

# Confronting domestic violence in the land of happiness: Measuring violence against women and girls in Bhutan

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*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



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# Country Context

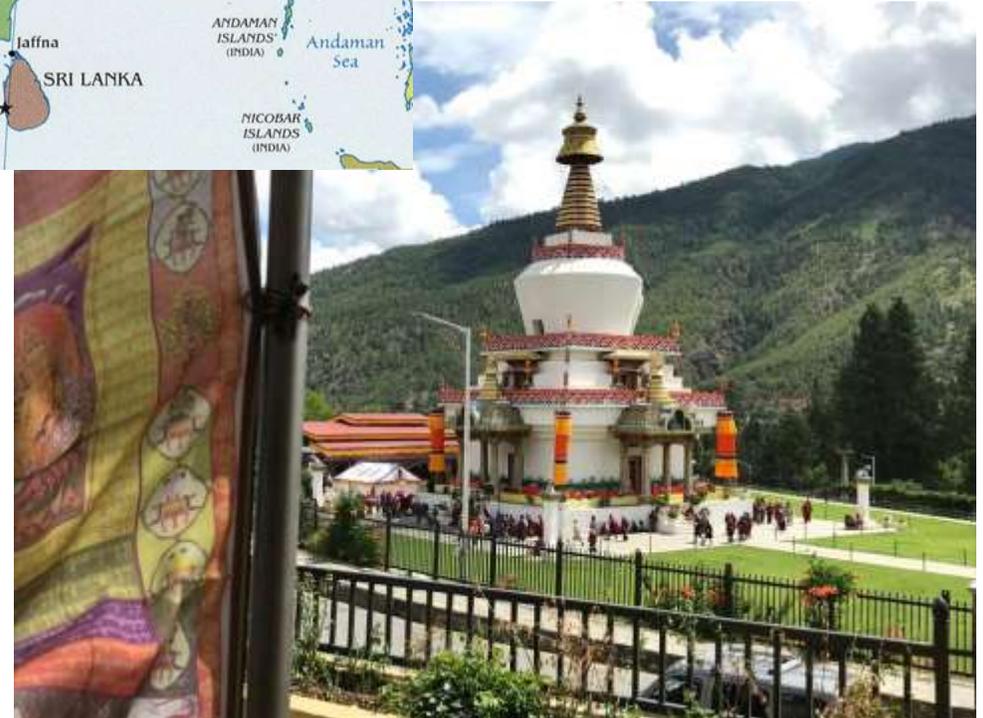
**Total area:** 38394 sq. km

**Total population:** 735553 (M-349708, F-385845) as of 2017

**Language-** Dzongkha

**GDP per capita-** Nu. 223,815.18 (or USD 3438.16) in 2017

**Development Philosophy-** Gross National Happiness

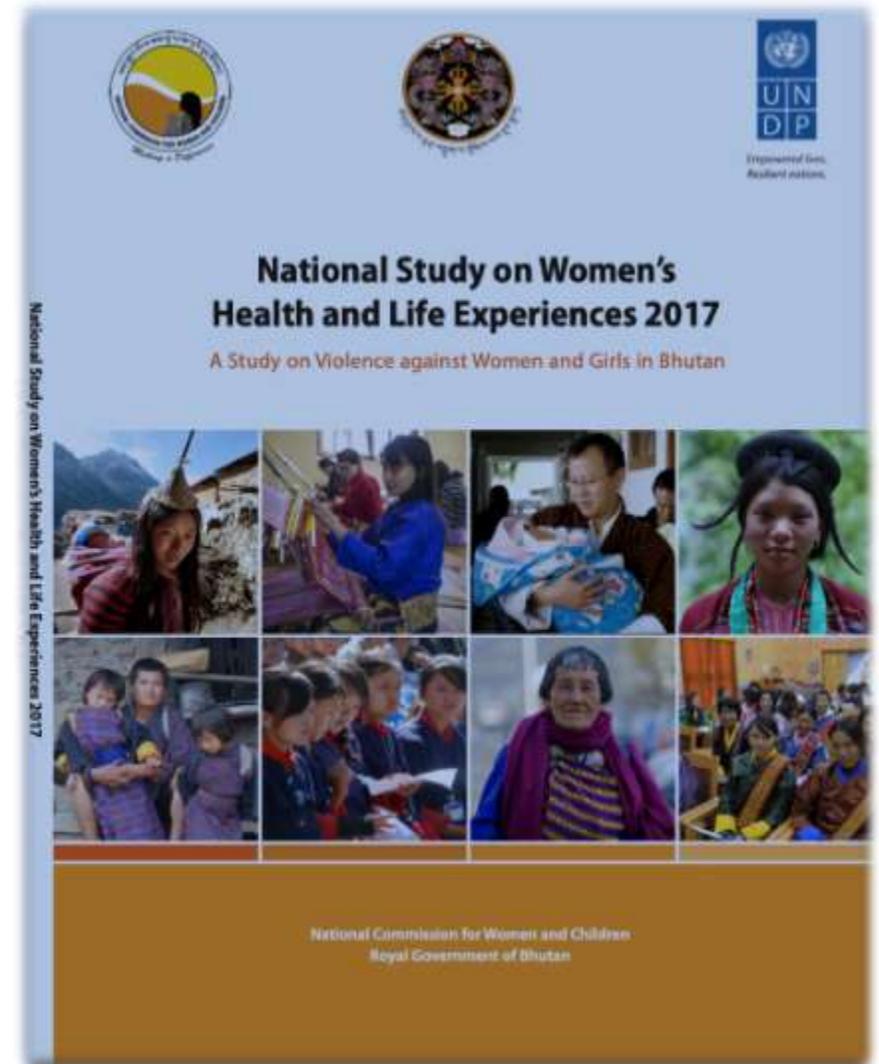


