

Reflecting 15 years

THE "RIGHTS" SIDE OF LIFE

2020



Family Protection Authority



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MALDIVES



PARTNERS

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives



The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) is an independent and autonomous statutory body under Human Rights Commission's Act of Maldives. Our mission is to lead the promotion and protection of Human Rights under the Maldives Constitution, Islamic Shari'ah and regional and international Human Rights Conventions ratified by the Maldives.

For more information, visit hrcm.org.mv or follow us [@hrcmv](https://twitter.com/hrcmv)

Family Protection Authority



The Family Protection Authority (FPA) was established under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (3/2012) to take lead nationally on the issue of domestic violence by creating public awareness; providing the required services to the victims of such violence; and by co-ordinating the work of the relevant government institutions including the police and the health sector, and various local efforts made by individuals to protect survivors of domestic violence.

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FOREWORD



The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives has now successfully conducted three comprehensive Human Rights Surveys in the Maldives. The “Rights” Side of Life: A Baseline Human Rights Survey was first conducted in 2005 in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The second baseline Human Rights Survey, Six years on The “Rights” Side of Life, was carried out in 2011 by the HRCM and UNDP. Now, the third continuation, Reflecting 15 years: The “Rights” Side of Life was conducted by the HRCM and Family Protection Authority (FPA) in partnership with UNDP in 2019. The objective of these longitudinal surveys are to determine the extent of awareness among the general public about human rights; their attitudes towards human rights issues; and their awareness of the existence of HRCM, its functions and its effectiveness in performing them. The current study also focused on Domestic Violence to understand the current situation in the country and provide insights on the extent of the additional work required to address any shortcomings.

This report highlights human rights concerns that have magnified over the past seven years since the publication of the previous survey Six years on “Rights” Side of Life. These concerns have manifested into serious issues demanding immediate national responses. The support for gender equality has diminished and women’s rights seem to have suffered even more over the years. What is significantly worse is the emergence of a religious extremist narrative that has been used to weaken support for gender equality and women’s rights. The fact that growing concern regarding child sexual abuse has been consistently highlighted in all three surveys, indicates the inadequate response of the State to remedy this issue. We believe that it is vital for the state to effectively address the spreading of religious extremist ideologies and xenophobia.

The decline in the approval rate of HRCM in relation to the 2011 findings has to be considered with gravity. This affects the respect for human rights among people in general, perception and faith in the institution and the impact of the current and future work of HRCM. It underlies the findings in this report suggesting that the majority of Maldivians are now aware of HRCM. Similarly, the lack of awareness on the constitutional role and functions of HRCM as an oversight body, should also be a primary concern for the Commission to address. The Commission would like to state that while steps have been taken to address these issues highlighted in this report, there still remains a lot more that needs to be done.

It is our hope that with the findings of this survey, we would be able to build upon it to enhance and reinvigorate the specific roles and functions of the HRCM to meet the diverse expectations of the public and to serve the

people better by learning from its lessons and overcoming the challenges. The commission hopes that the findings of this survey would provide essential data for decision makers, policy planners, international agencies and the community for their future development plans. We hope that this report will be useful for the students and the wider public.

The Commission would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of current and past members of the Research Team of HRCM, including Aminath Shifaath Abdul Razzaq (former Director of Research and Monitoring Department), Ahmed Yamaany, Aishath Maurifa Mohamed, Fathimath Hussain, along with previous Commission Members. We would like to acknowledge the support of UNDP and FPA for this exercise and thank them for their continuous support to the HRCM. We also acknowledge the work undertaken by Riyan Private Limited, the consultant that carried out the survey. Finally, we express our sincere appreciation and special thanks to Mr. Peter Hosking, designed the survey instrument.

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Member

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Member

Moomina Waheed
Member

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

FOREWORD



Family Protection
Authority

Domestic violence is a universal problem occurring at epidemic proportions with grave violations of human rights. It has devastating physical, psychological, reproductive, economic and social effects, especially on vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly and people with disabilities. The human rights framework has allowed for this global issue to be reframed as a collective problem that needs to be addressed by the society as a whole, whilst challenging the traditional views and the perception of domestic violence as a private matter. It is crucial that we all do our part to protect and promote core fundamental rights such as the right to life and to bodily integrity that is entitled to all human beings.

In the Maldives, the dire need to address the issue of domestic violence instigated the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention (DVP) Act on 23rd April 2012. The implementation of the DVP Act expedited policy formulations, and facilitated institutional developments as well as better coordination among state institutions, civil society organizations and those in the private sector working in domestic violence prevention. Further, it has paved the way for increased public awareness, strengthened law enforcement, improved psychosocial support, and growth of legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence.

The Family Protection Authority (FPA) was established as an independent body under the DVP Act and has been tasked to take a lead on a national scale to address the issue of domestic violence in the country by creating public awareness, co-ordinating the work of the relevant government institutions and various local efforts made by individuals to protect survivors of domestic violence. Amongst its wide range of responsibilities, FPA is mandated to conduct and publish research on the prevalence, characteristics and socio-demographic correlations of domestic violence. To meet this end, FPA formed a partnership with HRCM and UNDP for the Third Human Rights Survey to include a new chapter dedicated to domestic violence. This Third Human Rights Survey recognizes and integrates domestic violence as a human rights issue.

The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) has now successfully conducted three comprehensive Human Rights Surveys in the Maldives, documenting the public's awareness, attitudes and knowledge on various aspects of human rights. I hope that the findings of this Third Survey would serve as a basis for formulating decisions and developing strategies by law and policy makers in the years ahead. It is also my hope that practitioners will utilize these findings to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the issue and strengthen service delivery.

On behalf of Family Protection Authority, I would like to thank HRCM, UNDP, Riyan, and our staff involved in this important survey, for their

unwavering commitment in bringing the third "Rights" Side of Life to fruition. We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to collaborate in this study and be a part of a publication that strives to further strengthen and uphold the rights of the beloved people of our nation.

Aminath Leena Ali

Chief Executive Officer

Family Protection Authority

FOREWORD



UNDP is pleased to support the publication of the third 'Rights Side of Life' (RSL) Survey in Maldives. Since its first edition in 2005, the RSL Surveys have provided useful updates and trends regarding the issues related to human rights in the Maldives. As a young democracy on its journey towards the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development, Maldives has made significant strides towards becoming a nation centered on the universal values of human rights, freedom and justice for all. For instance, out of the nine core international human rights treaties, the country has joined eight and ratified seven. For the Maldives to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is fundamental to recognize the interlinkages between SDGs and human rights.

In this regard, the National Human Rights Framework guided by the 2008 Constitution of Maldives identifies and maps the interlinkages between SDGs and human rights. However, the country's efforts to promote and protect human rights while working towards the achievement of SDGs continue to be challenged by the fragility of the social and political fabric of the country. In the face of these challenges, the third Rights Side of Life survey provides valuable data in continuing discussions and dialogues around human rights, state obligations and citizen responsibilities.

The 'Rights Side of Life: A Baseline Human Rights Survey', determines the extent of awareness among the general public about human rights, their attitudes towards human rights issues, and their awareness of the existence of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM), its functions and its effectiveness.

The survey findings shed light on the grave need to address gender inequality in a more systematic and effective manner. For instance, there is a worrying increase in the number of women who did not respond to the questions regarding equal rights in the family unit (87.8% non-response rate) and child custody matters (87.8% non-response rate). The findings also reveal the need for more transparent and accountable governance institutions and greater awareness of human rights across the country. If not addressed in a timely manner, these could pose challenges to the achievement of SDGs and act as a barrier to fulfillment of human rights in the country.

Over the years, Maldives has made remarkable progress in its development journey, but for it to achieve inclusive and sustainable development it is necessary that the benefits of this progress reach all the people whatever their sex, age and ability. It is our sincere hope that the findings of the survey will provide a basis for policy-making and agenda setting, and allow for strengthening of systems that promote and protect human rights and the rule of law.

The launching of the Rights Side of Life Survey comes as a reminder of the work and effort that is required to ensure the protection of the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being.

Ms. Akiko Fujii

UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives

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ACCRONYMS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC

Convention on the Rights of the Child

DV

Domestic Violence

HRCM

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

MGFDSS

Ministry of Gender, Family Development and Social Security

PSU

Primary Sampling Unit

RF/DK/NA

Refused/Don't Know/No Answer

RSL

The “Rights” Side of Life: A Baseline Human Rights Survey

RSL2

Six years on The “Rights” Side of Life

RSL3

Reflecting 15 years: The “Rights” Side of Life

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

UPR

Universal Periodic Review

VAW

Violence against Women

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the Third Human Rights Survey of the Maldives, *The "Rights" Side of Life (RSL₃)*, a quantitative survey initiated by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM), conducted in partnership with Family Protection Authority (FPA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

BACKGROUND

The "Rights" Side of Life: A Baseline Human Rights Survey (RSL) was first conducted in 2005 by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to determine the extent of awareness among the general public about human rights; their attitudes towards human rights issues; and their awareness of the existence of HRCM, its functions and its effectiveness in performing them. It was decided that this survey will be longitudinal in nature and be repeated every five years. Hence, the second baseline Human Rights Survey, *Six years on The "Rights" Side of Life' (RSL₂)*, was carried out by the HRCM in 2011 to assess the level of human rights awareness of the general public and to compare the differences, if any, that could be observed between the results of the first and the second survey. The survey in 2005 revealed that Maldivians remained largely unaware of what human rights were despite promotion various authorities and the inclusion of individual rights of all persons residing in the Republic of Maldives in the second chapter of the Constitution of the Maldives. The results also indicated that even though HRCM is the primary state authority mandated to protect, promote and sustain human rights, only a few people were aware of the role of HRCM. Hence the existing survey instrument was modified by the HRCM, in 2011, to cater for the new developments and changes in the society. *RSL₂* conducted in 2011 revealed that although the approval rating of HRCM had declined, there was a remarkable improvement and increase in the knowledge and awareness of human rights.

Reflecting 15 years: The "Rights" Side of Life (RSL₃) is a longitudinal continuation of two previous surveys (RSL and RSL₂) conducted by the HRCM and FPA in partnership with UNDP in 2019. As FPA is mandated to conduct research on the issue of domestic violence, FPA partnered with HRCM and UNDP on RSL₃. This is the first time a chapter focusing solely on the issue of domestic violence has been included in *The "Rights" Side of Life*.

This study focused in empirically gauging the attitudes and awareness of the general public on a range of human rights issues and also recognizes and integrates domestic violence as a human rights issue. The study collected data on human rights and domestic violence to understand the current situation in the country and provide insights on the extent of the additional work required to address any shortcomings. The information obtained further helps prioritize future directions for human rights promotion, prevention of domestic violence and assists in identifying areas for more research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the research was to understand attitudes, awareness and perceptions of the public on a range of human rights issues in the Maldives.

The more specific objectives include:

1. Examine the level of knowledge on human rights and awareness on HRCM among the public.
2. Examine the changes in the public's attitudes and perceptions on human rights and the performance of HRCM over the years.
3. Compare the difference in the knowledge, awareness and perceptions between individuals across regions, between locals and migrants and other demographic categories.
4. Examine the knowledge, perception and prevalence of domestic violence.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The success of the initial 2005 survey, *The "Rights" Side of Life*, and its robust conclusions, resulted in the decision to use the same sampling design of 2005 survey, with slight adjustments in 2011 and 2019

SAMPLING

This study adopted the same design and sampling methodology of the two previous surveys. The research involved a randomized sample of 1,160 (713 females and 384 males) individuals selected from households on 20 islands. A total of 13 islands and the urban centres of Malé and Addu, were included in the sample. While RSL₂ surveyed 2 resorts, RSL₃ enumerated 4 resorts with a sample of 25 from each, which reflects a wider representation of the resorts as their number has increased since RSL₂. The exact resorts surveyed have been revised for convenience. Thilafushi Island was selected to represent an industrial island.

Multistage sampling was adopted, and the country was stratified into seven regions, with one atoll randomly selected from each. Two islands were then chosen from the atoll, one

being the administrative island and one other island was chosen at random. Sampling was carried out in two urban clusters (Malé and Addu) and in four resorts (randomly selected) and one industrial island (Thilafushi). Enumeration blocks were selected from these selected islands and all households in the block were enumerated until a pre-determined number of households was achieved. The respondents selected for the interview from the households were persons aged 16 or over.

The sampling design of RSL₂ has been largely adopted in the methodology and the sampling frame of RSL₃. The same atolls were followed with slight modifications to the island selection. Subject to the revised numbers available from census data from 2014, population and household numbers were aligned to RSL₂. With the updated population figure, the sample size was drawn using a sampling software with 95% confidence interval, with 5% error and 50% response distribution. To this figure, a 10% non-response was added. Based on this, a total of 1,160 individuals were included as the sample.

The Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) were selected using house lists obtained from the island councils. The respondents were persons aged 16 and above on his or her last birthday, living in the selected PSU. Where the selected sample was not available on the island for any reason, a replacement was taken from the household itself, provided they were over 16 years of age. The PSUs for the islands in the sample were selected using a block list obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). As for the resorts, the sample was agreed in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism, and for Thilafushi Island, it was decided in consultation with Thilafushi Corporation Limited.

ENUMERATOR'S TRAINING

The survey was undertaken by Riyan Pvt Ltd, a Maldivian consultancy firm. The survey instrument initially developed by the international consultant for the 2005 report was used with minor modifications. The approval to conduct the survey was obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the questionnaire was finalized and digitized using 'latin' in the local language. The topics in the enumerator training included familiarity with using the tablets, the

questionnaire and terminology; the laws and regulations attached to the subject in question, and the conventions the country has signed and ratified with international bodies. Training was conducted to equip the enumerators with the supervisory skills designed to assist the Riyan team handling the survey.

While the Riyan team conducted the training sessions in Malé and the Atolls, representatives from HRCM and the FPA actively participated in facilitating sessions. A supervisor from the Riyan team was assigned to each selected island and to Malé. He/she was present in the field for overall coordination of the data collection process. Prior to travelling to the sites, enumerators were sought from the selected islands using online advertisements. The final recruitment took place on site, and gender representation was emphasized. All of the selected enumerators had completed their education to at least GCE Ordinary Level (lower secondary exam). The enumerators underwent a half-day training session, focusing largely on the questionnaire. The training also included a session on human rights, the role of HRCM, the Domestic Violence Act and other key documents.

Some basic details of the sample are shared in the following table.

Table 1: Summary of sample

Total sample size	1,160
Malé	394
All Atolls	610
Industrial/Thilafushi	50
Resorts	106
Total Number of locations surveyed	20
Total number of islands (excluding cities, resorts and industrial islands)	13
Cities (Malé & Addu)	2
Resorts	4
Industrial (Thilafushi)	1

DATA COLLECTION

The survey data collection was carried out from 16 July – 10 September 2019.

Data collection was initiated after the enumerators had been trained. The length of the data collection period, the number of enumerators, and other details of the process are shared in the following table.

Table 2: Data collection schedule

Islands	Travel (DD/MM)	Dates	Days	No. of Enumerators	Sample Size
Total					1160
Malé	15/7	3/9	48	20	394
Fuvahmulah	20/7	22/7	2	10	25
Addu	25/7	29/7	4	10	61
AA. Atoll					
Aa. Rasdhoo	27/7	28/7	1	8	45
Aa. Thoddoo	29/7	30/7	2	4	45
Ha. Atoll					
Ha. Utheemu	2/8	5/8	3	10	66
Ha. Dhidhoo	2/8	5/8	3	8	66
R. Atoll					
R. Rasmaadhoo	2/8	3/8	1	9	65
R. Ungoofaaru	4/8	6/8	2	8	65
Faafu Atoll					
F. Nilandhoo	7/8	9/8	2	8	22
F. Bilehdhoo	8/8	8/8	1	6	22
Th. Atoll					
Th. Veymandoo	23/8	24/8	2	8	32
Th. Gaadhifushi	24/8	26/8	2	8	32
Gdh. Atoll					
Gdh. Thinadhoo	23/8	24/8	2	8	32
Gdh. Madaveli	25/8	26/8	2	8	32
Resorts	26/7	10/9	6	26	106
Industrial	4/8	24/8	10	4	50

RESPONSE RATE

The overall response rate for the survey was 95%. A more detailed breakdown is shared in the table below.

Table 3: Response rate

	Total Sample	Total Responses	Response rate
Outer islands	549	546	99.45%
Urban	455	422	92.75%
Resorts	106	94	88.68%
Industrial	50	39	78.00%
Total	1,160	1,101	94.91%

Although the total response rate is high, the response rate to questions in different sections of the questionnaire varied. Generally, refusals were received for different parts of questions 66 and 72, focusing on women's rights.

LIMITATIONS

Survey instrument

The size of the questionnaire proved to be a challenge in obtaining information from the respondents. In total, there were 127 broad questions with 248 sub-questions. On average, a minimum of 30 to 45 minutes was spent conducting one full interview.

