long time, sometimes I make them sit in a position of a hen and sometimes make them stand like an eagle, make them do up and down, but I don't do that every time. Initially I don't do that but if they tend to continue with the same behavior I make them do it. (035F)
- ≡ Generally boys when they have family tensions they don't come to school regularly. There's a boy in my class and is very irregular in school. He just comes to the class once a week and when I asked him about that he said that he had so many works to do at home and can't come to the school regularly and when we talked with his parents they also said the same thing. (035F)

#### ♀ Females

- ≡ Due to this, regardless of how much we encourage the rural girls, their daily activities include household chores like cutting grass, carrying firewood, working in field, helping parents in all of their works, looking after children and many more. Because of these, they are not able to concentrate on study despite their will and remain backward. Due to this reason, their study keeps degrading or not upgrading as I see. When a child cannot do well in study, the child gets concerned in subjects other than study and tries to catch those subjects. We could also see this in our school. Because of this, they marry early, leave school and work to earn money, etc. So, as you said, I mostly focus on the girls in my class because I know the fact and sufferings that they go through in the community. So, to treat them psychologically, I tell them that studying is the first duty and that they should keep it in first priority. I tell them that would take your future to high level and this can only be possible because of study and not only because of other small works. We also tell them to call their parents at school if they have such problems at home, and we, teachers would talk to them about the problems and discuss how to manage them and we would suggest them. We tell them to call their parents if the student has to plough the field all the time and don't get time to do homework so that we could encourage them and tell them ways to manage time. But still girls of class 7, 8 leave their study yearly or get married and leave, which can be seen. (034M)
- ≡ Though there is provision of separate toilet for female students, they are not well managed. For 6, 7, 8 students, because of menstruation, they have to skip the classes and this lead to school absenteeism. I think there are a lot of different problems. But we haven't done in-depth studies and discussed to find out the magnitude of problem, so we don't know what problems they are facing. But, I feel that they face problems. Now, some toilets are being constructed which would to some extent solve that problem. The next problem is that because the children are most from villages- where fertility is still high even though it's reduced than before- one parent has 3-4 children still- due to this, the students who study in class 6, 7, 8 might have their younger siblings. I hear that they should look after their younger brothers, or sisters if asked why they didn't do or read what I said them to do. What is generally seen is that parents give the task of looking after younger ones to girls rather than boys. So, this also causes problems to girls. The next is the task of cooking food. Mostly, it is the work of girls in our community. I see and hear that those girls who study in class 6, 7, 8 while helping with the household works also cook food because their parents go to field to work. These works are the extra workloads and added problem, I think. The other is- as this is a rural area, the students after 15, 16, 17 years, the tradition of wanting to marry early among girls still



exists in our community. The tradition of marrying a little early is still there among girls than boys. So, when girls turn 16, 17 or 18, the idea of marrying their girl child has already come up in the mind of parents. So, I think these are also the problems because they are not independent and not confident physically, mentally, economically and educationally. The family should also be fed with information about it and parents should think about it. These problems, which I see are more common among girls than boys, are seen to cause disinterest in study among students. (034M)

≡ Being picked on by boys (035F)

≡ Menstruation (035F)

≡ The punishment [for girls] is not like torturing them mentally. I call them in front of the class and sometimes I make them sing a song, dance in front of everyone or do some caricatures or make them tell some jokes in front of everyone. That's the punishment I give. (035F)

✚ Both

≡ School stressors

» ...The class teacher according to his/her mood- there is no any rule of student punishment- I see that they charge penalty like money penalty. Money penalty means fining Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 daily for absenteeism... (034M)

» During normal school days they act freely but then during exam time they seem to be quite tensed, nervous and don't seem to be much happy those days. (035F)

» They're usually tensed when they don't get what they want or when they can't do what they want to, like sometimes when we get inside the classroom they say that they want to play or they want to go out but we don't let them go out and make them study in the class and then they seem to be very unhappy and they can't concentrate... (035F)

≡ Family stressors

» Generally the parents are not that understanding. Sometimes when the children come late we ask them the reason and they say that they had to go to the field or their father / mother was sick... and something like that. And when we try to talk these things with the parents many of them do not participate in the meetings and don't try to meet. So that's a problem. And that is causing tensions in children actually because then they are stressed every day because they've to understand everything in the family and also think about the problems in the school so they get tensed every day and is some kind of burden to them...Due to such difficulties they can't be regular in the school, miss their studies, sometimes become late for school and sometimes come to school without having their meal due to which they become quite weak and sometimes faint and also have to get admitted in the hospital for one or two days... (035F)

Coping

✚ Males

≡ Whenever they're tensed, in the classroom, some students keep on writing something. Sometimes some of them prefer to sit in the last bench and just keep on thinking. Some of them, whenever they're tensed also are physically very active and so they either poke their friend on their back with a pen or kick them or do something whenever they are tensed. (035F)