# Background on VAW

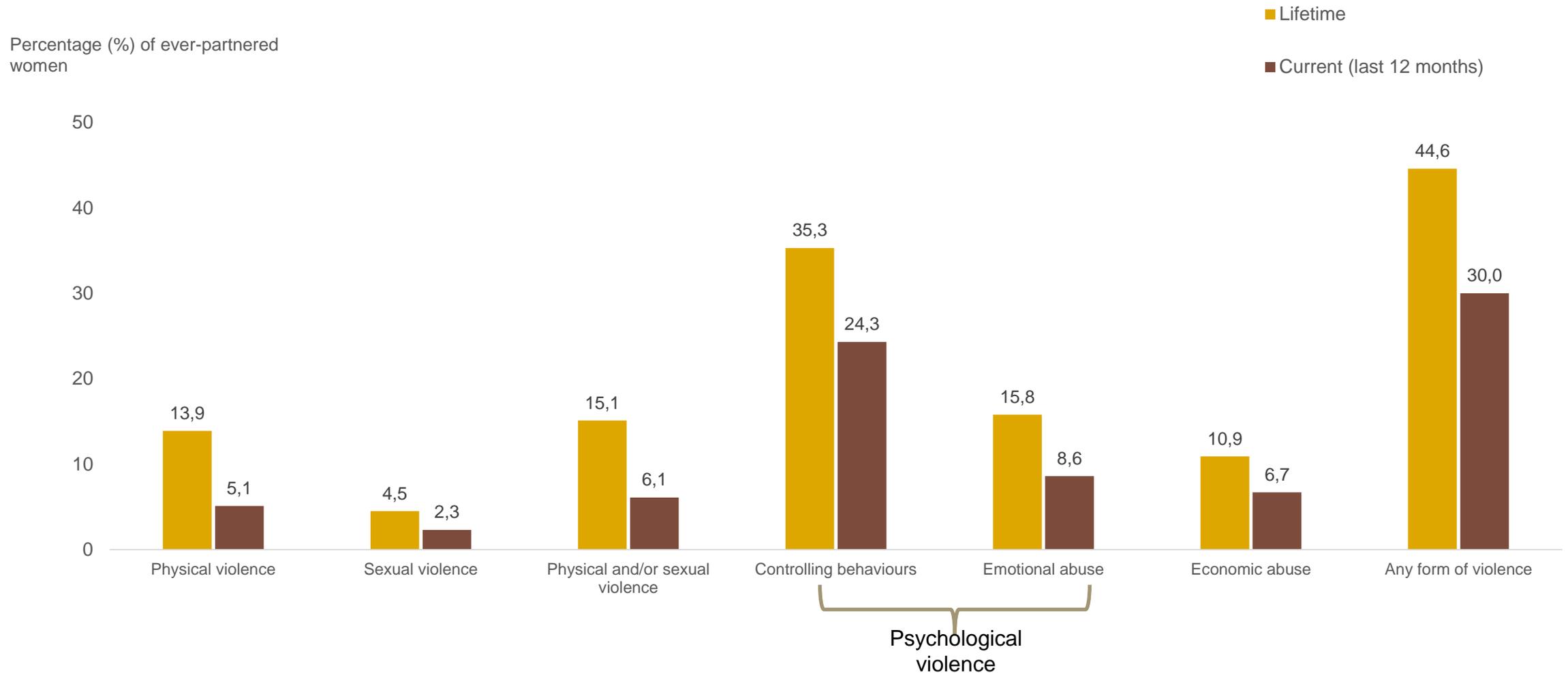
- GBV against women and girls is one of the key gender issues existing in the country
- Limited data on the prevalence of violence against women and girls
- A study on violence against women carried out in 2012 (sample size of 539)
- Efforts made to collect administrative data by various agencies
- A national level study on prevalence of VAW/G is much-needed to enable evidence planning and programming