Timing of the survey

Several public holidays fell into the survey period creating challenges in getting access to households, especially in Malé. This resulted in an extension of the data collection period, and burnout of the enumerators in the capital .

Furthermore, there was a considerable gender disparity among the respondents. This occurred because the surveys were conducted on weekdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., leading to more responses from women. Men were unavailable at home during these times and this is during weekdays and during office hours is a general phenomenon observed throughout the country and reflected in almost all the surveys.

In addition, the weather conditions deteriorated during the survey period, and travel was postponed occasionally, impacting on the fieldwork.

Availability of enumerators

One of the main challenges lay in recruiting enumerators and retaining them throughout the survey period, especially in Malé. Recruitment and training had to be conducted more than once. Initially, each Atoll/Island Council was asked to assist the team in recruiting enumerators, however, in some islands, the interest level was low. Hence, enumerators had to be hired from other, nearby islands.

Some questions in this survey were designed to be administered by female enumerators with female respondents, and by male enumerators with male respondents, in order to increase the responses. But finding enumerators from both genders in some locations was a challenge, and this may have impacted on the responses to some gender-based questions.

Challenges were also encountered in finding

enumerators from different age groups. The majority were below the age of 25, and hence difficulties were faced with questions which required probing and maturity in handling the responses.

Other

Challenges in communicating with migrant workers due to the language barrier, led some participants to leave midway through the interview. During the data collection, assistance was sought from the workers' colleagues in answering the questions, creating interpreters' bias.

KEY FINDINGS

Awareness of the Human Rights Commission

1. An increase in public awareness of HRCM (40.8% in 2005, 72.8% in 2011 to 84.8% in 2019).
2. A significant increase in migrant worker respondents awareness of HRCM (9.0% in 2011, 41.2% in 2019).
3. Similar to the findings of 2011, women's awareness of HRCM was high (84.9% in 2011 to 87.0% in 2019).
4. An increase in men's awareness of HRCM was observed (63.7% in 2011 to 80.7% in 2019).
5. A decline in the overall approval rating or the number of respondents who think HRCM is doing an excellent or good job since 2005 (39.7% in 2005, 27.0% in 2019). There was no significant difference between the results of the approval rating in 2011 and 2019 (26.7% in 2011).
6. There is also a decline in the number of respondents who believe that HRCM is doing a satisfactory job, down from 19.9% in 2011 to 13.4% in 2019.
7. 31.1% were dissatisfied and thought HRCM was not doing a good job.
8. A concerning lack of understanding on the functions and mandate of HRCM was observed. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents were not able to define the role of HRCM.
9. In 2011, 70.0% of the respondents stated that the role of HRCM was to protect human rights whereas this number had declined to 42.8% in 2019.
10. Understanding of HRCM's monitoring role has suffered a significant decline to 4.1%, down from 18.0% in 2011.
11. The investigative role of HRCM was stated as a function of HRCM by only 12.9% of the respondents as opposed to 31.0% in 2011.
12. When respondents were asked about the specific functions of HRCM that needed further strengthening, the strongest support was voiced for creating awareness on human rights (89.2%), closely followed by strengthening protection of the rights of vulnerable groups (89.0%).
13. 87.4% stated that the Commission should strengthen its function of advising the government on human rights issues, followed by 86.1% demanding improvement in the investigation of complaints regarding human rights abuses.
14. 85.8% suggested that the Commission should improve monitoring the government's compliance with human rights obligations.

Community Awareness of Human Rights

1. Awareness of human rights, while 13.4% claimed to have high awareness and 23.2% reported having a poor understanding.

2. Women displayed increased confidence with their human rights awareness with 60.5% reporting moderate awareness, compared to 46.6% of men. There was no significant difference in the findings to the 2011 report.
3. Only 36.5% of respondents were able to name five human rights, suggesting a decline from 45.1% in 2011
4. A significant positive change is in the decrease of the number of people who could not name any human rights (44.5% in 2011 compared to 15.4% in 2019).
5. More women (38.9%) were able to identify five human rights compared to men (32.0%) mirroring the greater awareness of human rights reported by women in the previous query.
6. The respondents believed that rights of the child were the most important from a provided list of twenty-one human rights. This is a considerable departure from previous findings of 2011 where the right to access education was cited as paramount.
7. Women's right to equality was identified as the second most important human right at 10.9%, with the right to education and right to adequate healthcare trailing closely at 10.5% and 10.1% respectively. In 2011, freedom of expression was ranked as the most important human right, with the right to education in second place.



Democratic Reform

1. People overwhelmingly asserted (85.7%) the importance of knowing about the rights and freedoms guaranteed under second chapter of the constitution. This view holds merit across the gender, geography and nature of local island/atoll/municipal administration without significant variation.
2. A marked improvement of 20.2% (up from 11.2% in 2011) of the respondents reported having read the *Chapter II: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Constitution*.
3. More men (23%) than women (18%) reported having read the constitutional chapter on rights.
4. 77.6% of the respondents supported an initiative for the government to provide copies of the constitution to every household in the country.
5. No significant difference was observed between respondents who thought the democratic process was successful (31.0 %) and those who thought it was not (30.0%). 18% of respondents believe the democratic process has been successful to some extent.
6. Men were noted to be slightly more satisfied (38.0%) with democratic and political reform than women (28.1%)
7. Corruption (21.0%) and lack of trust between political parties (20.0%) were considered the leading factors undermining the success of the democratic process.





The Right to Security of the Person/Crime

1. No significant difference was observed between respondents who reported knowing a victim of crime between 2011 (20.8%) and 2019 (21.7%).
2. Fewer migrant workers reported knowing a victim of crime, with a fall from 15.8% in 2011 to 4.1% in 2019
3. Two thirds of people (74.9%) who reported knowing a victim of a crime were below the age of 39 years old
4. A quarter of those who reported knowing a victim of crime, recalled that it was a member of their own community, while 14.0% said it was a neighbour, and 13.5% stated it was a member of their household.
5. Most of the respondents identified victims of crimes as male (45.3%) while 17.3% indicated that the victim was a female.
6. The high (37.4%) non-response rate (as opposed to 18.0% in 2011) contributes to the decline in the number of people who reported that the victim was male and those who reported the victim as female, compared to 2011.
7. 31.6% stated the age of the victim to be between 19-34 years. Almost half (49.6%) of these respondents were from urban regions as opposed to 23.7% from the outer islands.
8. 40.7% of people believe there has been a significant increase in crime.
9. The number of respondents who believed that the crime rate has increased, rose from 52.6% in 2011 to 60.0% in 2019. Similar to the findings of 2011, more women (45.0%) than men (33.0%) consider crime rate to have greatly increased.
10. More people living in urban areas (55.2%) reported an increase in crime compared to those in the outer islands (31.7%).
11. People in the 60-69 age group are of the opinion that the crime rate has greatly increased (58.7%), in contrast to 2011 where people in the 40-49 age group held this belief.
12. The other diverging finding is that 41.6% of people over the age of 70 were concerned that crime rate has increased when the previous survey found that people belonging to this age group were least concerned about crime rates.
13. Most respondents believe substance abuse is the main cause fuelling an increase in crime (19.2%).
14. 11.2% of the respondents believe gangs to be the second most influential factor for the increase in crime.
15. 28.2% of the respondents said that everyone, including the executive, parliament, judiciary, other state institutions, oversight bodies such as HRCM and parents along with the general public, is responsible for the increase in crime.
16. 19.7% of the respondents identified the government as a whole and the police (16.3%) as institutions that should be held accountable for the inability to prevent crimes.





Human Rights and Religion

1. An increase in the number of people who believe human rights are incompatible with Islam was observed (from 29.6% in 2011 to 33.7% in 2019), while a decline is noted in the those who attest to its compatibility (from 45.6% in 2011 to 29.9% in 2019).
2. More women (36.0%) than men (29.2%) were of the opinion that human rights are incompatible with Islam.
3. A decrease in the number of women agreeing with compatibility between Islam and human rights from 41.0% in 2011 to 30.2% in 2019, as well as among men, with a drop from 49.0% in 2011 to 29.7% in 2019.
4. Over a third (35.6%) of the respondents living in urban regions were of the belief that there are no conflicts between human rights and Islam, whereas only 26.4% of those from outer islands tended to subscribe to the same view.
5. Over a third (34.0%) of the respondents from outer islands stated that they believed human rights and Islam are in conflict with one another and therefore incompatible.
6. Among those who considered human rights to be opposed to Islamic ideals, 50.0% were in the 60-69 age group. The greatest number of people who thought human rights and Islam are compatible were over 70 years of age (41.7%).
7. Concerningly, a third (36.2%) of the respondents who think human rights and Islam are not compatible belong to the 20-29 age group.
8. Among migrant workers, 15.5% believe human rights to be compatible with Islam.
9. Almost half of the respondents believed that human rights are not compatible with Islam because the punishments for offences prescribed in Islam conflicted with principles of human rights.
10. There were worrying responses from a considerable number of people who felt that gender equality and child rights are not compatible with Islam. And it's concerning that most of these respondents were women.
11. People also believed that human rights principles conflicted with Islamic values among which dress code, the use of music in schools, freedom of conscience and thought, inability to implement harsh punishments, detainee/prisoner rights and promotion of interaction between sexes are notable. It is also important to note that it was mostly young people who expressed concern regarding human rights hindering implementation of the death penalty.

Attitudes to Family and Ideas about Acceptable Behaviour in the Home

1. 82.9% of respondents were strongly supportive of the statement 'A good wife always obeys her husband even if she disagrees'.
2. 45.9% of respondents from outer islands were in strong agreement with this statement compared to 20.1% from urban regions who strongly agreed.



recently shared the same residence were in a domestic relationship.

4. 80.0% of the respondents stated that they were aware of protective provision in the law.
5. More women (54.6%) were aware of the right to claim a protection order as opposed to (25.0%) of male respondents.
6. 44.3% of the migrant workers were aware that they could seek a protection order in cases of domestic violence.
7. Majority (80.0%) of people said that they knew where to lodge complaints for domestic violence.
8. More than half (58.1%) of the respondents named Maldives Police Service as the institution where they can file a domestic violence complaint, while less than a third identified the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services as the institution to report cases of domestic violence.
9. 56.7% of migrant workers were aware of institution(s) to which they could report a domestic violence allegation.
10. Over a third (34.7%) of the respondents were disappointed with the performance of these institutions, while 29.3% said they were happy.
11. 17.6% said they were satisfied with the institutions handling domestic violence cases.
12. 39.8% of the respondents from the urban regions were less happy with the performance of state institutions pertaining to domestic violence, while 31.3% of respondents from outer islands were happy with the performance of the institutions.
13. Majority of the respondents identified substance abuse (21.0%) as the most influential factor responsible for domestic violence. Financial difficulties (13.8%), inability to hold perpetrators accountable (13.8%), lack of education (12.3%) and lack of adequate housing (13.3%) were other factors that respondents said were the root causes.
14. 19.0% of respondents reported knowing a survivor of domestic violence. Women (26.7%) are more likely to know a survivor.
15. A very high non-response rate (71.3%) was observed for questions related to perpetrators. Most respondents to this question said survivors suffered domestic abuse by the spouse or the former spouse. Most female respondents stated that they suffered domestic violence from their husbands while in the case of male respondents, a former lover was the most commonly reported perpetrator.
16. Most women responded that their husbands were the perpetrators of domestic violence, while most men reported having suffered abuse from previous partners.
17. From those who reported physical abuse most respondents said they were subjected to the violence by their husbands (13.6%) and in-laws (11.1%).
18. Most survivors related that the most recent type of abuse they suffered was physical abuse (39.0%) and the second most common response as verbal abuse (20.3%).
19. More women reported having suffered physical abuse (47.4%) compared to men.





Sexual Abuse of Children and Other Children's Rights

1. 93.6% of the respondents affirmed child sexual abuse of girls as a serious issue. This concern has increased over the years with 82.1% in 2005 and 93.3% in 2011.
2. 91.7% of the respondents affirmed child sexual abuse of boys as a serious issue.
3. Less than a third of respondents (27.9 %) reported being satisfied with the level of protection afforded to children, while the majority (48.2%) were dissatisfied.
4. From those who reported being satisfied with the level of protection given to children, 32.3% were men and 25.5% were women.
5. Respondents from the urban regions were more dissatisfied with the protection services for children (53.1%)
6. 20.8% respondents admitted that access to quality education needed to be improved and 12.9% of this group felt that response to violence against children needed to be strengthened.
7. 9.6% of people believed that gender discrimination needed to be prevented.



Rights of Older People and People with Disabilities

1. 40.9% of respondents are dissatisfied with the protection and services assured for persons with disabilities and 39.0% reported being satisfied. 41.7% people from urban areas and 37.3% from outer islands were satisfied with the services
2. 16.3% of the people said they were concerned over the lack of access to education for people with disabilities. Respondents identified discrimination as the second most prevalent issue that needed to be addressed (13.2%). Respondents were similarly concerned about the lack of schools for children with special needs (13.0%).
3. Close to half of the respondents (48.1%) reported being satisfied with the services provided for the elderly while a third (33.3%) exhibited dissatisfaction.
4. The most important area to ensure the rights of the elderly was to prevent neglect of elderly persons (23.0%) and the need to prevent abuse of the elderly (11.0%).

Rights to Equality of Access to Services

1. 41.0% of the respondents were satisfied with schooling and education in the Maldives, 40.0% were noted to be disappointed.
2. People from urban areas (52.4%) appeared relatively more satisfied with education and schools than the respondents living in the outer islands. (45.2%)



3. Most (23.3%) of the respondents felt that better qualified and well-trained teachers in schools would improve the quality of education (23.3%) and 16.7% of the people thought improved education in higher grades of the outer islands would positively and generally affect education.
4. Majority (63.6%) of the people were dissatisfied with overall health services and especially those from outer islands (62.3%).
5. 64.4% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of hospitals.
6. The overall dissatisfaction exhibited over the three components of health are congruous with the 2011 findings highlighting that people do not perceive health services have improved.
7. A third of respondents (31.4%) believed improving services at the hospitals would enhance access to health in general.
8. Majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the available employment and work opportunities (43.1%).
9. Close to half of the respondents (45.2%) expressed concern over the limited access to markets for conducting economic activities.
10. The number of respondents dissatisfied with the judiciary accounted for at 56.3% of the respondents.
11. Most commonly cited reason for the loss of judicial confidence pertained to corruption (39.2%).
12. A positive change can be observed towards the performance of security services including the police, with an increase in respondents expressing satisfaction with police work (43.5%).
13. The most commonly cited reasons for dissatisfaction with police services were corruption (25.1%) and their unavailability when in demand (19.4%).
14. A general dissatisfaction with the performance of prisons services (24.8% was reported). Women expressed this more than men, and the reasons cited were corruption (10.7%), lack of supervision (5.2%), abuse (4.2%) and torture (2.5%) of prisoners.
15. Generally, people agreed that social services have not been expanded to facilitate better outreach over the years and thus have remained at the same level.
16. Close to half (46%) of the respondents were convinced that the government was taking adequate measures to improve housing services.
17. Most respondents believed that the government should prioritize health services' improvement and ensure the provision of social housing as well as financial assistance.
18. Majority of people stated that they were dissatisfied with the access to official information.
19. Over a third of the respondents (36.1%) reported that the enactment of the Rights to Information Act (2014) has been helpful.





Right to Participate in Government and Take Part in Decision-Making

1. 77.0% of the respondents confirmed having participated in the parliamentary elections, with 83.3% of women and 65.4% of men responding positively.
2. 7.7% identified aggressive campaigning as an issue with the elections and 7.0% pointed to mismanagement or incomplete voter registration.
3. 9.6% of respondents found the lack of voter education problematic.
4. More than half (59.0%) of the respondents were dissatisfied over the allocations of resources between administrative atolls and islands.
5. People living in urban regions (67.5%) felt there is unequal distribution of resources between administrative atolls and those in the outer islands (53.8%).



Sexual Harassment

1. The most common type of harassment women were subjected to consisted of a man making obscene or offensive sexual comments (14.2%). The second was a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching them on their breasts or buttocks on the street, at the night market or any other public place (12.8%).
2. In 2011 the most common type of harassment was cited as grabbing the victim's hand in public (22.9%) and the least reported types of harassment were a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching the respondents on the breasts or buttocks or when getting on and off on ferries or other vessels (3.4%)
3. A woman rubbing herself against him or touching his private parts on the street or any other public place was reported as the most common type of harassment (8.0%) for men. The second most common type of harassment identified by men was having their hands grabbed by a woman at a public place (7.2%)
4. Majority of the respondents reported never having had any experiences of harassment they were queried about at their workplace
5. It is concerning that 1.2% of the respondents reported that someone at work forced them to have sex with them against their will or attempted to do so.
6. Respondents who reported having been subjected to some form of sexual harassment when asked what action they took, decided not to respond (82.2%) by responding with 'did not know' and 'refused to answer'.
7. Among those who disclosed how they responded to the harassment, most (8.1%) did nothing about it.
8. People who admitted not taking any action following the harassment were then asked about the reasons why they did not pursue the issue. 34.2% of respondents did not believe it was a serious enough issue and in fact dismissed it as normal behaviour. The second highest reason for



non-action was reported as apprehension over disbelief (10.5%).

