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Government of Nepal, Ministry
of Health and Population



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Investments for Improved Health
and Development



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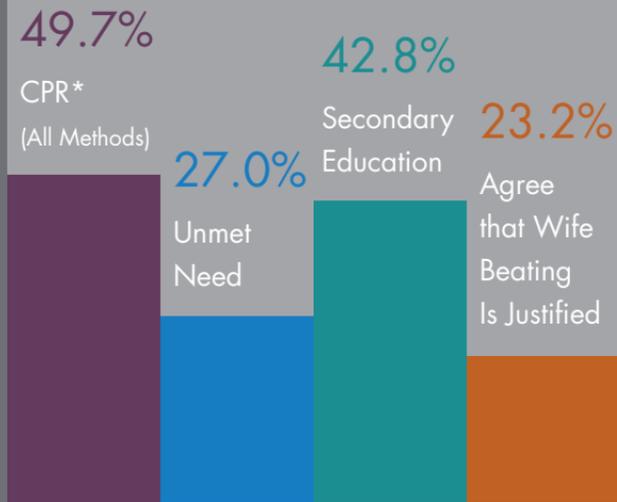
Context



Women and girls already make important contributions to their families, communities, and the nation. Helping them to maximize their skills, access needed health and educational resources, and take active roles in family and community decision making—in essence, empowering them—could increase their contributions and further the country's social and economic development.

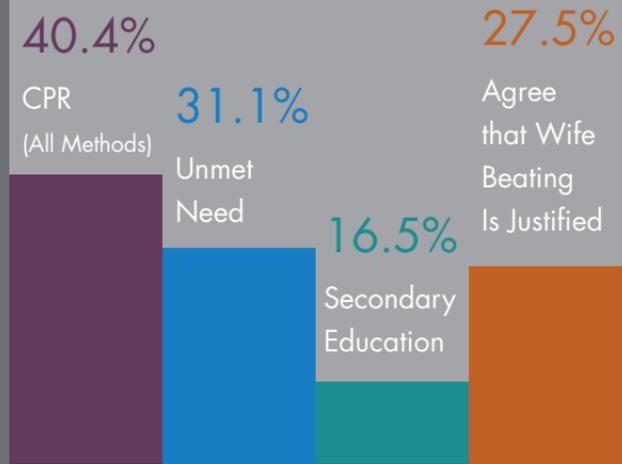
Women in poor and rural areas of Nepal face inequities in education, gender-based violence, and family planning, which affect their health and economic opportunities.

National Average



*CPR is the contraceptive prevalence rate

Among Women in the Lowest Wealth Quintile



Sources: Nepal DHS, 2006, 2011



"My parents died when I was very young, so I had to work in someone's home as a domestic servant for more than 20 years, so I never got an education and never learned to read. I can only write my name because my landlady in Kathmandu taught me how."

— Yanjing

What if we could create an environment where...

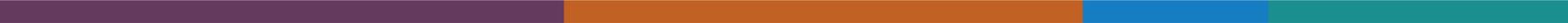


- Increased investments in family planning improve equitable access to and quality of services
- More girls from poor communities attain secondary education
- More people oppose violence against women



"It's easy to educate your children if you are educated. But if you don't have an education, it's hard."

— Kamala



Family planning prevents unintended pregnancies, reduces high-risk births, and protects the health of women and children. By improving access to family planning, women and couples are able to determine the number and timing of their pregnancies. Women's ability to participate in the workforce increases, they can increase their family's income, and can invest more resources into the care and education of their children.

Education is important for many reasons, including economic empowerment and better health and well-being. Investing in and encouraging education for girls, as well as preventing early marriage and childbearing, will protect the health of mothers and children and enable young women to maximize their social and economic opportunities and contributions.



"Equitable economic growth can lead [women] out of their disadvantaged conditions, increase resilience and lead to higher rates of economic growth" (PDNA, 2015).