- ≡ Don't share tension with others (035F)
- ≡ They [boys] get angry easily and want to shout and scream at others and also don't want to do any works they are assigned to and not talking properly. (035F)
- ≡ I think because of the games boys get more tensed than girls because boys are very much interested in games than girls so whenever they want to play during the classes and we don't let them play, this causes them tension but not in girls. (035)

#### ✚ Females

- ≡ ...I think that girls take much tensions than boys do. It might be because girls do not speak and express much... (035F)
- ≡ Usually they don't show their tensions but we see girl children sharing their problems with their close friends. They don't directly tell it to others but share it with their very close friends. So if they have anything to tell others about their problems, they tell it through their friends but straight away don't tell them. (035F)

#### ✚ Both

- ≡ Some students seem monotone/stare into a void, they don't get what we teach, and they seem to be on their own. And some like to make noise, beat friends who are weaker. Most would become a bit serious about the stressor, become disinterested in study and move away from the participation in extra activities. It is seen that their interest seem to be decreasing than before. And also in class, they seem to be lost in isolation and behave such which I presume is because of tension. Sometimes, when I see such, I ask them about that but they don't express themselves in most cases. We don't have such habit that children share all their problems related to home to their teachers and ways to solve them. Neither the school has been able to conduct programs to address this nor the students or their parents provide suggestions about the ways to move forward. We're not being able to incorporate this into our behavior until now. Due to this, the stressor that students feel had to be dealt by the student solely. As I understand, I, from time to time, tell them to share their house related problems with the person they like or whom they believe, may be a friend, brother, sister, father/mother, uncle/aunt, or teachers or neighbors so that they could solve them- the problem that they face is difficult for them to solve but not for other elder people to solve them, so that measures to solve could be identified when shared with others. But still, neither we are being able to create an environment where they could share freely nor they come and share about their problems. So with time, problems of some get bigger and some might get better. But, from the management side, it has not been addressed- the problem arises and they handle individually like some seem monotone, some become less interested in study and other activities, some get into mischief. (034M)
- ≡ Because of this tension they might not be able to reach their goal. They might not be able to follow their aim because they remain in this tension and especially in the rural areas, basically the parents do not guide them, don't try to talk to them or discuss anything about their problems. So when they don't have proper guidance they will have to live with the tension and might not reach the goal that they aim to. (035F)
- ≡ I: Why do you think that the students choose not to share with others?  
P: First, I think it is actually a kind of a Nepali culture. Mostly, people behave based on how or where the culture is developed. For example- the people who grow in an an open environment that allows sharing things, these kind of

thoughts and activities develop from the early age among the children there. So I think where we grow, we behave accordingly. So in our case, until now, we behave for example, hiding problems from others, keeping things or problems within ourselves. We ourselves are doing this and children are also doing the same. Most of the parents of the students are uneducated, and though they are educated, they don't have knowledge about such things. So I don't think there are parents who tell to their children that we should be open, we shouldn't keep our problems within ourselves. And if there are, there may be very few. And when children don't get any such information from their older ones, they imitate the same behavior. What their parents do or how they behave, children also incorporate the same thing in their behaviour. So, I think they don't share their problems with others. The another thing is that- they might think that they might be ashamed, they might debase themselves in other's eyes, thinking they might be belittled compared to others, or thinking their career may get damaged- due to all these speculations, I think most children develop the thought of hiding their problems and not sharing with others. (034M, teacher)

### Caregivers

Stressors:

#### ♀ Females

- ≡ What else should she think of? I am there to fulfill her needs anyway. I'm there to buy her food stuffs, clothes. She doesn't have to worry about all those things. The things that she worry about is how to study well, how to have a healthy competition with friends, how to be good than others, how to be a good person in life. These are the things in her life that causes tension in her life. (036F)
- ≡ Arguments with friends (036F)
- ≡ The only thing that she is worried in school is when she cannot grab the lessons that the teachers teach her and she cannot do her work properly then she's quite tensed whether the teacher would scold her or beat her. (036F)
- ≡ I am also surprised at it. Here, the day before yesterday, [name of her daughter] fainted and was taken to somewhere. In the hospital, they say it was due to tension. But I don't know what kind of tension it was. It is not worry that caused so, we feel like what might be the cause. They say children take more tension, but what kind of tension do they feel- despite struggle, we haven't deprived them of anything, we have done what they want, but why do they feel so, I don't get it. I ask her why does she feel tension but she doesn't respond... For children, I can't figure out what causes them tension. (045F)