9. Only 1.0% said they reported the case to a relevant authority. It is to be acknowledged that 5.5% of the victims told a friend.
10. 4.3% who took of the aforementioned actions regarding the harassment reported that it did not help them. However, 2.9% admitted it helped them.
11. More women (3.3%) than men (2.1%) reported that taking an action provided them some relief.

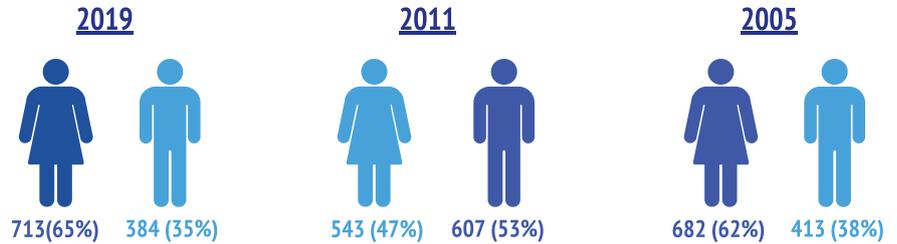
Employment

1. Just over a third of respondents admitted to being employed in a salaried position (46.0%).
2. 16.0% of the participants were employed in more than one job, of which 19.0% were men 12.0% were women.
3. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of people working for more than 12 hours (20.0% in 2005, and 16.6% in 2011 to 7.5% in 2019).
4. Most people (61.2%) reported working for 4-8 hours a day. Most migrant workers (58.8%) also reported working for 4- 8 hours a day.
5. The number of people who worked for more than 27 days in 2005 was 50.0% and this fell to 37.9% in 2011, with a further decline in 2019 to 31.2% indicating an improvement.
6. Majority of respondents felt that they get enough leisure time off work and thus report being satisfied with this free time (73.0%).
7. 56.5% of respondents reported that they get less than 4 days of paid holiday every month.
8. Fewer women (11.0%) reported earning a salary over MVR 15,000 in comparison to that of men (17.6%).
9. Majority (73.0%) of people reported getting timely payment of their salaries
10. More women (57.4%) in comparison to men (22.7%) believe the salaries they receive are fair and adequate.

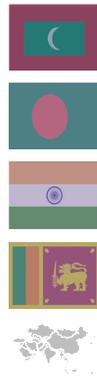


DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

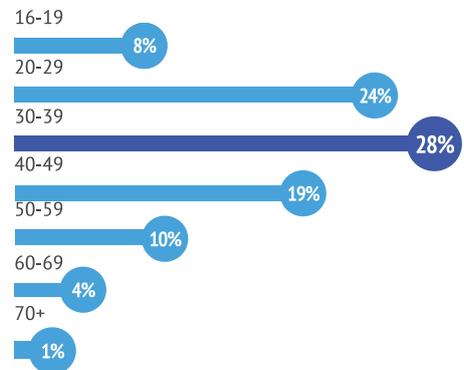
Gender



Nationality



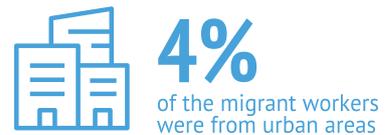
Age Group



Region of Locals



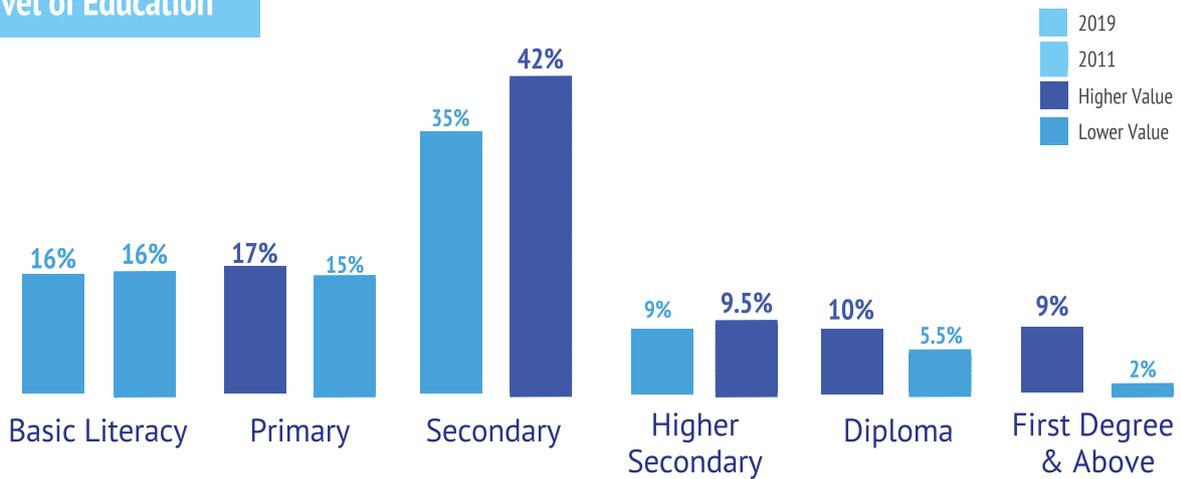
Region of Migrant Workers



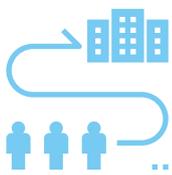
Household Size (No. of People)



Level of Education



Boards Educated in Male'



2019
32%

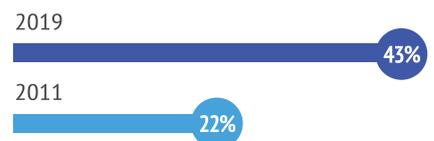
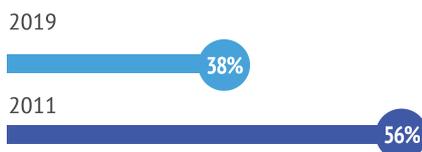
2011
25%

2005
28%

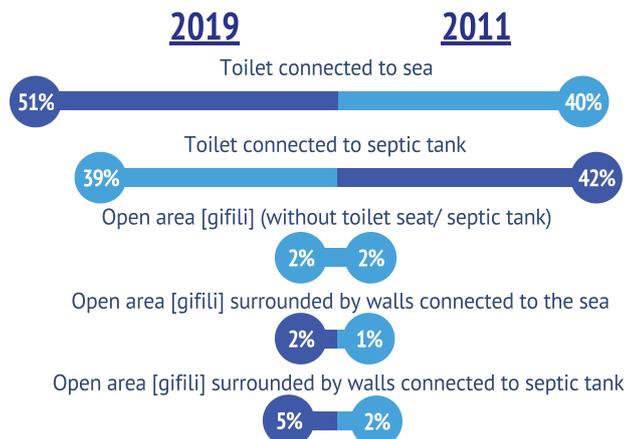
Availability of Amenities



Drinking Water



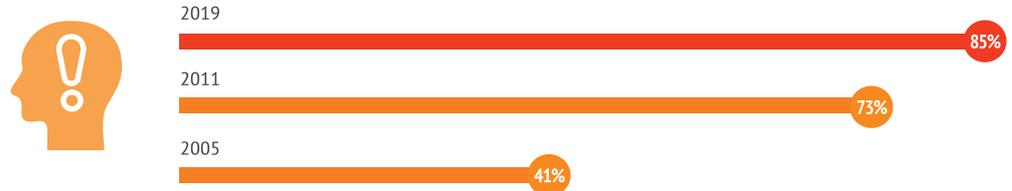
Access to Toilet



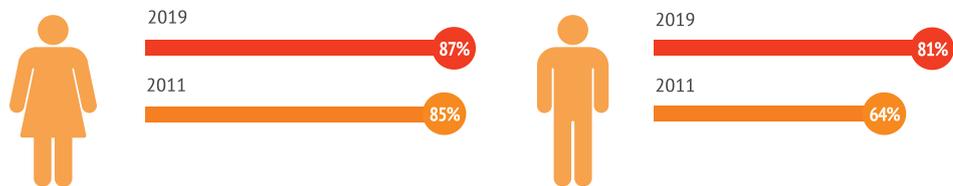


Awareness on the Human Rights Commission

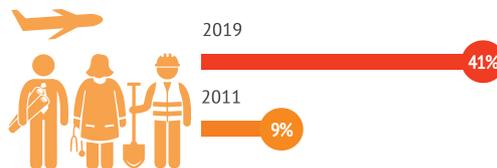
Awareness of Existence of HRCM



Awareness by Gender



Awareness of Migrant Workers



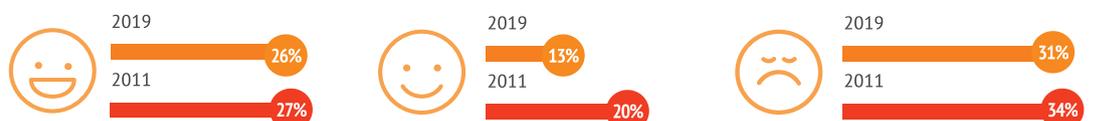
Awareness of Roles of HRCM



Roles of HRCM to Strengthen



Opinion of the Performance of HRCM



41%

2019 2011

9%



Awareness of Migrant Workers

First established under a presidential decree in 2003, followed by reconstitution of the Commission under its own statute in 2006, HRCM is now a constitutional oversight body established with the broad mandate to promote respect for human rights in the Maldives.

Over this period of sixteen years, public awareness of HRCM has increased progressively from 40.8% in 2005, to 72.8% in 2011 and to 84.8% in 2019.

There is a significant increase in migrant worker respondents who were aware of HRCM with 41.2% in 2019 in relation to only 9.0% in 2011.

Findings of this survey reaffirm the 2011 outcome that more women are aware of HRCM, with 87.0% of the respondents reporting awareness of HRCM analogous to that of 84.9% in 2011. The increase in the percentage of men aware of HRCM from 63.7% in 2011 to 80.7% in 2019 is noteworthy and thus is one of the factors contributing to the overall increase in awareness of HRCM.

A decline from 39.7% in 2005 to 26.7% in 2011 was observed in the number of respondents who thought HRCM was doing an excellent or a good job. However, there was no significant difference in 2019 (27.0%) in the number of respondents who answered this question when compared to 2011. There is also a decline in the number of people who believe that HRCM is doing a satisfactory job from 19.9% in 2011 to 13.4 in 2019. Moreover, 31.1% of respondents were dissatisfied and thus of the opinion that HRCM was not doing a good job. Further inquiry is conceivably necessary to assess the phenomenon of 29.2% of the respondents not being able to arrive at a conclusion about their evaluation of the performance of HRCM. A direct correlation cannot be inferred between the increase in awareness of HRCM with the decline of its approval rating as probable contributing factors were not evaluated. The 2019 findings yet again manifest a narrowing gap between men and women who feel positively about the performance of HRCM, supporting the findings of 2011.

It is to be noted that when compared to women (28.0%), more men (37.0%) were disappointed with HRCM's performance.

There seems to be no significant difference between respondents from urban (25.2%) and outer islands (27.0%) who stated they were happy about the performance of HRCM. Yet, respondents from both urban and outer islands reported being unhappy with the performance of HRCM

with 30.0% and 31.8% affirming dissatisfaction respectively.

Table 4: HRCM Performance, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Excellent	3.63%	3.51%	3.54%
Good	21.75%	23.36%	22.73%
Satisfactory	13.60%	13.13%	13.43%
Not good	21.15%	18.02%	18.99%
Dissatisfactory	15.71%	10.23%	12.12%
RF	0.90%	0.60%	0.71%
DK/NA	23.26%	31.15%	28.48%

AWARENESS ABOUT THE ROLE OF HRCM

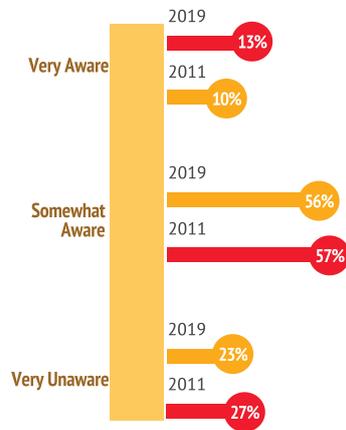
Despite a considerable increase in awareness about HRCM, there is a significant decline in the understanding of the role of HRCM. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents were not able to define the role of HRCM. In 2011, 70.0% of the respondents reported that they believe the role of HRCM is protecting human rights, compared to that of 42.8% in 2019. Understanding of HRCM's monitoring role has suffered a significant decline to merely 4.1% from 18.0% in 2011. The investigative role of HRCM was stated as a function of HRCM by just 12.9% of the respondents. This is a concerning outcome as the trend manifests a decline in perception of the investigation role of HRCM from 2011 (31.0%).

When respondents were inquired about what function of HRCM needed to be further strengthened, the strongest support was for creating awareness about human rights (89.2%). This was closely followed by 89.0% of respondents who opined that HRCM must strengthen protection of the rights of vulnerable groups namely children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Subsequently, 87.4% stated that the Commission should strengthen its function of advising the government on human rights issues, followed by 86.1% calling for strengthening the function of investigating complaints about human rights abuses. Also, 85.8% stated that the Commission should be strengthening its work on monitoring the government's compliance to human rights obligations.



Community Awareness on Human Rights

Awareness in Human Rights



By Gender



Respondents Who Can Name 5 Human Rights



Respondents Who Could Not Name Any Human Rights



3 Most Important Human Rights

2019



Children Rights



Women's Rights to Equality



Access to Education

1

2

3

2011



Access to Education



Access to Health Care



Standard of Living



More than half (55.6%) of the respondents reported being moderately aware of human rights. While 13.4% claimed to have a high and 23.2% reported to have a low understanding of human rights. Women appeared to be more confident about their awareness of human rights with 60.5% exhibiting moderate awareness, while 46.6% men stated the same. There was no significant difference in the findings in relation to that of 2011.

Interestingly though, when asked to name five human rights, only 36.5% of the respondents were able to do so. This outcome is concerning as it is a decline from 45.1% people who could name five human rights in 2011. However, a significant positive change is the decrease in the number of people who could not name any human right from 44.5% in 2011 to 15.4% in 2019. More women (38.9%) than men (32.0%) were able to name five human rights.

Rights of the child was identified as the most important human right, ranked the first place (18%) from a provided list of twenty-one. This is a divergence from findings of previous years. In 2005, the highest ranked right was access to health services (82.4%) and in 2011 it was the to education (86.7%).

Interestingly, women’s right to equality was identified as the second most important human right at 10.9%, with the right to education and right to adequate health following closely at 10.5% and 10.1% respectively.

Table 5: Five Human Rights considered as the most important, by gender

Top 5 rights (ranked)	Male	Female	Total
1. Children's rights	14.37%	19.93%	18.01%
2. Women's rights to equality	7.10%	12.90%	10.93%
3. Access to good quality of education	9.14%	11.23%	10.53%
4. Access to health services	8.78%	10.86%	10.14%
5. Adequate food	8.70%	8.00%	8.23%

Another interesting trend to be noted is the rise in ranking of women’s right to equality over the years. In 2011, women’s right to equality was ranked in sixth position, while in 2019 it has been identified as the second most mentioned human right.

This finding is significant as it strongly corresponds to the fact that the number of women who are aware of human rights has increased exponentially over the years. It is widely believed that women’s rights and empowerment directly correspond

to the rights of the child¹. Women’s right to equality was the second most important human right (10.9 %) in this 2019 survey, replacing right to education which was ranked at as the second most important in 2011. Followed closely by access to education at 10.5%, which replaces the right to housing as the third most important human right in 2011.

Table 6: Five Human Rights considered as the most important, by region

Urban	
1. Children's rights	14.84%
2. Access to health services	9.39%
3. Women's rights to equality	8.26%
4. A secure family life	7.89%
5. Access to good quality of education	7.61%
Outer Islands	
1. Children's rights	19.52%
2. Women's rights to equality	12.19%
3. Access to good quality of education	11.92%
4. Access to health services	10.50%
5. Adequate food	8.66%

The people living in outer islands and urban regions also ranked the rights of the child as the most important followed by access to healthcare in the urban region and women’s equality in the outer islands.

Studies on the impact of women’s awareness, education and empowerment show that when women are empowered with education, health and human rights awareness, they are better able to ensure and prioritize rights of their children, the health of the family and work to provide education for their children².

Additionally, in its resolution 32/20, the Human Rights Council has recognized that education was a multiplier right that empowered women and girls to make choices to claim their human rights, including the health and education of their families, economic growth and political participation³. Hence the outcome of this survey affirms with the correlation between an increase in women’s awareness of human rights and identification of the rights of the child, women empowerment and right to education as the most salient of human rights.