# Survey Methodology

- First nation-wide survey of this kind in Bhutan
- World Health Organization (WHO) methodology – gold standard, using quantitative and qualitative research methods
- In the survey: interview 2200 women aged 15-64, representing women in the entire country



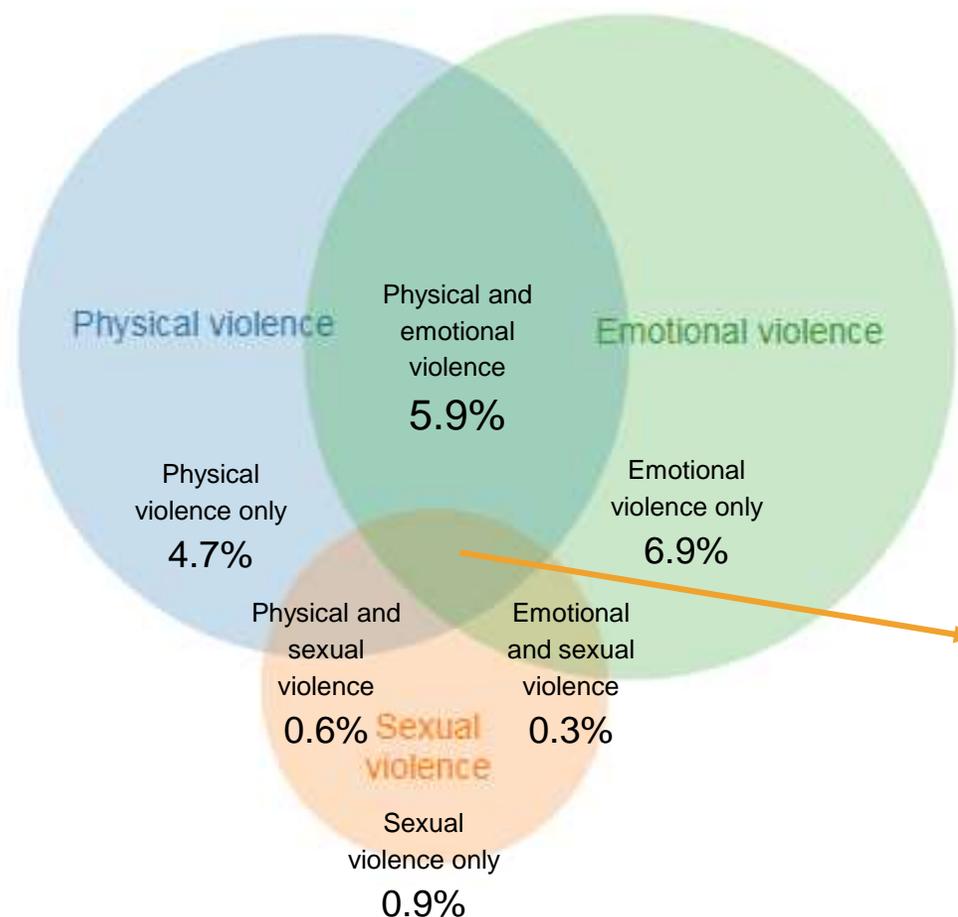
# FINDINGS- Types and patterns of intimate partner violence