#### ♂ Both

- ≡ No, he doesn't have. The kids of this generation, they don't get apprehension or worry. I am his grandfather and he has his parents too. They don't have any worry. If they get to eat food, wear clothes, or play, it doesn't come into their concern what they should do. They only know when the burden comes on their head. Now they don't have anything to do and don't know what their parents are doing for him. (037M)
- ≡ Tension in dimaag among boys and girls might be due to home, or because they are weak in study. There are various things in *man* of various people. One thing is they get tension due to study. If they are not able to study, they might feel so. (037M)
- ≡ Exams (045F)

## Coping:

### ✚ Females

- ≡ Avoidance – 1 (036F)
  - » Sleeping (036F)

### ✚ Both

- ≡ Though we are poor and we feel bad, after sharing with others also it will not be solved nor we'll get anything so it's good to keep your pain in *man* and try to solve them on our own. Also we have different kinds of neighbours so if we share our problems they might try to humiliate us or enjoy with that so it's better not to share anything with anyone. (036F)
- ≡ I: Okay and when somebody does lose their *ijjat*, if somebody does something bad and that causes them to lose their *ijjat*, what kind of emotions might they feel?  
P: Such people might leave a place and go abroad, or find places to hide, or think of suicide so that they don't have to face people. (045F)

## Focus Groups

### Stressors:

#### ✚ Males

- ≡ If they want money, sometimes when father comes home drunk. If father doesn't provide money, there is argument between father and son sometimes.
- ≡ Family
  - » Conflict
  - » Illness/death
    - When don't have money to pay for treatment
  - » Parents don't give money
  - » Parents give money to one son but not the other
- ≡ Breakups
- ≡ Poverty
- ≡ Regret for doing something bad
- ≡ Discrimination from upper caste
- ≡ When don't have food
- ≡ Poor grades
- ≡ Getting beat by teacher if forget to do homework
- ≡ Arguments with friends
- ≡ If one can't pass SLC, it is difficult for him/her to find a job which causes tension. So, SLC is a license to work. One can't enroll in grade 11 until he/she passes SLC. Passing SLC is valued. Those who pass SLC have probability of getting good jobs.
- ≡ M: And if father marries two women. Does that cause tension?  
P#: Yes. The stepmother doesn't do good. The stepmother does good only to her own children but not for others because they are children of another woman.

#### ✚ Females

- ≡ In our community, boys are free to go out and come home late but then girls cannot do that. If girls reach home late they'll have problems. We are not only talking about parents who think bad but also we ourselves have set our mind that it's normal for boys to go out and come home anytime but it's not good if

girls do the same. We also don't feel comfortable when we think of going home late but when boys think about it they think it's normal.

- ≡ In our community, girls are dealt and behaved in a different way than boys. Daughters are looked down upon in comparison to son.
- ≡ Sending daughters to government school and sons to private school. Daughters have to take care of all household chores and spend all their time doing it but son can go out anywhere to roam around. Sending son to school and daughter to collect grasses and fodders for cattle.
- ≡ Daughters have to carry out all household chores. Though they work so hard at home, the parents love sons more than us.
- ≡ We have lot of tensions during exams. When we are weak in some subjects we think about how are we going to pass. We keep on thinking about what will sir say if we spoil our exams. Also if we fail in exams. Also if boys fail in exam the parents give them another chance but if girls fail the parents tell them to get married as they think that it is a waste of time and money.
- ≡ Family
  - » Conflict
  - » Living apart from family
  - » When any of the family member are involved in substance abuse, the community members point us by saying that we belong to the same family. Like if my father drinks alcohol then the community members refer me as a daughter of a drunkard and humiliate us.
  - » Illness
- ≡ We think of being misbehaved by someone while walking alone. We also feel uncomfortable while walking alone. When we walk with someone they inform us if something is going wrong but if we walk alone we'll not be aware of those things and people might tease us in roads for that.
- ≡ Teachers scolding
- ≡ People say that she is from lower caste group and she is from higher caste group and discriminate according to caste. We feel really very bad when they say so... "We wish we would also belong to higher caste"
- ≡ Teased by friends
- ≡ R: [Hesitates for some time] In relationship [Love affairs] (laughs)  
R: When we have breakups.  
R: Actually we plan about our life with that guy. We love and trust them more than our family. So, in spite of loving them unconditionally, going against our own family and supporting them and trusting them so much if they leave us that causes great tension.  
Also even when we have small fights it causes tension.
- ≡ The community think that daughters should get married and go to their husband's house while sons are expected to get involved in some kind of jobs and gain some name and fame.
- ≡ They tell us that we are daughters and we have to do the household chores and that we have to focus on that kind of works because we have to go to our husband's house and do the same thing there too. So they want us to prioritize the household works rather than studies.