1 https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Women-Children-Rights-UNFPA-UNICEF_final.pdf

2 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/84203/9789241505420_eng.pdf

3 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/Report-GirlsEqualRightEducation.pdf>



Democratic Reform

Knowledge of Chapter Two of the Constitution



86%
considered it very important to know the rights and freedom given by the constitution

Read Chapter Two of the Constitution



Did Not Read Chapter Two of the Constitution



Having a Copy of Constitution in Household

2019

2011

78%



81%

14%



9%

Success of Democratic Reform

28%
of the women were satisfied with the democratic reform



38%
of the men were satisfied with the democratic reform

Causes for Failure of Democratic Reform



21%
identified **corruption** as the cause for failure of democratic reform



21%
identified **corruption** as the cause for failure of democratic reform



20%
identified **mistrust between political parties** as the cause for failure of democratic reform



12%
identified **ineffective Majlis** as the cause for failure of democratic reform

The second democracy survey, *A Troubled Future for Democracy* conducted by Transparency Maldives in 2015 concluded that most respondents (62.0%) believed that despite problems, democracy is the best form of governance for the Maldives⁴. The study also manifested strong support for democracy with 77.0% of the respondents agreeing that a democratic form of government is good for the country. Nevertheless, the study also found that half of the respondents were not satisfied with how democracy functions in the country. The finding resonates with the results of this survey.

A significant number of people agreed (85.7%) that it is very important to have knowledge about the rights and freedoms guaranteed under chapter two of the constitution. This view holds merit across sexes, geography and nature of local island/atoll/municipal administration without significant variation. However only 20.2% of the respondents reported having read the second chapter of the constitution, with 78.1% saying that they have not. However, there is an increase in the number of respondents claiming to have read the chapter on rights in comparison to 2011 (11.2%). Yet, there seems to be a slight increase in those who have not read the chapter on rights from that of 2011 (76.1%). More men (23.2%) than women (18.4%) continue to report having read the constitutional chapter on rights.

Table 7: Have read rights chapter in constitution, by gender

	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
Male	23.18%	57.29%	2.08%	17.45%
Female	18.37%	65.50%	1.54%	14.59%
Total	20.16%	62.49%	1.73%	15.62%

The survey asked the respondents about their view on whether the government should provide a copy of the constitution to each household. Overall, 77.6% (80.8% in 2011) of those respondents agreed with the proposition with only 13.7% (9.1% in 2011) disagreeing.

This survey also examined people's views on the success of the democratic reform process. No significant difference was found between respondents who thought the democratic process was successful (31.0 %) compared to those who thought it was not (30.0%). A similar trend was also observed in 2011 without any significant changes in 2019. However, there was a slight increase in

the number of respondents who thought the democratic process has been successful to some extent, up from 13.4% in 2011 to 18.1% in 2019.

Men were found to be slightly more satisfied with the reform (38.0%) than women (28.1%).

It is also interesting to note that more respondents from urban regions thought that the democratic reform process has been successful, while it was mostly those living in the outer islands who did not agree with this assertion.

Table 8: Success from democratic reform, by region

	Yes	No	Partly	RF	DK/NA
Urban	39.34%	22.75%	22.75%	1.90%	13.27%
Outer Islands	26.51%	33.87%	15.17%	1.62%	22.83%
Total	31.43%	29.61%	18.07%	1.73%	19.16%

Respondents who did not consider reform to have been a success were then asked to share what they considered to be the negative aspects of the democratic reform process. Corruption (21.0%) and lack of trust between political parties (20.0%) were named as the leading attributes that have rendered the process unsuccessful. Details of factors named by respondents are illustrated below.

Table 9: Reasons democratic reforms have not been successful or only partly successful, by gender

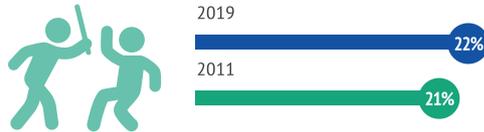
Factors	Male	Female	Total
Mistrust among political parties	19.31%	20.29%	19.98%
Ineffective Majlis	13.90%	11.70%	12.33%
Ineffective politicians	9.65%	7.68%	8.38%
Lack of understanding about democracy by the public	7.34%	6.03%	6.54%
Insufficient resources allocated for democratic strengthening	5.02%	4.02%	4.32%
Government/executive influence/ Interference with Majlis or judiciary	6.56%	4.20%	4.93%
Corruption	22.01%	20.66%	20.96%
Other	7.72%	8.23%	8.01%
RF	0.77%	0.18%	0.49%
DK/NA	7.72%	17.00%	14.06%

⁴ <http://transparency.mv/files/media/6dca8a9f7bed-a482335bb654b88020f7.pdf>

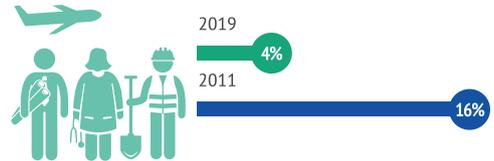


The Right to Security of the Person/Crime

Respondents Who Knew a Victim of Serious Crime



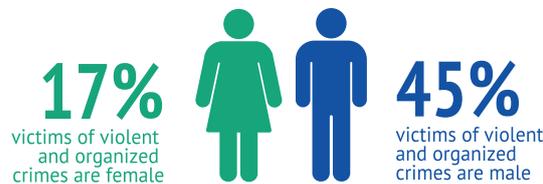
Migrant Workers Who Knew a Victim of Serious Crime



Relation to Victim



Gender of Victim

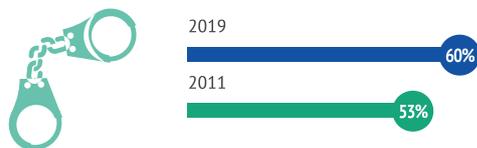


Age of Victim

Majority of the victims of violent and organized crimes falls in the age group of

19-34 Years

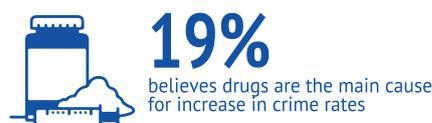
Increase in Crime Rates



Increase in Crime Rates by Region



Factors Fueling Crime Rates



Accountability



Rising crime rates, gang violence and organized crime remain significant societal concerns.⁵ HRCM along with other stakeholders have been trying to understand the nature and trends of crimes, gang violence and organized crime over the years as they directly impact the right to security of person. The 2015 HRCM submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outlining the human rights situation in the Maldives raised serious concerns about the increase in gang related violence and its consequences on the right to security and life of persons. A significant number of respondents in this survey also believe that incidents of crime and violence have increased greatly.

The respondents were asked if they knew a victim of gang violence from an incident over the past 12 months and 21.7% of the respondents affirmed that they did. There was no significant difference between respondents who reported knowing a victim of crime between 2011 (20.8%) and 2019. However, it is noteworthy that the number of migrant workers who reported knowing a victim of crime has declined from 15.8% in 2011 to 4.1% in 2019. While the non-response rate remains high for this group, it is to be noted that most migrant workers interviewed were from resorts and an Industrial island. These are relatively safer places and a significantly low number of violent crimes are reported there.

Two thirds of the people (74.9%) who reported knowing a victim of a crime, were below the age of 39.

A quarter of those who reported knowing a victim of a crime, recounted that it was a member of their community, while 14.0% said it was a neighbour, and 13.5% said it was a member of their household. The high non-response rate to this query (34.6%) despite saying they knew a victim in response to the previous question, makes it difficult to draw inferences in comparison to the 2011 findings where 43.5% of the victims were members of the community, 14.6% were reported as neighbours and 8.5% of the respondents said the victims were members of their households.

Most of the respondents identified victims of crimes as men (45.3%) while 17.3% indicated that the victims were women.

Table 10: Crime victim, by gender

	A female	A male	RF	DK/NA
Male	12.23%	51.80%	6.47%	29.50%
Female	20.63%	40.81%	2.69%	35.87%
Total	17.31%	45.33%	4.12%	33.24%

The high non-response rate (37.4%) (as opposed to that of 18.0% in 2011) contributes to the observance of a decline in the number of people who said the victim was male (60.7% in 2011) and those who reported the victim as female (21.3% in 2011).

Over a third of the respondents did not know the age of the victim. Yet, 31.6% of those who were able to give a definitive response stated the age of the victim to be between 19-34 years old. Almost half (49.6%) of the respondents who reported the victim was from this age group live in urban regions as opposed to 23.7% from the outer islands.

Significant numbers of people believe that incidents of crime have increased greatly (40.7%).

Table 11: Perception of change in crime rate, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Greatly increased	33.07%	44.74%	40.69%
Somewhat increased	18.49%	19.78%	19.44%
Neither increased nor decreased	15.89%	11.64%	13.08%
Decreased	11.72%	7.85%	9.17%
Greatly decreased	2.86%	2.52%	2.63%
RF	1.56%	0.98%	1.18%
DK/NA	16.41%	12.48%	13.81%

The number of respondents who reported that the crime rate is on the rise has increased from 52.6% in 2011 to 60.0% in 2019. Similar to the findings of 2011, more women (45.0%) than men (33.0%) consider the crime rate to have greatly increased.

More people living in urban areas (55.2%) report an increase of crime in comparison to the outer islands (31.7%), relating significantly to the fact that greater incidents of violence and gang related crimes have been reported from the Greater Malé area.⁶

⁵ <https://www.police.gov.mv/#casestat>

⁶ <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/b725fb42-776a-444d-8002-16688cc101ce>

Most respondents in the 60-69 age group are of the opinion that the crime rate has greatly increased (58.7%), in contrast to 2011 where mainly people in the 40-49 age group held this belief.

The other diverging finding is that 41.6% of people over the age of 70 were concerned that crime rate has increased when the previous survey found that people belonging to this group were least concerned about the crime rate.

Reaffirming the previous report's findings, most respondents believe that substance abuse is the main cause fuelling the increase in crime rate (19.2%). It is also noteworthy that respondents believe gangs (11.2%) to be the second most influential factor, while in 2011 the second most influencing factor believed to increase crime rate was reported as neglect in parents' responsibility. In 2019 'parent's responsibility' ranked as the third factor most commonly believed to affect increase in crime as opposed to unemployment or lack of work in 2011.

Table 12: Reasons believed for the increase in the crime rate, by gender

Reason	Male	Female	Total
Economic Reasons	6.01%	4.46%	4.86%
Lack of Work	9.62%	8.33%	8.74%
Absence from school without approval from parents and schools	2.88%	2.48%	2.64%
Neglecting parents' responsibility	10.82%	10.71%	10.76%
Drugs	17.79%	19.84%	19.15%
Gangs	9.86%	11.90%	11.17%
Release of criminals from jail/ detention by Police	9.38%	8.13%	8.47%
Release of criminals from jail/ detention by Courts	3.85%	4.66%	4.58%
Political Issues	6.01%	5.46%	5.69%
Housing Issues	2.88%	3.67%	3.47%
Lack of Law enforcement	8.41%	6.75%	7.22%
Lack of government attention to crime	3.61%	5.16%	4.79%
Other	6.25%	5.06%	5.34%
RF	0.00%	0.20%	0.14%
DK/NA	2.64%	3.17%	2.98%

Interestingly 28.2% of the respondents said that everyone, including the executive, parliament, judiciary, other state institutions, oversight bodies such as HRCM and parents along with the public, is responsible for the increase in crime. Subsequently, the government as a whole (19.7%) and police (16.3%) were identified as institutions that should be held accountable for the inability to prevent crimes. While in the 2011 survey respondents held the government and

parents responsible for the increase in crime.

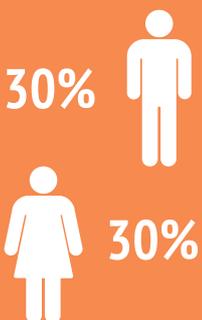
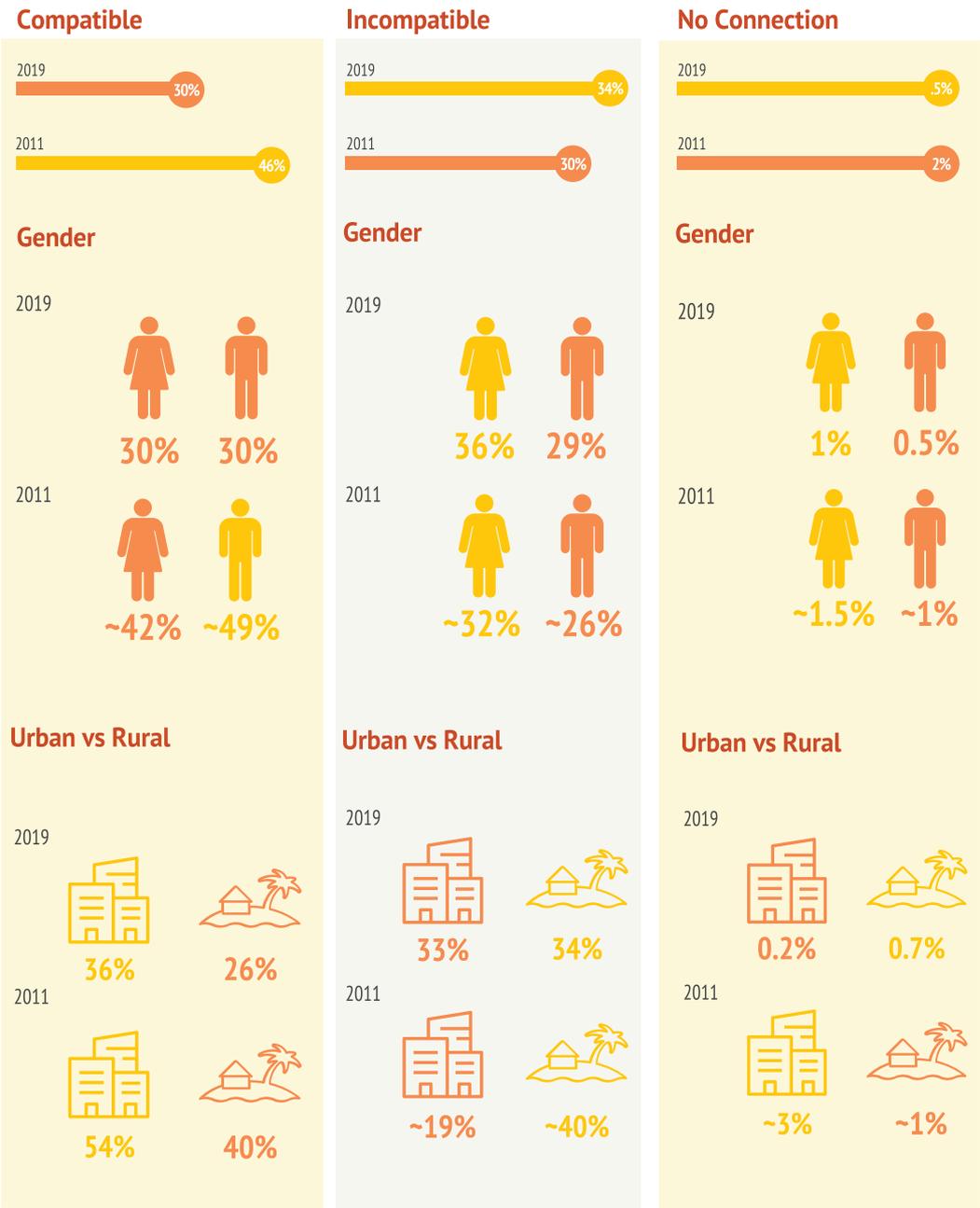
Table 13: Responsible party for the increased crime rate, by gender

Responsible party	Male	Female	Total
The Parliament	7.34%	4.44%	5.39%
The Government	20.65%	19.39%	19.71%
The Police	17.93%	15.65%	16.33%
The Courts	4.89%	4.91%	4.99%
The Atoll Council	3.53%	3.50%	3.62%
The Island Council	5.98%	5.02%	5.39%
Parents	8.42%	11.68%	10.70%
Human Rights Commission	3.53%	2.80%	3.06%
Society (all)	25.27%	30.02%	28.24%
Other	1.36%	1.29%	1.29%
RF	0.27%	0.12%	0.24%
DK/NA	0.82%	1.17%	1.05%



Human Rights and Religion

Islam and Human Rights



Reasons for Incompatibility



Punishments for offences prescribed in Islam conflicts with principles of human rights



Gender Equality is not compatible with Islam



Child Rights is not compatible with Islam

Given the significance of perception on successful implementation of policies and interventions, HRCM decided it was important to understand how people perceived the relationship between Islam and human rights to facilitate the effective implementation of Human Rights in the Maldives. As the findings from other chapters show, attitudes on women and family life appear to have a significant correlation with religion. An additional factor considered was the high non-response rate from the 2011 survey on questions pertaining to Islam and human rights; this prompted the inclusion of these questions in this survey.