# Overlap of different forms of partner violence

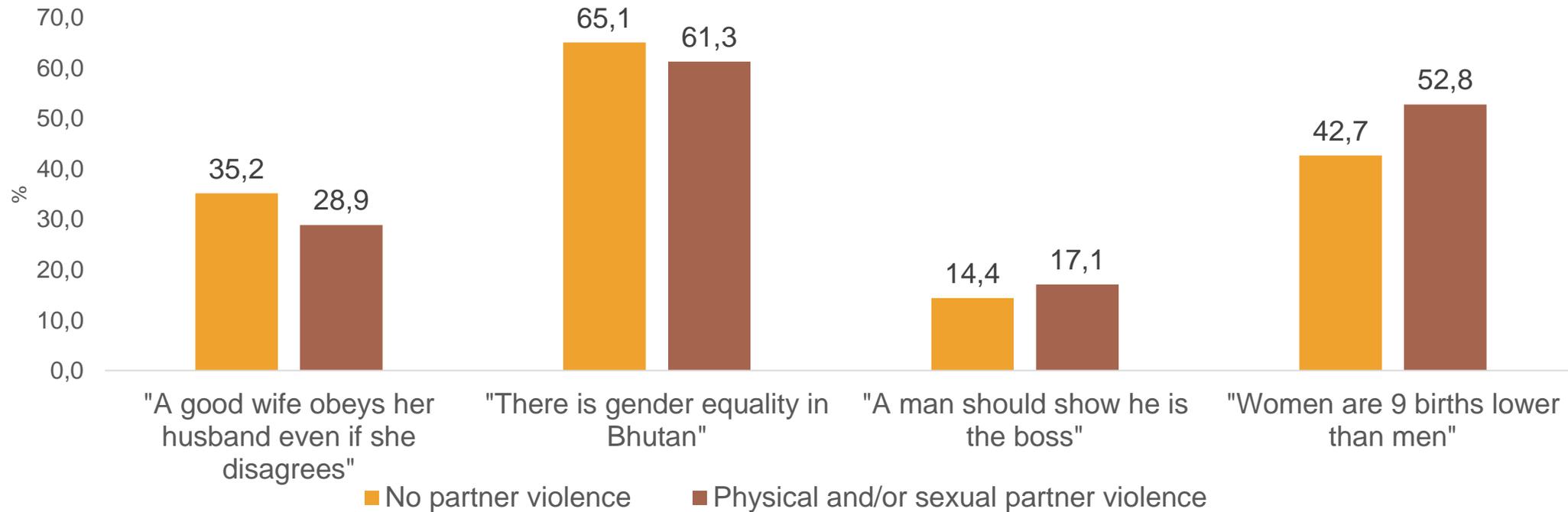
Combination of lifetime **physical, sexual and/or emotional** violence by husbands/partners

**22.0%** of ever-partnered women reported either sexual violence alone, physical violence alone, emotional violence alone or a combination of the three types of violence



All forms – physical, sexual and emotional violence – experienced by **2.7%** of ever-partnered women