Coping:

✚ Males

- ≡ Confiding in friends/families
- ≡ Forget thing that caused tension

- ≡ Dancing
- ≡ Spending time with friends
- ≡ Apologizing if did something bad
- ≡ Don't talk about the issue

#### ✚ Females

- ≡ Confiding in close friends/family members
- ≡ Sitting alone and recalling everything that happened and analyzing what was actually wrong and also accepting our own problems. Also thinking about what can be done further to repair the situation.
- ≡ We get angry at that time and can't do anything to anyone. So we throw things and express our anger to some stuff.
- ≡ Cutting their hands/arms, scratching our own face, getting into substance abuse, suicide
- ≡ Crying, screaming. It helps to reduce tension.
- ≡ Beating younger siblings
- ≡ Not eating [endorsed by one female]
- ≡ Using drugs when angry  
[Two of them disagreed. They said that using drugs during that time increases tension rather than reducing it. But others said that some of the girls in the community also drink alcohol "chhyang" and also smoke to reduce their tension. It makes them feel good and relaxed.]

#### Males on Females:

- ≡ Boys are strong. Girls are weak. Girls are weak as compared to boys.
- ≡ Boys don't help at home. Girls do all household works. Boys quarrel and argue with their father more. Boys concentrate more on outside work. Boys want what they want- they are stubborn. Boys earn more money. Boys run household by earning money.
- ≡ Girls marry early. They escape early. Boys take them. If boys don't take them, girls don't escape. It's the boys fault then.
- ≡ P: They want to argue/fight. Girls want to argue/fight with boys and boys want to argue/fight with girls. Boys want to be oversmart. Girls want to be beautiful.
- ≡ Yes, they don't help at fetching water. They help at outside works. Boys do difficult tasks and girls do easy household tasks like cooking food.
- ≡ They are weak physically and mentally. Girls don't have much force (energy) as boys have. They have weak muscles. Girls don't have as much energy as boys. Their nervous system works less and slowly. Girls can't do work as boys. They can't carry loads.
- ≡ M: And girls are more helpful than boys, is it? What do they help with?  
P: By helping their mother in home, help neighbours if they need help, care their younger brothers and sisters, help someone who is in difficult situation by giving money or by helping in other things, support and help others in sad and happy times.  
M: And boys earn more money, is it?  
P: By doing good things, by doing difficult works, are hardworking.  
M: All agree at this?  
P: Yes, but some drink. Some earn money but some throw away. Some waste money they have/earned by drinking.
- ≡ M: And girls marry early, is it?  
P: Yes

- M: Early mean? How early?
- P: At around 15. When they complete school/SLC, they get married. Some want to study but most marry. Some marry while they're studying. (M)
- ≡ M: And when upper caste discriminates lower?
- P: Yes. This cause more tension for girls. This often comes up in love relationships.
- ≡ Killing ourselves. People commit suicide when they fail in SLC. One might commit suicide because of deterioration in his/her mental health.

#### Female FGD on Males

- ≡ P: When he likes a girl and she likes some other guy or because of breakup.
- ≡ P: When he likes a girl and the girl he like likes some other guy, he starts to think a lot of things like whether I'm not good looking or do I have some weakness and things like that goes in his mind which leads to tension.
- ≡ P: When they see other boys showing off, putting on good clothes, spending money, and having fun, and can't do it themselves they feel bad and starts thinking about it.
- ≡ P: Unable to go to play.
- ≡ P: Boys usually talk good things about themselves with girls. So, they don't want anybody talking bad or scolding them in front of girls. So, if it happens they feel ashamed and bad.
- ≡ P: Those boys who are habituated to take drugs or alcohol or even smoke when they don't get it they'll have temptation of having that and it creates tension.
- ≡ P: When friends go out and have some fun and they can't they feel bad. Also when the friends share things of having so much fun they'll feel bad that they couldn't go. Also they think that their friends might be backbiting about him and then worries a lot.
- ≡ P: When they have to work at home or follow parent's order and can't go out to play or go out where he wants to.
- ≡ P: Also when they cannot follow the fashion trends that he is interested in.
- ≡ P: When they like something of their friends and demand the same with the parents and the parents refuse to buy that for him.
- ≡ P: They are the one to look after the family and if they are not able to get jobs and earn money it becomes a big problem to many of them as they wish to help their parents in lowering their financial burdens.
- ≡ P: Also when they don't have money or have financial problems and their friends show the money they earned by working they worry a lot.
- ≡ P: When parents ask them to plough field, fetch water for home, cutting wooden logs into pieces or sometimes cleaning utensils they feel irritated because they see their friends playing and having fun and they can't join them.
- ≡ P: Also when their friends see them doing those works they feel embarrassed which is also one thing that creates tension among boys.
- ≡ P: When they see their parents quarrel always they even don't wanna smile. This causes tension too.
- ≡ P: When they have a breakup in their relationship, they feel bad and worry a lot.

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