There is an increase in the number of people who believe human rights are incompatible with Islam (from 29.6% in 2011 to 33.7% in 2019), while a decline is observed in the those who think it is compatible (from 45.6% in 2011 to 29.9% in 2019).

Table 14: Perceived conflict between Islamic views and human rights, by gender

	Yes	Sometimes	No	No connection	RF	DK/NA
Male	29.17%	10.42%	29.69%	0.52%	1.30%	28.91%
Female	36.04%	10.52%	30.15%	0.56%	0.98%	21.74%
Total	33.70%	10.63%	29.88%	0.54%	1.09%	24.16%

There is no change in the number of respondents who said there is no connection between Islam and human rights (1.00%) while the response rate to the question has also not improved (15.9% in 2011 compared to 25.2% in 2019). This is a significantly worrying change in perception and one that demands strengthened policy and programmatic interventions.

Similar to 2011 findings, more women (36.0%) than men (29.2%), were of the opinion that human rights are incompatible with Islam. There is significant decrease in respondents who said human rights and Islam were compatible (45.0% in 2011 to 29.9% in 2019). This holds true with all sexes. The number of women agreeing with compatibility between Islam and human rights decreased from 41.0% in 2011 to 30.2% in 2019, while the figure for men fell from 49.0% in 2011 to 29.7% in 2019. It is also to be noted that men (30.2%) appeared more hesitant to respond to this query in comparison to women (22.7%).

Over a third (35.6%) of the respondents living in urban regions were of the belief that there are no conflicts between human rights and Islam, while 26.4% of those from outer islands subscribe to this view. This shows a significant decline in the number of respondents living in urban regions who believe there is no conflict between human rights and Islam from 2011 (54.0%). Over a third (34.0%) of the respondents from outer islands stated that they believed human rights and Islam are in conflict and hence incompatible.

Table 15: Conflict between Islamic views and human rights, by region

	Yes	Sometimes	No	No connection	RF	DK/NA
Outer island	34.02%	10.46%	26.36%	0.74%	1.77%	26.66%
Urban	33.18%	10.90%	35.55%	0.24%	0.00%	20.14%
Total	33.70%	10.63%	29.88%	0.54%	1.09%	24.16%

Among those who considered human rights to be non-compliant with Islam, 50.0% were from the 60-69 age group. Interestingly, the greatest number of people who thought human rights and Islam are compatible were over 70 years of age (41.7%). This age group is also the lowest (25.0%) to report that there is conflict between human rights and Islam. It is notable that over a third (36.2%) of the respondents who think human rights and Islam are not compatible belong to the age group of 20-29 years.

Among migrant workers, 15.5% believe human rights to be compatible with Islam. However, it is to be noted that most migrant workers (75.3%) did not respond or know the answer to this query.

Those who replied that human rights are not compatible with Islam were further queried about the reasons for their stance. Close to a half of the respondents believed that human rights are not compatible with Islam because the punishments for offences prescribed in Islam conflict with principles of human rights. Several people also said it is problematic that human rights impede the implementation of death penalty. There were worrying responses from a considerable number of people who felt that gender equality and child rights are not compatible with Islam. It is more concerning that most of these respondents were women.

Another significant observation is that these respondents belonged to outer island regions. Freedom of religion was also named as one of the matter of incongruence between human rights and Islam. People also believed that human rights principles conflicted with Islamic values among which dress code, the use of music in schools, freedom of conscience and thought, inability to implement harsh punishments, detainee/prisoner rights and promotion of interaction between sexes are notable. Most people who thought human rights are not compatible with Islam because the punishments for offences prescribed in Islam conflicted with principles of human rights, were from urban regions and mostly from Malé. It is also important to note that it was mostly young people who expressed concern regarding human rights hindering implementation of the death penalty.

against them, depriving children and women of their basic human rights and propagating and promoting extremist ideologies.¹⁰

Decreased respect for gender equality, calls for harsher punishments, glorification of violence and disillusionment about rights are manifestations of radicalization and violent extremism⁷. In December 2019, during the national decentralization symposium 'Viyavathi Raajje' conducted by the President's Office, Maldives Police Services and the National Counter Terrorism Centre presented their findings on the nature and extent of radicalization and extremism in the Maldives, along with national indicators for profiling those manifesting radicalized and extremist views and beliefs⁸. During the live-streamed and broadcasted session, the Commissioner of Police, Mr Mohamed Hameed, revealed that the authorities have identified 1,400 people harbouring extremist ideologies. He also confirmed that 423 Maldivians have to date, attempted to travel to Syria and Iraq to join rebel groups, and 173 of them have succeeded.⁹

The National Counter Terrorism Centre also disclosed the characteristics of those holding extremist and radicalized ideologies in the country. The Centre said they were people who do not accept the laws of the state and disregard them citing incongruency with Shariah; people migrating to or ready to move to countries with ongoing war in the name of jihad; people claiming Maldivians other than themselves to be infidels hence justifying/promoting/advocating and glorifying violence

⁷ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Discussion%20Paper%20-%20Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20Development.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwVK1siuhUw>

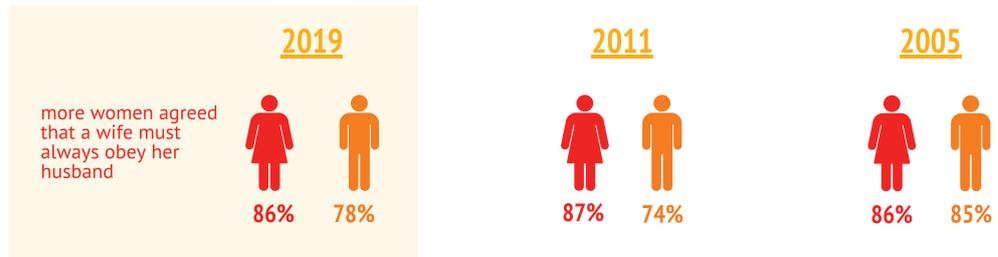
⁹ <https://en.sun.mv/57176>

¹⁰ <https://nctc.gov.mv/announcement/anncmnt4.pdf>

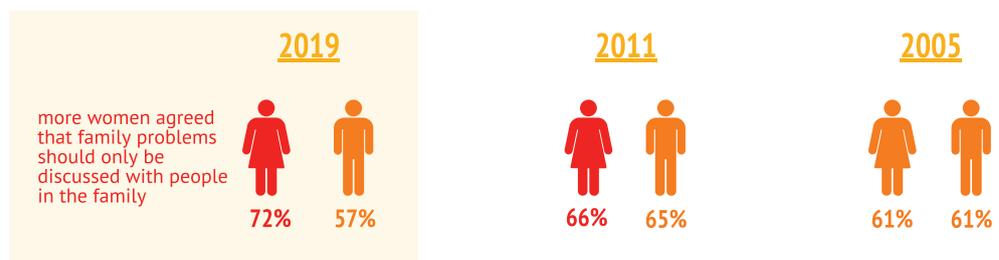


Attitudes to Family and Ideas About Acceptable Behaviour in the Home

A Good Wife Always Obey Her Husband Even When She Disagree



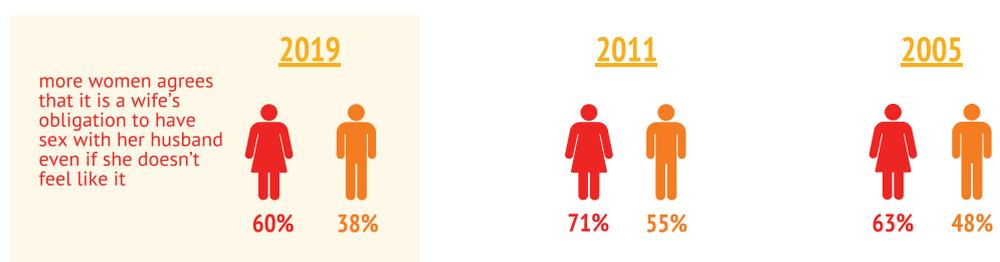
Family Problems Should Only be Discussed with People in the Family



It is Important to a Man to Show Wife Who is the Boss



It Is a Wife's Obligation to Have Sex with Her Husband Even If She Doesn't Feel Like It



more women agreed that a wife must always obey her husband

The 2006 Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences (WHLE)¹¹ outlined, for the first time, the extent and nature of gender-based violence experienced by women. Some questions with slight variations in answers have been used to infer the responses from the aforementioned study to understand attitudes towards women in the family.

A GOOD WIFE ALWAYS OBEYS HER HUSBAND EVEN IF SHE DISAGREES

An overwhelming 82.9% of respondents were in strong support of this statement in 2019 consistent with previous years. There was no significant difference between the views of men and women. The support for this statement also demonstrates the acceptance by both men and women of a woman's subordinate role in a marriage.

It is noteworthy that 45.9% of respondents from outer islands were in strong agreement with this statement compared to 20.1% from urban regions who strongly agreed.

While the number of men and women who strongly agreed has decreased in comparison to 2011, the number of men and women who agreed has increased.

Table 16: A good wife always obeys her husband even if she disagrees (2005, 2011, 2019), by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Strongly agree	35.40%	43.90%	30.70%	44.80%	52.40%	38.90%
Agree	49.40%	30.10%	47.70%	41.10%	34.90%	46.60%
Neutral	3.60%	6.30%	3.40%	3.70%	3.90%	2.40%
Disagree	8.70%	7.20%	9.90%	8.40%	5.90%	8.30%
Strongly disagree	2.70%	0.00%	0.30%	0.90%	0.40%	0.40%
RF/DK/NA	0.20%	12.50%	8.10%	1.20%	2.60%	3.50%

FAMILY PROBLEMS SHOULD ONLY BE DISCUSSED WITH PEOPLE IN THE FAMILY

Most of the respondents believed that family problems should not be discussed with people outside of the family (66.7%) where more women (72.1%) tended to believe in this statement than men (56.8%).

However, the number of men (32.8% in 2011 to

11 https://maldives.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/WHLESurvey_0.pdf

18.2% in 2019) and women (31.5% in 2011 to 27.1% in 2019) who strongly agreed with this statement has decreased in comparison to 2011.

Table 17: Family problems should only be discussed with people in the family (2005, 2011, 2019), by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Strongly agree	20.40%	32.80%	18.23%	23.4%	31.50%	27.07%
Agree	40.10%	32.60%	38.54%	38.00%	34.30%	45.02%
Neutral	4.60%	6.70%	4.17%	3.50%	6.50%	2.95%
Disagree	26.20%	23.60%	28.13%	27.40%	25.70%	21.04%
Strongly disagree	4.40%	1.30%	1.82%	5.90%	0.90%	0.42%
RF/DK/NA	0.70%	3%	9.11%	0.80%	1.10%	3.51%

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR A MAN TO SHOW HIS WIFE WHO IS THE BOSS

The number of people who believe in this statement is on a steep decline. Out of the total respondents, 9.9% stated that a wife should be shown who is the boss. More women (10.4%) supported this statement compared to men (8.6%).

Table 18: It is important for a man to show his wife who the boss is, by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Strongly agree	38.40%	27.40%	4.17%	38.60%	26.30%	4.35%
Agree	48.50%	33%	4.43%	47.40%	30.80%	6.03%
Neutral	3.90%	7.70%	2.60%	1.30%	8.80%	0.84%
Disagree	5.60%	18.50%	57.03%	8.10%	30.40%	67.88%
Strongly disagree	1.50%	1.00%	15.89%	3.40%	1.10%	16.83%
RF/DK/NA	2.20%	12.30%	15.88%	1.20%	2.60%	4.07%

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that more from the outer islands (24.3%) strongly agree with this statement when compared with the urban respondents (6.4%).

IF A MAN ORDERS A WOMAN TO DO SOMETHING CONFLICTING WITH ISLAM, SHE MUST DO IT

The majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that a woman has to obey her husband if he asks her to do something that

conflicts with Islam (80.4%). In fact, more women (84.7%) than men (72.9%) disagreed with this statement. Slightly more respondents from urban regions (89.8%) did not support this statement when compared with people from outer islands (74.5%).

This question was introduced to the survey instrument during the 2019 study, hence no inferences can be drawn to establish trends in comparison to the previous years.

Table 19: If a man orders a woman to do something conflicting with Islamic views she must do it, by gender

	Male	Female
Strongly agree	4.17%	4.35%
Agree	4.43%	6.03%
Neutral	2.60%	0.84%
Disagree	57.03%	67.88%
Strongly disagree	15.89%	16.83%
RF	1.04%	0.42%
DK	14.84%	3.65%

IT IS A WIFE'S OBLIGATION TO HAVE SEX WITH HER HUSBAND EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT

Over a half (52.2%) of the respondents feel that it is the duty of the wife to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it. Alarming, more women (60.0%) believe in this statement. However, it is noteworthy that the number of women who strongly agreed to this belief has decreased from 33.3% in 2011 to 23.1% in 2019

Table 20: Have sex with husband even if she doesn't feel like it, by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Strongly agree	16.0%	26.80%	15.10%	20.80%	33.30%	23.14%
Agree	32.20%	28.10%	22.92%	41.80%	37.70%	36.89%
Neutral	7.50%	9.80%	5.73%	3.50%	5.90%	2.10%
Disagree	32.90%	20.80%	34.64%	24.30%	18.20%	26.37%
Strongly disagree	7.50%	1.40%	7.29%	5.50%	2.40%	4.07%
RF/DK/NA	3.90%	13.20%	14.32%	4.10%	2.40%	7.43%

IF A MAN MISTREATS HIS WIFE, OTHERS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY SHOULD INTERVENE

Most people (57.0%) believe that if a woman is being abused by her husband, people outside of the family are entitled to step in to help the victim.

More men (59.1%) in comparison to women (55.8%) seem to agree with this statement. The number of women who strongly believed that people outside of the family can intervene to help a woman abused and mistreated by her husband declined from 39.2% in 2005 to 19.1% in 2011 and saw a very slight increase in 2019 (20.2%). Interestingly, the number of male respondents who agree that others outside the family should intervene if a man mistreats his wife has increased from 48.2% in 2005 to 54.9% in 2011 to 59.1% in 2019.

Table 21: If a man mistreats his wife, others outside the family should intervene, by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Strongly agree	41.40%	20.10%	18.23%	39.20%	19.90%	20.20%
Agree	48.20%	30.40%	40.89%	49.90%	34.60%	35.62%
Neutral	2.90%	7.30%	3.91%	1.90%	5.20%	2.24%
Disagree	5.30%	27.20%	21.61%	6.90%	34.10%	32.82%
Strongly disagree	0.70%	2.10%	3.91%	1.30%	3.50%	4.91%
RF/DK/NA	1.50%	13.00%	11.46%	0.70%	2.60%	4.21%

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR MEN HITTING THEIR WIVES

People were given a list of circumstances and asked if they were good justifications for a man to hit his wife in order to further understand perceptions behind gender-based violence.

In general, most people (67.85%) did not believe any of the justifications provided could sanction a husband to hit or physically abuse his wife.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that 12.4% of the respondents believe that the husband can hit his wife if she fails to obey him and worryingly more women (13.5%) than men held on to this belief (9.6%). Notably there is a decline in the number of men (29.3%) and women (35.9%) who subscribe to this view when compared to 2011.

Some respondents said a man can hit his wife if he found out that she was unfaithful to him (12.26%). Here too, no significant difference was observed between the genders. However, in 2011 slightly more men (39.4%) than women (30.8%) said a man can hit a wife if she has been unfaithful.

Participants of the survey were also asked if it would be justified for a man to hit his wife if she

went against Islam and 26.8% of the respondents said they believed it would be justified. No significant difference was observed between men (20.8%) and women (29.9%) who believed that a husband can hit his wife in this instance.

When asked if a man is justified in hitting his wife if she physically abuses the children, 12.1% of the respondents agreed. Here too, no significant difference was observed between women (11.4%) and men (12.8%).