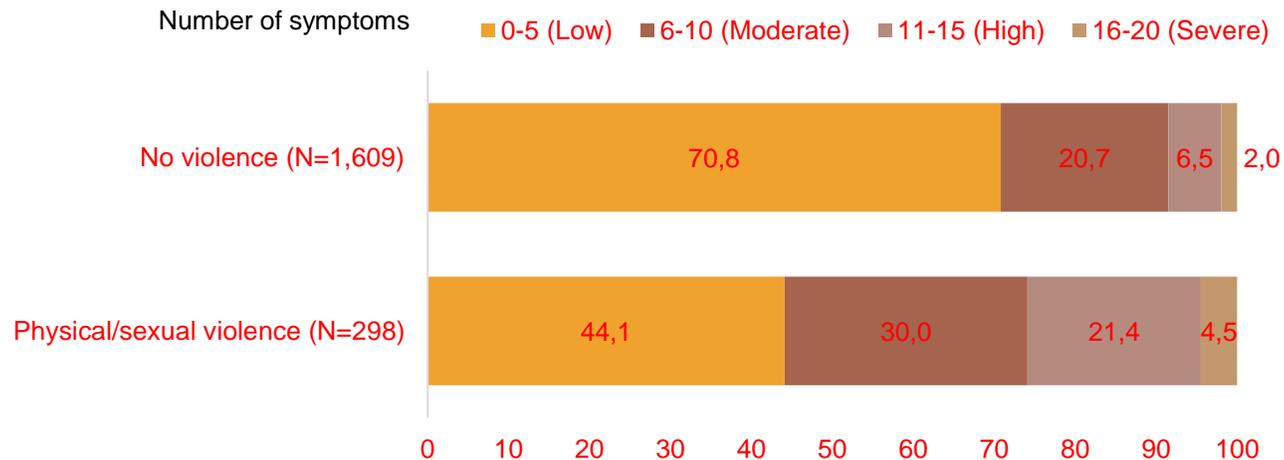
# Attitudes towards gender equality



# Impact of partner violence

Physical Injury : More than quarter of women experienced injury as a result of Partner violence ( 27.2 %)

Mental health : 4.5 % of women interviewed ( n: 298) suffered severe distress.

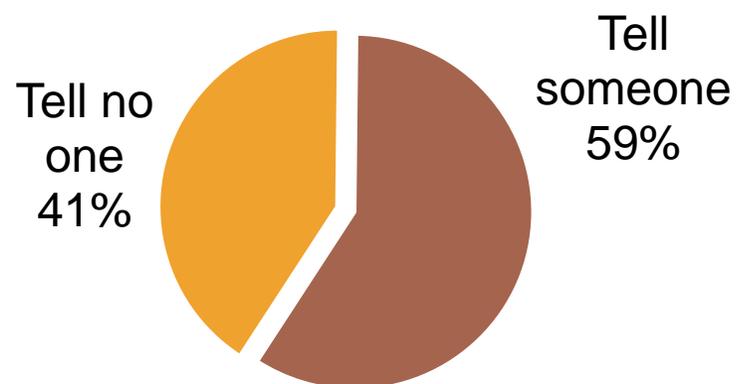


*“I suffered from depression. Now I have become very forgetful because he used to hit on my head. He made me black and blue and my eyes would swell. See- one of my eyes is watering even now. I am happy I divorced.”*

In-depth interview with a survivor of partner violence

# Coping with violence

Women who experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence (N=298)



“**I never told anyone.** Because I thought that was a common problem in every marriage and why to air out our dirty laundry in public. I suffered from bruises all over my body and I still kept quiet”.