Gender-based violence (GBV) negatively affects women's physical and psychological health. Social and cultural norms that condone GBV prevent women from accessing the resources and services they need to protect their health and improve their well-being for themselves and their families. By investing in women and changing harmful norms, women are better able to make and act on decisions about the health and well-being of their children, which can have long-term effects on population growth, health, and the economy.

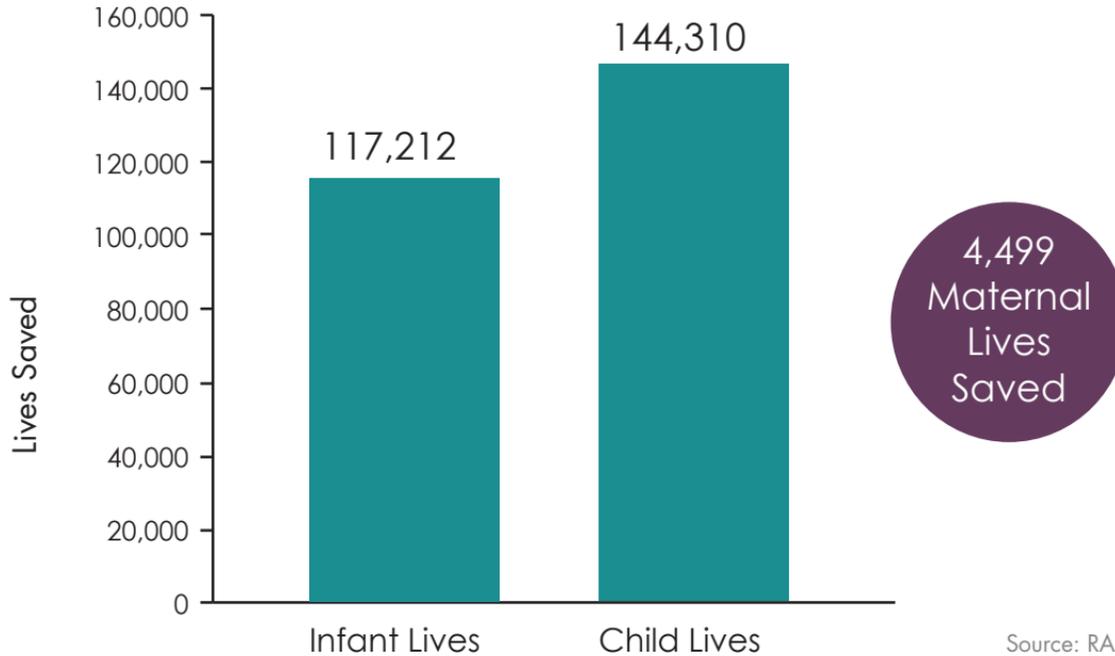


"My husband is from Kavre district. He [works for] a trekking [company] in Kathmandu, and I see him about once every three months. We are planning on having another child soon."

— Sarita

Investments in three areas could make a major difference in improving women's and children's health in the next few decades: expanding equitable access to family planning, enabling girls from poor communities to stay in school longer, and transforming norms that condone violence. Such investments are most effective when combined and, by preventing high-risk pregnancies and births, could save thousands of women's and children's lives among the poorest group of the population.

Lives Saved, 2015–2035



Source: RAPIDWomen Model

Investing in family planning and women-centered strategies improves the lives of individual women and families throughout Nepal. Women like Kamala will be able to educate their children and access the health services they need to protect their health.



"I don't have big dreams for my children. Although I wish they could become doctors, it's not something I can afford. So I keep my dreams small. Poor people cannot afford big dreams. I'll be happy if they get a good education."

—Kamala

Call to Action

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- Improve accessibility of family planning services for poor and rural areas
- Improve accessibility of maternal, neonatal, and child health services for poor and rural areas
- Increase educational opportunities for girls to increase economic opportunities
- Increase investments in strategies to prevent and respond to violence against women

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