Table 22: Justification for men hitting their wives, If she does not complete her housework to his satisfaction, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	2.38%	1.82%	2.36%
Agree	2.52%	1.56%	2.18%
Neutral	0.56%	1.30%	0.82%
Disagree	68.72%	66.67%	67.85%
Strongly disagree	22.16%	21.09%	21.71%
RF	0.14%	0.26%	0.18%
DK	3.51%	7.29%	4.90%

Table 23: Justification for men hitting their wives if she disobeys him, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	1.82%	2.38%	2.36%
Agree	1.56%	2.52%	2.18%
Neutral	1.30%	0.56%	0.82%
Disagree	66.67%	68.72%	67.85%
Strongly disagree	21.09%	22.16%	21.71%
RF	0.26%	0.14%	0.18%
DK	7.29%	3.51%	4.90%

Table 24: Justification for men hitting their wives if she refuses to have sex with him, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	1.56%	3.23%	2.72%
Agree	4.17%	5.19%	4.81%
Neutral	2.34%	0.84%	1.45%
Disagree	64.32%	65.08%	64.58%
Strongly disagree	20.31%	20.76%	20.62%
RF	0.26%	0.56%	0.45%
DK	7.03%	4.35%	5.36%

Table 25: Justification for men hitting their wives if she asks him whether he has other girlfriends, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	1.30%	2.66%	2.36%
Agree	2.60%	3.65%	3.27%
Neutral	1.56%	0.28%	0.73%
Disagree	65.89%	67.74%	66.94%
Strongly disagree	20.57%	20.90%	20.71%
RF	0.26%	0.42%	0.36%
DK	7.81%	4.35%	5.63%

Table 26: Justification for men hitting their wives, if he suspects that she is unfaithful, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	1.56%	2.52%	2.27%
Agree	3.91%	4.63%	4.36%
Neutral	1.04%	0.42%	0.73%
Disagree	65.89%	67.46%	66.76%
Strongly disagree	20.05%	20.48%	20.25%
RF	0.26%	0.42%	0.36%
DK	7.29%	4.07%	5.27%

Table 27: Justification for men hitting their wives if he finds out that she has been unfaithful, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	2.34%	3.51%	3.27%
Agree	9.11%	8.84%	8.99%
Neutral	2.34%	0.98%	1.45%
Disagree	59.11%	62.55%	61.13%
Strongly disagree	18.75%	19.21%	18.98%
RF	0.52%	0.28%	0.36%
DK	7.81%	4.63%	5.81%

Table 28: Justification for men hitting their wives if she goes against Islam, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	7.85%	7.55%	7.90%
Agree	22.02%	13.28%	18.89%
Neutral	0.98%	2.08%	1.45%
Disagree	47.27%	49.48%	47.87%
Strongly disagree	16.97%	17.45%	17.08%
RF	0.42%	0.00%	0.27%
DK	4.49%	10.16%	6.54%

Table 29: Justification for men hitting their wives if she beats the children, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	3.37%	3.65%	3.72%
Agree	7.99%	9.11%	8.36%
Neutral	0.98%	1.82%	1.27%
Strongly disagree	18.93%	19.01%	18.89%
Disagree	63.81%	58.07%	61.58%
RF	0.28%	0.78%	0.45%
DK	4.63%	7.55%	5.72%

Most of the respondents (74.9%) think it is unacceptable for a husband to hit his wife. This is a significant improvement from 2011 and 2005,

where 61.5% and 58.5% respondents agreed that under no circumstances should a man hit a woman. It is imperative to note women progressively have come to affirm their conviction that it is wrong for their husbands to hit them, with a staggering 77.4% stating so in 2019. This is a meaningful shift from 2005 when fewer women (53.5%) felt it was wrong for husbands to hit their wives, and in 2011 where more women stated that men cannot hit them (64.4%). The patterns have shifted in men's reporting on the subject matter as well. 2019 records the highest number of men stating that it is unacceptable to hit their wives (61.5% in 2005, 50.3% in 2011 and 70.3% in 2019).

Slightly more people living in the outer islands (75.4%) seem to believe hitting a woman is unacceptable compared to respondents from urban settings (74.2%).

People in the 60-69 age group, appeared to (60.9%) believe most strongly that a man should not hit his wife, while those aged between 16-19 had the opposite view on this (65.2%).

The migrant workers responded robustly against inflicting violence on a woman, with 71.1% respondents strongly agreeing, as opposed to 54.2% of Maldivians.

The respondents were then asked about their views on men hitting their wives under any circumstances. 74.9% of respondents were in agreement with the statement that a husband should never hit his wife under any circumstances and the views were similar between both genders

Table 30: A husband should never hit his wife under any circumstances, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	56.25%	55.54%	55.68%
Agree	14.06%	21.88%	19.26%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.99%	4.07%	4.81%
Disagree	14.84%	11.92%	12.90%
Strongly disagree	2.86%	2.81%	2.82%
RF	0.52%	1.12%	0.91%
DK/NA	5.47%	2.66%	3.63%

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR WOMEN HITTING THEIR HUSBANDS

A similar set of questions were asked regarding justification for women hitting their husband.

Similar to the question on men hitting their wives, most of the respondents did not agree on any of

the reasons provided as an excuse for a wife to hit or physically abuse her husband.

When asked whether not completing the housework to her satisfaction is a good enough reason for the wife to hit her husband, 3.0% of the respondents agreed to this statement of which 2.5% were women and 3.7% were men. In addition, 4.0 % of the respondents believe that the woman can hit her husband if he fails to obey her and no significant difference was observed between men and women. When asked if a woman could hit her husband if he refuses to have sex, 4.4% of the respondents were in agreement with this statement and the views were similar between the genders.

Table 31: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if she does not complete housework to her satisfaction, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	1.68%	1.82%	1.82%
Agree	0.84%	1.82%	1.18%
Neutral	0.28%	1.82%	0.82%
Disagree	66.34%	64.06%	65.40%
Strongly disagree	23.56%	22.92%	23.25%
RF	1.26%	0.52%	1.09%
DK	6.03%	7.03%	6.45%

Table 32: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if he disobeys her, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	1.54%	1.56%	1.63%
Agree	2.52%	2.08%	2.36%
Neutral	0.84%	2.08%	1.27%
Disagree	64.38%	63.80%	64.03%
Strongly disagree	23.00%	22.92%	22.89%
RF	1.40%	0.78%	1.27%
DK	6.31%	6.77%	6.54%

Table 33: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if he refuses to have sex, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	2.24%	2.08%	2.27%
Agree	1.96%	2.34%	2.09%
Neutral	0.42%	2.34%	1.09%
Disagree	64.38%	62.50%	63.58%
Strongly disagree	23.00%	22.92%	22.89%
RF	1.40%	0.52%	1.18%
DK	6.59%	7.29%	6.90%

3.4 % of the respondents believe that a woman can hit her husband if he asks her whether she has other boyfriends.

Table 34: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if he asks her whether she has other boyfriends, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	1.68%	1.30%	1.63%
Agree	1.68%	1.82%	1.73%
Neutral	0.56%	1.82%	1.00%
Disagree	64.94%	65.10%	64.85%
Strongly disagree	23.28%	22.66%	22.98%
RF	1.26%	0.52%	1.09%
DK	6.59%	6.77%	6.72%

The percentage of people who believe that a wife could hit her husband if she suspects him of being unfaithful is lower (4.0%) compared to those who believe that a wife could hit her husband if he is found to be unfaithful (7.2%). Surprisingly more men (8.6%) than women (6.2%) believed that finding out about infidelity was a good enough reason for a woman to hit her husband.

Table 35: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if she suspects that he is unfaithful, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	1.82%	1.56%	1.82%
Agree	2.24%	2.08%	2.18%
Neutral	0.70%	1.82%	1.09%
Disagree	63.96%	63.54%	63.67%
Strongly disagree	23.42%	22.92%	23.16%
RF	1.26%	1.04%	1.27%
DK	6.59%	7.03%	6.81%

Table 36: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if she knows that he is unfaithful, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	2.24%	2.08%	2.27%
Agree	3.93%	6.51%	4.90%
Neutral	0.56%	2.86%	1.36%
Disagree	62.55%	58.85%	61.04%
Strongly disagree	23.00%	21.61%	22.43%
RF	1.26%	0.78%	1.18%
DK	6.45%	7.29%	6.81%

Respondents were also asked if it would be justified for woman to hit her husband if he went against Islam. 16.6% of the respondents believed it would be justified. No significant difference was found between men and women.

Islam. 16.6% of the respondents believed it would be justified. No significant difference was found between men and women.

Table 37: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if he goes against Islam, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	5.47%	5.47%	5.54%
Agree	11.08%	10.94%	11.08%
Neutral	1.12%	2.86%	1.73%
Disagree	53.44%	51.04%	52.41%
Strongly disagree	20.76%	19.79%	20.35%
RF	1.54%	0.78%	1.36%
DK	6.59%	9.11%	7.54%

9.3% of the respondents were in agreement when asked if a woman is justified in hitting her husband if he physically abuses the children. Surprisingly for this question too, more men (11.7%) than women (7.9%) believed a woman can hit her husband if he was physically abusing the children.

Table 38: Does the woman have a good reason to hit her husband if he beats her children, by gender

	Female	Male	Total
Strongly agree	2.66%	3.13%	2.91%
Agree	5.19%	8.33%	6.36%
Neutral	1.26%	2.60%	1.73%
Disagree	60.45%	56.51%	58.86%
Strongly disagree	22.30%	21.88%	22.07%
RF	1.26%	0.78%	1.18%
DK	6.87%	6.77%	6.90%

Similar to the question on whether a husband should never hit his wife, the respondents were asked about their view on whether a wife should hit her husband. The majority (76.9%) of the respondents believe it is unacceptable for a wife to hit her husband.

No significant differences were observed across the sexes, location and age groups in response to these questions.

Respondents were also asked about their opinion on wives hitting their husbands under any circumstances. The majority (77.0%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that a wife should never hit her husband under any circumstances.

Table 39: A wife should never hit her husband under any circumstances, by gender

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	57.31%	60.16%	55.82%
Agree	19.62%	12.76%	23.14%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.09%	5.21%	1.96%
Disagree	11.90%	14.58%	10.52%
Strongly disagree	3.00%	2.86%	3.09%
RF	0.73%	0.26%	0.98%
DK/NA	4.36%	4.17%	4.49%

When comparison was made between the two scenarios, the percentage of respondents who believed that a man can hit his wife was higher compared to those who believed that a woman can hit her husband, in all 8 circumstances. The percentage of respondents who believed that a husband can hit his wife if she goes against Islam was higher (26.8%) compared to the percentage of respondents who believed that a wife can hit her husband if he goes against Islam (16.6%). Similarly, respondents who believed that a husband can hit his wife if she disobeys him (12.3%) was more compared to respondents who believed that a woman can hit her husband he disobeys her (4.0%)

Table 40: Justification for a married man/woman hitting wife/husband

	Yes	No		Yes	No	Diff in %
She does not complete her housework to his satisfaction	4.54%	89.55%	He does not complete housework to her satisfaction	0.03%	88.65%	4.51%
She disobeys him	12.35%	80.74%	He disobeys her	3.99%	86.92%	8.36%
She refuses to have sex with him	7.54%	85.20%	He refuses to have sex with her	4.36%	86.47%	3.18%
She asks him whether he has other girl-friends	5.63%	87.65%	He asks her whether she has other boy-friends	3.36%	87.83%	2.27%
He suspects that she is unfaithful	6.63%	87.01%	She suspects that he is unfaithful	4.00%	86.83%	2.63%
He finds out that she has been unfaithful	12.26%	80.11%	She finds out that he has been unfaithful	7.17%	83.47%	5.09%
She goes against Islam?	26.79%	64.94%	He goes against Islam?	16.62%	72.76%	10.17%
She beats the children	12.08%	80.47%	He beats the children	9.27%	80.93%	2.81%

A MARRIED MAN/WOMAN CAN REFUSE TO HAVE SEX WITH HIS WIFE/HER HUSBAND

Respondents were divided in their stand on whether a married woman can refuse to have sex with her husband if she wants to. While 42.3% of the people said a woman cannot refuse, slightly more people, 47.7% were of the opinion that a married woman has the right to refuse sex.

Interestingly, more women were of the opinion that a married woman (47.3%) cannot refuse sex think if she does not feel like it as opposed to men (48.4.0%).

Table 41: A married woman cannot refuse to have sex with her husband, by gender

	Male			Female		
	2005	2011	2019	2005	2011	2019
Yes	68.2%	42.2%	48.44%	59.8%	44.6%	47.27%
No	27.9%	44.9%	13.02%	36.1%	49.5%	44.74%
RF/DK/NA	3.9%	12.9%	13.54%	4.1%	5.9%	7.99%

There were regional differences in the response to this statement where more respondents from outer islands thought a married woman cannot refuse sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it (45.2%) while 37.7% of those from the urban regions subscribed to this viewpoint. People in the 20-29 age group recorded the highest percentile (55.0%) in affirming the stand that married women can refuse sex with her husband if she does not feel like it. There were no significant differences observed between other age groups.

The relationship was reversed, and when respondents were asked whether a man can refuse to have sex with his wife if he doesn't feel like it, more than half of the respondents said he can refuse (54.9%). There was no significant difference between sexes in their opinions. However, there were significant regional disparities. More respondents from urban regions (64.9%) stated that the husband can refuse sex if he does not want to, compared to 48.6% from outer islands.

Most of the respondents agreed that a woman can refuse sex with her husband if he is intoxicated (70.2%). No significant differences were observed between sexes in response to the aforementioned. Nevertheless, a higher number of respondents from urban regions (81.8%) compared to outer islands (63.0%), said a woman can refuse sex with an inebriated husband.

No significant differences were observed across age groups in response to the query.

Table 42: A married woman can refuse to have sex with her husband

	Yes	No
If she does not want to	47.68%	42.33%
If he is intoxicated	70.21%	19.53%
If she is sick	71.21%	19.89%
If he mistreats her	66.03%	24.34%

When respondents were asked if a man can refuse sex with his wife if she was intoxicated 71.1% agreed that he can. Once again there were no significant differences in the opinions of men and women on the matter. Nevertheless, more people from the outer islands (84.1%) affirmed their support for the rights of the man to refuse sex with his wife if she is intoxicated compared to those from the urban regions (63.0%). No significant disparities are seen between age groups.

There was strong agreement among the respondents regarding the right of a woman to refuse sex with her husband when she is sick (71.2%). Once again, no significant differences exist between the sexes in their responses to the question. However, regional disparities were observed where, more people from urban regions (82.9%) said a woman can refuse sex with her husband if she is sick when compared with those from outer islands (63.9%). No significant differences were observed among groups.

Similarly, the majority (71.0%) of the respondents agreed a man can refuse sex with his wife if he is unwell. Here too, a significant difference in the responses are observed based on location. 84.6% of respondents from urban regions said the husband can refuse sex if he is sick, opposed to 62.6% of people from outer islands. No significant differences were observed between the sexes and across age groups.

Respondents were also asked if a married woman can refuse sex with her husband if he mistreats her. The majority (66.0%) of the respondents agreed that a woman can refuse sex if her husband ill-treats her. Once again, no significant differences were observed across the sexes, location and age groups in their response to the question.

When asked if a man can refuse sex with his wife if she mistreats him, the majority of the respondents reported positively (67.7%). The disparity between the respondents from urban (82.3%) and outer

islands (58.8%) who agreed that a husband can refuse sex with his wife if she ill-treats him is significant. There were no noteworthy differences across the sexes and age groups.

Table 43: A married man/woman can refuse to have sex with his wife/ her husband

	Yes	No		Yes	No
She does not want to	47.68%	42.33%	He does not want to	54.86%	33.33%
He is intoxicated	70.21%	19.53%	She is intoxicated	71.12%	16.89%
She is sick	71.21%	19.89%	He is sick	71.03%	17.53%
He mistreats her	66.03%	24.34%	She mistreats him	67.76%	20.25%



Domestic Violence

Awareness of Protection Orders



80%

of the respondents were aware that victims can get Protection Orders.

By Gender



Migrant Workers



Top 5 Acts of Domestic Violence Identified



21%



14%



12%

Verbal Abuse



12%

Harassment



11%

Intimidation

Institutions to Report Domestic Violence

80%

knew an institution to report Domestic Violence

58%

identified

Maldives Police Services

31%

identified

Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services

5%

identified

Human Right Commission of Maldives

Perceptions about Performance of Institutions



29%



18%



35%

Public Perception on Factors Associated with Domestic Violence



21%

believes drug abuse leads to domestic violence



14%

believes financial difficulties as a factor leading to domestic violence



14%

believes inability to hold perpetrators accountable leads to domestic violence



12%

believes lack of education leads to domestic violence



21%

believes drug abuse leads to domestic violence

Public Perception on Ways to Prevent Domestic Violence



40%

believes increasing public awareness can help reduce domestic violence



16%

believes capacity building can help reduce domestic violence

Following extensive consultations among the partners, it was decided to incorporate a new chapter on domestic violence to the third "Rights" Side of Life survey with the aim of understanding the levels of knowledge, perception and prevalence of domestic violence in the Maldives.

Law Number 3/2012 (The Domestic Violence Prevention Act) explicitly prohibits domestic violence, including physical, sexual, verbal, psychological and financial abuse. At the end of 2019, a total 541 cases of domestic violence were reported to the FPA, of which 376 were allegations of physical abuse, 416 were verbal and psychological abuse, and 114 were sexual abuse cases.¹²

LEVEL OF AWARENESS

Acts of Domestic Violence

When asked to identify five acts of domestic violence, 21.2% respondents identified physical abuse. Exactly half the respondents went on to say that sexual abuse in a domestic relationship is an offence. 11.9% said verbal abuse, making threats for the purpose of intimidation and harassment are acts of domestic violence. Women were generally more confident in identifying the forms of domestic violence.