*Key informant interview*

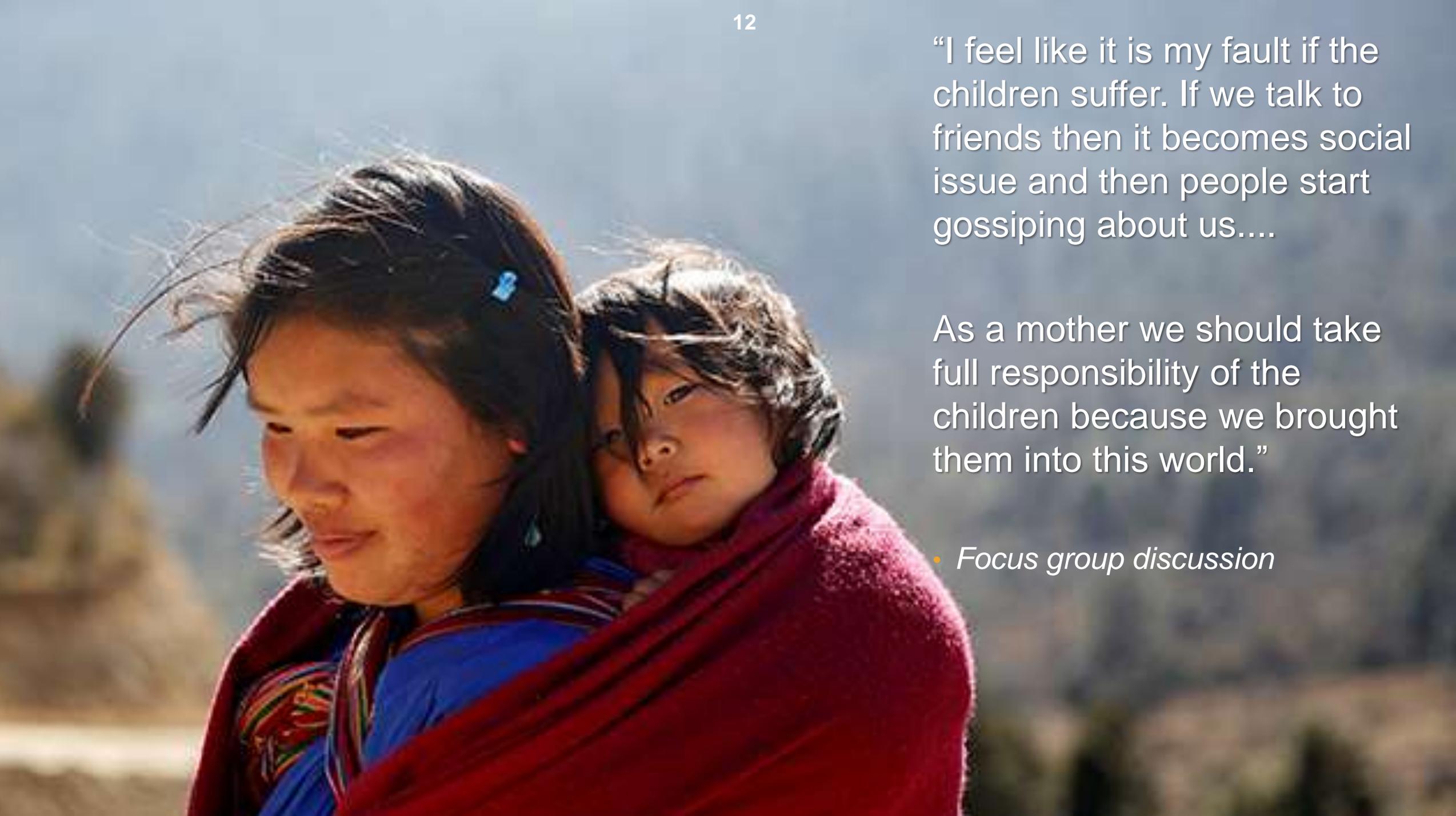
Percentage of women who sought help from agencies/persons in authority among women who experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence, Bhutan 2017 (N=298)



“I feel like it is my fault if the children suffer. If we talk to friends then it becomes social issue and then people start gossiping about us....

As a mother we should take full responsibility of the children because we brought them into this world.”

- *Focus group discussion*



# Policy implications

- **Importance of understanding from the data...**

- that violence against women is common, but that it is a hidden problem
- ... that majority of women are reluctant to seek help, and often only do so when the situation is very serious
- ... that many women even if they seek help from social services may not (easily) disclose that they are living in a situation with intimate partner violence
- ... that most women want violence to stop but not to have the partner arrested
- ... that safety of the woman seeking help should be central to any action taken

- **Improve services to women and families**

- Expand the provision of inclusive services and facilities
- Develop standard operating procedures, including training frontline workers in the health sector, law enforcement, education system, etc.
- Economic support and free legal aid to give women options
- Interventions to reduce the harmful use of alcohol

# Vision



*“A happy nation where children, women and men live in harmony with equality and respect in all spheres of life”*

THANK YOU !