Table 44: Forms of Domestic Violence identified by the respondents, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Physical abuse	22.01%	20.83%	21.17%
Sexual abuse	13.24%	14.99%	14.44%
Verbal abuse / psychological abuse	10.79%	12.44%	11.93%
Economic / Financial abuse	7.50%	8.39%	8.12%
Impregnating the spouse, without concern to her health condition and against any medical advice to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time	2.28%	3.62%	3.21%
Impregnating a woman, who is trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage, against her will	2.70%	2.06%	2.27%
Deliberately withholding the property of a person	1.69%	1.49%	1.57%
Intimidation	11.47%	11.90%	11.78%
Harassment	13.07%	12.06%	12.38%
Stalking	1.77%	2.82%	2.53%
Damage to property	2.70%	2.56%	2.58%
Entry into, and being present thereafter at the victim's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence	0.34%	0.38%	0.37%
Any other act which may be described as controlling or abusive behaviour towards the victim	0.42%	0.46%	0.44%

Coercing, intimidating or forcing the victim to commit an act which such person would not have consented to or committed by their own volition	0.84%	0.57%	0.65%
Confining the victim to a place or restricting their movement against their will	1.35%	0.76%	0.94%
Attempting to commit any of the foregoing acts or causing apprehension of such acts	0.34%	0.23%	0.26%
Causing a minor to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a minor in such situation where such minor may witness or hear an act of domestic violence	0.42%	0.50%	0.47%
Other	0.84%	0.69%	0.73%
RF	0.00%	0.08%	0.05%
DK/NA	6.24%	3.17%	4.10%

No significant differences were observed in identifying forms of domestic violence between outer islands and urban respondents.

Domestic Relationships

For people to be able to identify acts of domestic violence and subsequently report or seek help, it is imperative that they can fully comprehend what constitutes a domestic relationship.

When the respondents of the survey were asked to identify what domestic relationships are, 20.4% said it was parents or persons who have or had parental responsibility for a child, 20.3% understood it as the relationship between people who are or were married to each other, 15.1% believed it is one that exists between persons who are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or marriage and 14.1% thought persons who recently shared the same residence were in a domestic relationship.

One third of the respondents believed that the relationship between family members is a domestic relationship. 94.1% of respondents do not believe that two people in an intimate relationship are in a domestic relationship, which may thus have serious implications on reporting and seeking help, protection and justice. One third of the respondents could not name any form of domestic relationship.

¹² <http://www.fpa.gov.mv/w/dh/statistics>

Table 45: Domestic relationships identified by respondents, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Persons who are or were married to each other	20.58%	20.22%	20.33%
Persons who share or have recently shared the same residence	12.07%	15.09%	14.13%
Persons who are the parents of a child or are persons who have or had parental responsibility for that child	19.19%	21.09%	20.41%
Persons who are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or marriage	15.50%	14.90%	15.12%
Persons who are domestic child carers or domestic workers	7.37%	9.15%	8.60%
Persons who are in an intimate relationship	5.84%	4.82%	5.21%
RF	1.02%	0.56%	0.74%
DK/NA	18.42%	14.16%	15.45%

No significant discrepancies were observed in identifying domestic relationships across demographic factors.

Protection Orders

This survey inquired into the awareness on the provision for survivors to obtain a protection order from a court in cases of domestic violence and the response was encouraging. 80.0% of the respondents stated that they were aware of this protective provision in the law. 54.6 % of women were aware of the right to claim a protection order as opposed to 25.0% of male respondents. There was no significant difference between men and women who were not aware of this safeguard nor between urban and outer islands. This also holds true across all age groups.

44.3 % of migrant workers were aware that they could seek a protection order in cases of domestic violence.

WHERE/WHOM TO REPORT ACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

80.0% of respondents stated that they knew where to report cases of domestic violence. 82.0% of women were confident about where to report a case of domestic violence compared to 77.0% of men. 58.1% of the respondents named MPS as the institution to file a domestic violence complain, while less than a third identified Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services as the institution to report domestic violence. 65.3% of men and 54.8% of women stated domestic violence cases had to be reported to MPS. This also holds true for respondents from both urban

and outer islands.

No significant differences are observed between outer islands and urban regions or across age groups.

56.7% of migrant workers were reported to be aware of institution(s) to report a domestic violence

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS

Respondents were asked their thoughts about the performance of the institutions mandated to respond to reports of domestic violence. 34.7% of the respondents were disappointed with the performance of these institutions while 29.3% reported being happy with the services. It is to be noted that 17.6% of the respondents were satisfied with the institutions handling domestic violence cases.

32.7% of female respondents stated being happy with the services of the institutions while only 25.7% of male respondents were happy with the services.

39.8% of respondents from urban regions were less happy with the performance of state institutions mandated to provide services pertaining to domestic violence, while 31.3% of respondents from outer islands were happy with these institutions.

The survey examined what respondents thought needed to be done to improve the services of these institutions. More than half of the respondents stated that greater effort should be put into raising awareness about domestic violence.

Table 46: Public perception on ways to prevent domestic violence, by region

	Outer Islands	Urban	Total
Create public awareness	37.64%	43.82%	39.71%
Capacity building of staff	19.53%	7.87%	15.62%
Rehabilitation of perpetrators	12.17%	7.12%	10.48%
Adequate, timely and convenient assistance to survivors	11.79%	11.80%	11.79%
Other	3.11%	13.11%	6.46%
RF	0.85%	0.37%	0.69%
DK/NA	14.91%	15.92%	15.24%

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

21.0% of the respondents identified substance abuse as the most influential factor responsible for domestic violence while 13.8% stated financial difficulties, 11.9% cited lack of adequate housing, 12.3% replied lack of education and 13.8% stated inability to hold perpetrators accountable as root causes of domestic violence.

While women cited substance abuse as the primary cause of domestic violence, men reported substance abuse and financial/economic difficulties as the primary cause of domestic violence. In general, migrant workers could not respond effectively to this question and resulted in a high non-response rate of 42.6%.

More respondents from outer islands cited drug abuse as the cause of domestic violence than urban. Respondents from the urban cities most commonly identified financial difficulties and drug abuse as factors associated with domestic violence.

Table 47: Perceived factors of domestic violence, by local/foreign

	Local	Foreign	Total
Financial and/or economic reasons	14.00%	10.43%	13.77%
Drugs/ substance abuse	22.13%	5.22%	21.04%
Lack of Education	12.80%	5.22%	12.31%
Perpetrators are not found guilty (not convicted or penalized)	14.35%	6.09%	13.82%
Housing issues	12.26%	6.96%	11.92%
Other	12.62%	22.61%	13.26%
RF	0.48%	0.87%	0.50%
Dk/NA	11.36%	42.61%	13.37%

KNOWING A SURVIVOR

When asked whether anyone close to the respondent experienced any form of domestic violence, 67.4% of the respondents stated that they didn't know a person who has experienced domestic violence, while 19.0% reported knowing a survivor. More women (26.7%) than men (15.9%) stated knowing a person who has experienced domestic violence.

More respondents from urban regions (28.4%) reported knowing a survivor, compared to respondents from outer islands (13.1%).

Respondents mostly between the ages of 20-29 (22.3%) and 40-49 (22.3%) reported knowing a survivor of domestic violence.

Only 3.1% of migrant workers said they knew a domestic violence survivor.

PERPETRATORS, FREQUENCY AND NATURE OF ACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A significant number of respondents chose not to answer or reported not knowing the answer to the questions in this section relating to perpetrators. It is likely that responding to this section was difficult as it requires identifying the perpetrator who the respondent might be in a domestic relationship with. It is also likely that the survivor the respondent knows is also in a domestic relationship with the perpetrator.

Most respondents reported that it was either the spouse or the former spouse that the survivor suffered domestic violence from. Female respondents stated that they suffered domestic violence mostly from their husbands; while in the case of male respondents, a former intimate partner was the most commonly reported perpetrator. Both men and women reported having suffered domestic violence from their fathers. Half of the respondents reported that they knew a survivor who had been subjected to physical abuse by a person with whom they were in a domestic relationship with. Out of the respondents who reported knowing a survivor, more women (59.0%) than men (46.9%) cited physical abuse as the nature of violence. The second most common type of violence reported by respondents who knew a survivor was verbal abuse (11.0%).

Table 48: Types of domestic violence survivors experienced, by gender

Abuse	Male	Female	Total
Physical abuse	2.11%	3.13%	2.89%
Verbal abuse / psychological abuse	6.32%	5.44%	5.65%
Sexual abuse	3.68%	5.44%	5.02%
Economic / Financial abuse	2.63%	3.79%	3.51%
Impregnating the spouse, without concern to her health condition and against any medical advice to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time	-	4.94%	4.52%
Impregnating a woman, who is trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage, against her will	-	14.83%	16.06%

Deliberately withholding the property of a person	4.74%	4.12%	4.27%
Intimidation	11.58%	10.87%	11.04%
Harassment	8.42%	8.57%	8.53%
Stalking	2.63%	3.13%	3.01%
Damage to property	0.00%	0.16%	0.13%
Entry into, and being present thereafter at the victim's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence	4.74%	6.26%	5.90%
Any other act which may be described as controlling or abusive behaviour towards the victim	0.53%	1.81%	1.51%
Coercing, intimidating or forcing the victim to commit an act which such person would not have consented to or committed by their own volition	4.21%	4.28%	4.27%
Confining the victim to a place or restricting their movement against their will	4.74%	4.45%	4.52%
Attempting to commit any of the foregoing acts or causing apprehension of such acts	6.84%	5.93%	6.15%
Causing a minor to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a minor in such situation where such minor may witness or hear an act of domestic violence	2.63%	2.80%	2.76%
Other	1.05%	2.31%	2.01%
RF	10.00%	7.74%	8.28%
DK/NA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

To understand the frequency of the violence it was important to know when the last incident of abuse took place. Most respondents stated that the abuse took place 1-5 years ago, closely followed by the people who reported having heard of the abuse less than a year ago.

Table 49: Frequency of violence

Frequency	Total
Between 1 and 5 years	30.62%
10 years ago,	14.35%
Between 5 and 10 years	12.44%
RF	1.44%
In the past 12 months	29.67%
DK/NA	11.48%

Table 50: Nature of violence suffered by someone the respondent knows, by gender

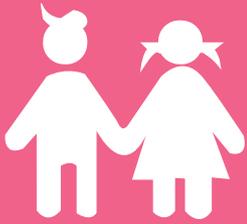
Abuses	Male	Female	Total
Physical abuse	4.24%	3.03%	4.36%
Verbal abuse / psychological abuse	7.16%	6.06%	7.27%
Sexual abuse	3.18%	0.00%	3.49%
Economic / Financial abuse	4.51%	3.03%	4.65%
Impregnating the spouse, without concern to her health condition and against any medical advice to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time	4.24%	3.03%	4.36%
Impregnating a woman, who is trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage, against her will	14.32%	24.24%	13.37%
Deliberately withholding the property of a person	2.92%	3.03%	2.91%
Intimidation	13.26%	21.21%	12.50%
Harassment	8.22%	6.06%	8.43%
Stalking	8.49%	9.09%	8.43%
Damage to property	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Entry into, and being present thereafter at the victim's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence	2.65%	0.00%	2.91%
Any other act which may be described as controlling or abusive behaviour towards the victim	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Coercing, intimidating or forcing the victim to commit an act which such person would not have consented to or committed by their own volition	3.71%	3.03%	3.78%
Confining the victim to a place or restricting their movement against their will	3.18%	9.09%	2.62%
Attempting to commit any of the foregoing acts or causing apprehension of such acts	4.51%	3.03%	4.65%
Causing a minor to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a minor in such situation where such minor may witness or hear an act of domestic violence	7.16%	3.03%	7.56%
Other	2.92%	0.00%	3.20%
RF	5.31%	3.03%	5.52%
DK/NA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

As observed from the table above, respondents who said they were survivors of domestic violence shared that the most common nature of abuse pertained to being forcefully impregnated while she was trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage. The second most common nature of abuse reported by survivors was intimidation. Stalking, harassment and placing a minor in a situation where they had to witness the domestic abuse were also identified as frequently occurring acts of domestic violence.

PERPETRATORS

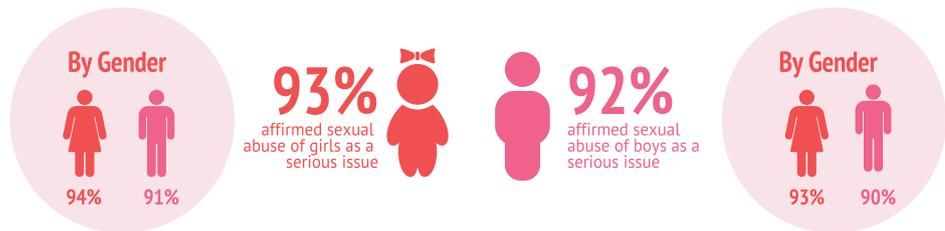
13.6% of respondents who were survivors of physical abuse stated being subjected to the violence by their husbands while 11.1% identified in-laws as perpetrators. Among those who stated that they were sexually abused in a domestic relationship, respondents reported that 10.71% of the times it was their in-laws. 18.2% survivors of verbal and psychological abuse reported that their perpetrator was the husband. 8.3% of respondents whose property was withheld as an act of domestic violence, reported that it was their mothers who withheld their property. Respondents reported that it was mostly their husbands and in-laws perpetrating harassment, with 10.2 % survivors of intimidation saying they experienced the abuse by their husbands and another 10.2% stating their in-laws as perpetrators.

39.0% of respondents who were survivors of domestic violence stated physical abuse as the most recent type of abuse suffered and 20.3% of respondents who were survivors stated verbal abuse as the most recent, making it the second most common form of abuse. More women than men reported having suffered physical abuse. The majority of respondents who were survivors who reported having been verbally abused were from urban regions.



Sexual Abuse of Children and Other Children's Rights

Perception of Child Abuse as a Serious Issue



Opinion on Protection Offered to Children



Areas to Improve Protection Offered to Children



21%
Better Access to Education



13%
Violence Against Children



10%
Gender Stereotyping and Discrimination

HRCM highlighted the sexual abuse of children and the weak state response to address this serious violation of child rights as a grievous concern in its 2015 submission to the CRC periodic report¹³. The Maldives' 2018 Human Rights Report by the US State Department reports that the majority of the child abuse cases reported to Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services were sexual abuse cases, while the same was true for 45% of child abuse cases reported to Maldives Police Service by July 2018.

The previous figures are analogous to the findings of this survey with increasing community concern, where 93.6% (95.5% female and 90.4% male) of respondents affirmed child sexual abuse of girls as a serious issue. This concern has increased over the years with 82.1% in 2005, and 93.3% in 2011.

When asked whether sexual abuse of boys is a serious issue, 91.7% agreed. In comparison to the previous report, there seems to be a slight decrease in number of women who considered sexual abuse of boys to be a serious problem. In 2011, 97.2% of female respondents said that it was a serious issue compared to 93.3% in 2019. However, there seems to be a slight increase in number of male respondents who thought sexual abuse in boys is a serious issue with 89.6% affirming this belief in 2019 compared to 85.9% in 2011.

OTHER ISSUES REGARDING RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Less than a third of respondents (27.9%) reported being satisfied with the level of protection afforded to children, while the majority (48.2%) were dissatisfied. 10.8% of the respondents chose not to answer or reported not knowing the answer when they were asked how they felt about protection assured for children.

From those who reported being satisfied with the level of protection given to children, 32.3% were men and 25.5% were women. It is to be noted that, of the dissatisfied respondents, the majority were women at 54.0% followed by men at 38.0%. The number of women dissatisfied with the protection afforded to children has decreased in comparison to 2011 where 66.0% female respondents expressed their dissatisfaction.

¹³ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/MDV/INT_CRC_IFU_MDV_20377_E.pdf

Similarly, the number of men dissatisfied with the protection provided for children has also decreased; in 2011 41.8% men reported they were dissatisfied.

The 2011 findings generally indicated that younger respondents were dissatisfied with the protection services given to children (with the exception of the 60-69 age group). However, the 2019 findings indicate otherwise where the older the respondent, the more dissatisfied they appeared with the protection afforded to children.

Table 51: Perception of protection of child's rights in the Maldives, by age

Age group	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	RF	DK/NA
16 - 19	32.61%	23.91%	31.52%	1.09%	10.87%
20 - 29	26.42%	13.96%	47.55%	0.75%	11.32%
30 - 39	27.42%	12.58%	50.00%	0.65%	9.35%
40 - 49	28.64%	7.77%	50.97%	0.97%	11.65%
50 - 59	29.91%	12.15%	49.53%	0.00%	8.41%
60 - 69	26.09%	17.39%	52.17%	2.17%	2.17%
70 and above	41.67%	0.00%	58.33%	0.00%	0.00%
na	22.22%	14.29%	50.79%	0.00%	12.70%
Grand Total	27.88%	13.08%	48.23%	0.73%	10.08%

Respondents from the urban regions were more dissatisfied with the protection services for children in 2019 (53.1%), while in 2011 respondents from the outer islands were increasingly dissatisfied (66.7%).

Table 52: Perception of protection of child's rights in the Maldives, by region

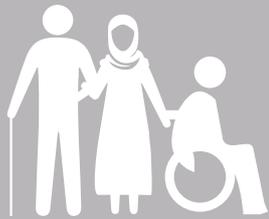
	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	RF	DK/NA
Outer islands	28.72%	11.78%	45.21%	1.18%	13.11%
Urban	26.54%	15.17%	53.08%		5.21%
Total	27.88%	13.08%	48.23%	0.73%	10.08%

The survey inquired further with the respondents who felt that protection given to children was inadequate. 20.8% said access to quality education needed to be improved and 12.9% of this group felt that the response to violence against children should be strengthened. Notably 9.6% of people believed gender discrimination needed to be prevented. While in 2011 the strongest support was for prevention of violence against children (35.2%) and access to quality

education was identified as the second most important protection area to be strengthened (34.8%). While prevention of substance abuse was identified as the third most salient protection to provide for children (23.8%), gender equality (16.8%) was mentioned as the fourth most important aspect to be strengthened.

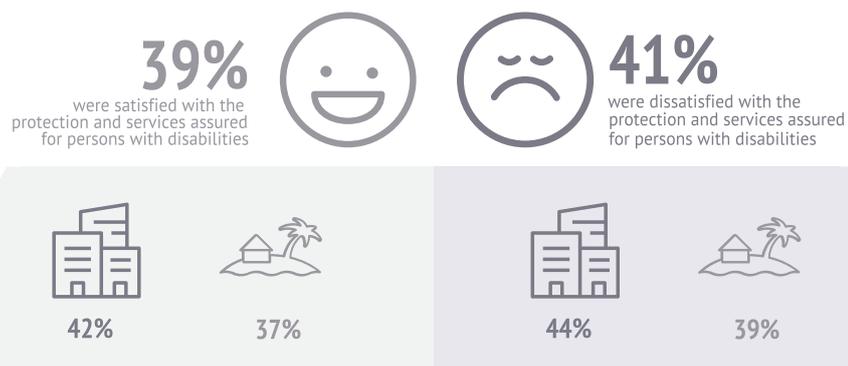
Table 53: Areas which need to be improved, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Better access to education	17.77%	22.19%	20.81%
Malnutrition	6.83%	7.08%	6.99%
Infant mortality	3.42%	3.02%	3.21%
Gender stereotyping / discrimination	8.88%	9.79%	9.55%
Inadequate sanitation	2.05%	3.33%	2.92%
Geographic isolation/access to basic services	4.78%	2.92%	3.49%
Violence against children	12.98%	12.92%	12.90%
Drugs	7.97%	8.85%	8.55%
Crime and/or gangs	6.15%	6.88%	6.63%
Other	8.43%	8.54%	8.48%
RF	1.14%	0.73%	0.86%
DK/NA	19.59%	13.75%	15.61%



Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities

Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Areas to Increase Protection



Protection of rights of Elderly People



Areas to Increase Protection



39%

were satisfied with the protection and services assured for persons with disabilities

The 2015 UPR submission from HRCM raised concern that disability rights are not mainstreamed into policies and services despite the enactment of the Disability Law in 2010 and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Issues raised in the report include lack of accessibility to services and infrastructure, access to education and high unemployment rate of persons with disabilities. The lack of medical services, treatment and access to specific therapies mandatory for certain kinds of disabilities including mental disabilities were highlighted as serious issues.

The 2019 survey indicates that 40.9% of respondents are dissatisfied with the protection and services assured for persons with disabilities while 39.0% reported being satisfied. No significant difference is observed between the findings of 2011 in this regard.

The differences in satisfaction level between the urban regions and outer islands are noteworthy as most services are only available in Malé. 41.7% people from urban areas and 37.3% from outer islands were satisfied with the services

People who were dissatisfied were asked which areas of services needed to be improved, 16.3% of the people said they were concerned about the lack of access to education for people with disabilities. Respondents identified discrimination as the second most prevalent issue that needed to be addressed (13.2%). People were equally concerned about the lack of schools for children with special needs (13.0%). 'Parental awareness, better quality of life for disabled people and better monitoring mechanism' were some of the additional issues which were highlighted under the 'other' option.

Table 54 :Services provided for persons with disabilities in need of improvement , by gender

Services needed to be improved	Total
Lack of access to education	16.28%
Lack of schools for children with special needs	12.99%
Lack of facilities in existing schools for children with special needs	7.32%
Inadequate health care (including mental health care) for people with disabilities	8.89%
Stereotyping/discrimination	13.22%
Lack of employment/employment services	11.13%
Inadequate benefits/lack of information/ knowledge about benefits from Aasandha Health Insurance	7.09%
Access to buildings and on transport	4.63%
Other	4.56%
RF	0.22%
DK/NA	13.67%

Article 35 of the constitution guarantees special protection for the elderly and recognizes them as a vulnerable group. Under the National Social Protection Scheme established under Social Protection Law of 2009, financial support for the elderly is granted.

Close to half of the respondents (48.1%) reported being satisfied with the services provided for the elderly while a third (33.3%) were not. Women appeared to be less satisfied (35.6%) than men (29.4%) with how elderly persons were being treated by the service providers. Interestingly, among those dissatisfied with the services for the elderly, more people were from urban regions.

Respondents felt that the most important area to address in order to ensure the rights of the elderly was to prevent neglect of elderly persons (23.0%). People also expressed the need to prevent abuse of the elderly as an important issue (11.0%). Inadequate attention to the health of older persons was ranked as the third most pressing issue that needed improvement (9.9%).

Table 55: Services provided for older people that needs to be improved, by region

Services needed to be improved	Outer island	Urban	Total
Abuse (physical or mental)	13.06%	6.65%	10.95%
Neglect	21.96%	25.08%	22.99%
Lack of legislation and/or policies to protect older people	7.12%	4.23%	6.17%
Inadequate pension	5.04%	5.74%	5.27%
Inadequate attention to health status of older people	9.35%	10.88%	9.85%
Inadequate housing for older people	6.08%	7.55%	6.57%
Lack of information/knowledge about benefits from Aasandha Health Insurance	4.45%	2.42%	3.78%
Lack of oversight (registration) of caregivers of older people	3.12%	5.44%	3.88%
Lack of respite care to ensure that family and volunteer caregivers are not overburdened	4.30%	3.02%	3.88%
Lack of residential care/nursing home facilities	5.04%	7.55%	5.87%
Other	0.89%	9.67%	3.78%
RF	0.74%	0.30%	0.60%
DK/NA	18.84%	11.48%	16.42%

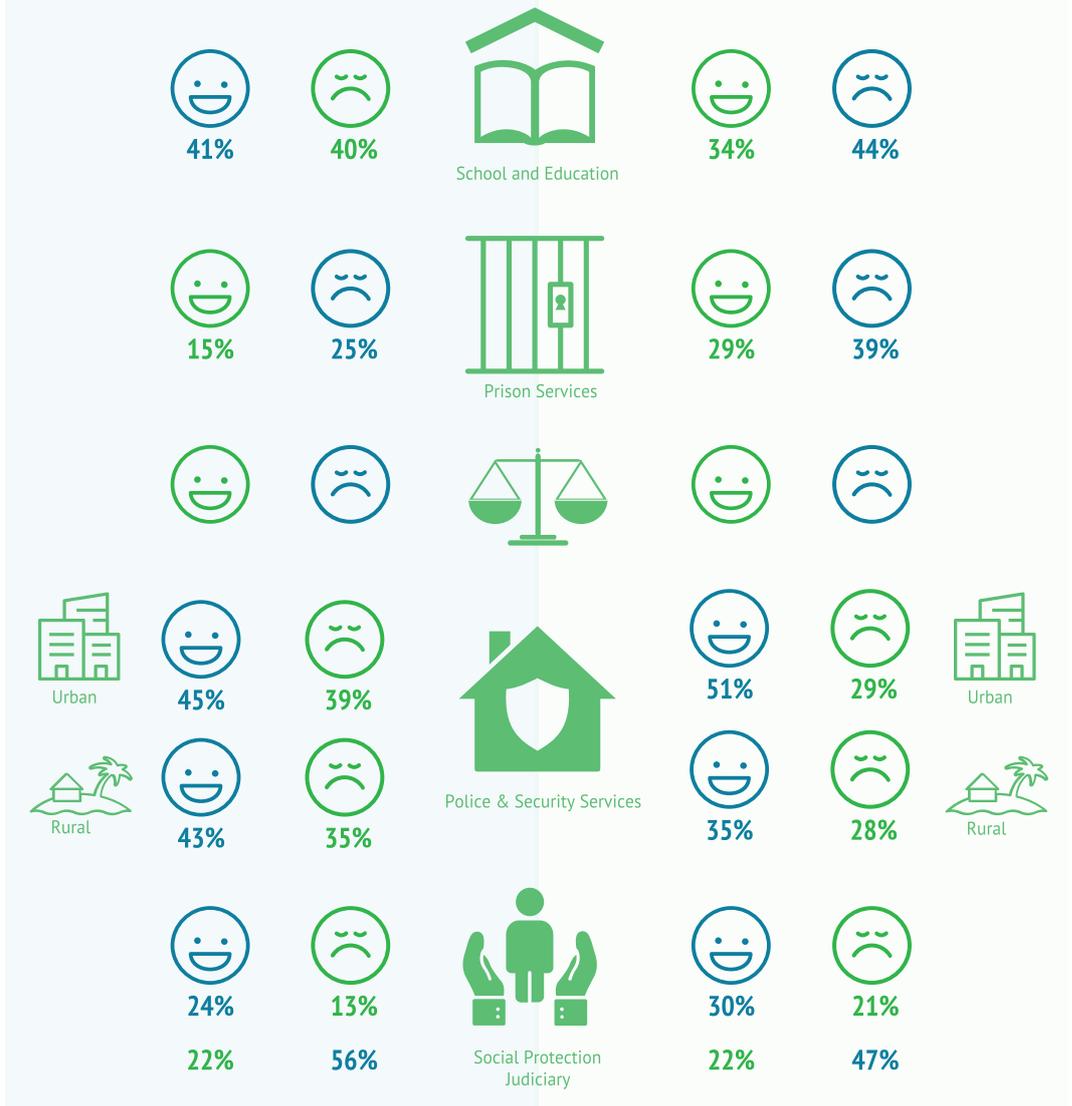


Equality of Access to Services

Access to Services

2019

2011



26%



Access to Health Services

Access to Health Services



26%



64%

Access to Medicine



31%



57%

Quality of Hospitals



24%



64%

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

While 41.0% of the respondents were satisfied with schooling and education in the Maldives, 40.0% were disappointed. This is an improvement from 2011 where 34.1% seemed satisfied with the education provided and 44.0% were dissatisfied. People from urban areas (52.4%) appeared relatively more satisfied about education and schools than those living in the outer islands where 45.2% of respondents reported being dissatisfied with the quality of education and schools in their islands. Most (23.3%) of the respondents felt better qualified and trained teachers in schools would improve the quality of education and 16.7% thought improving education by easing access to education in higher grades of the outer islands would positively affect education in general. Although the number of respondents with this opinion has declined since 2005, both surveys conducted in 2005 and 2011 found people have been consistently saying improvement in these factors are imperative for overall improvement in education.

Table 56: Perception of areas of the education system in need of improvement, by region

	Outer islands	Urban	Total
Education to higher grade on islands	18.87%	11.66%	16.69%
Better trained and qualified teachers	24.90%	19.43%	23.25%
Better facilities, such as library, laboratory	15.36%	8.83%	13.39%
Better qualified Principals	15.13%	5.12%	12.11%
Better monitoring systems	9.93%	11.31%	10.35%
Others	5.04%	26.50%	11.52%
RF	0.84%	0.00%	0.59%
DK/NA	9.93%	17.14%	12.11%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Three components were assessed to understand how people felt about access to healthcare services, overall health services, access to medicines and quality of hospitals. The majority (63.6%) of the people were dissatisfied with overall health services and especially those from outer islands (62.3%). More women reported being unhappy with health services across the regions (67.9%).

More than half of the people were not happy with access to medicines (57.4%), most of whom were women (62.1%). Slightly more people from the outer islands (58.0%) were more dissatisfied than respondents from urban regions (56.4%)

regarding access to medicine

Similar views were expressed regarding the quality of hospitals with the majority of people being dissatisfied (64.4%). More women (69.1%) than men (55.7%) were not satisfied with the quality of hospitals. Respondents from urban regions (65.9%) appeared to be slightly more dissatisfied with the quality of hospitals than those from the outer islands (63.5%)

Table 57: Perception of areas of improvement in the health system, by region

	Outer islands	Urban
More health centres	9.07%	8.66%
Better services at health centres	27.94%	16.23%
More hospitals at a regional level	13.32%	12.36%
Better services at hospitals	31.36%	31.53%
Others	8.79%	24.11%
RF	1.02%	0.00%
DK/NA	8.51%	7.11%

Table 58: Perception of areas of improvement in the health system, by gender

	Male	Female
More health centres	9.87%	8.44%
Better services at health centres	20.74%	25.07%
More hospitals at a regional level	13.88%	12.44%
Better services at hospitals	28.09%	33.24%
Others	15.89%	13.87%
RF	0.84%	0.53%
DK/NA	10.70%	6.40%

The overall dissatisfaction manifested around the three components of health are synonymous with the 2011 findings highlighting that people do not feel health services have improved over the years.

Close to a third of respondents (31.4%) believed improving services at the hospitals would enhance access to healthcare in general. This is a significant decline from 2011 where 71.4% of respondents said the same. Interestingly, in 2019, there is an increase in the number of people who seem to think that improving services in health centres at island level, would help to provide better health services and access (23.6%). This shift indicates support for decentralized services.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

The majority of the respondents were unhappy with employment and work opportunities available for them (43.1%). In 2011, slightly more respondents were dissatisfied with access to work (48.4%). People from urban regions were more dissatisfied (54.4%) in comparison to those living in the outer islands (38.0%). Notably more women (46.0%) than men (38.0%) were dissatisfied with the lack of employment and work opportunities.

Close to half of the respondents (45.2%) expressed dissatisfaction about the access to markets for economic activities such as selling their products. This finding resonates with the outcome of the 2011 survey where 48.5% of respondents reported being unhappy with the extent to which they had access to markets. Respondents from both urban regions (43.1%) and outer islands affirmed their dissatisfaction although, understandably those from outer islands were slightly more dissatisfied (46.5%). With regards to access to markets, more women (46.4%) were unhappy with the lack of access to markets to sell their products than men (43.0%).

Much like the outcome of the 2011 survey, respondents generally appeared satisfied with the other services as seen in the table below.

Table 59: Opinion on employment and work opportunities

	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	RF	DK/NA
In relation to work and employment opportunities, are you	38.69%	6.18%	43.14%	0.64%	11.35%
In relation to access to markets to sell your products, such as fish, produce, handicrafts etc, are you:	32.15%	6.36%	45.23%	0.64%	15.62%
In relation to transport services (ferries, air services etc), are you	50.41%	6.81%	34.24%	0.64%	7.90%
In relation to banking and credit facilities, are you	43.69%	5.99%	37.60%	0.82%	11.90%
In relation to access to radio, are you:	59.31%	3.36%	15.99%	0.82%	20.53%
In relation to access to television, are you:	69.30%	3.91%	16.44%	0.82%	9.54%
In relation to access to newspapers, are you:	59.13%	5.54%	26.07%	0.82%	8.45%
In relation to access to postal services, are you	60.67%	3.91%	17.53%	0.91%	16.98%

JUDICIARY

Over the years, the rate of satisfaction with the judiciary, courts and judges has decreased significantly. In 2005, 41.5% of the respondents reported being satisfied with the performance of the judiciary, while in 2011 this number halved to 21.5% and continues to remain at 21.5% in 2019. The number of respondents dissatisfied with the judiciary was 56.3% in 2019 compared to 46.8% in 2011 of whom 58.06% were women. Respondents from outer islands (62.1%) mostly reported being disappointed with access to justice.

Table 60: Perception on judicial service system, by region

	Outer islands	Urban	Total
Satisfied	21.94%	20.85%	21.53%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5.74%	6.40%	5.99%
Dissatisfied	52.72%	62.09%	56.31%
RF	1.47%	0.47%	1.09%
DK/NA	18.11%	10.19%	15.08%

9.28% of migrant workers reported being dissatisfied with the judiciary, but this could be because relatively fewer migrant workers get access to courts to pursue justice for their grievances.

The most commonly cited reason for the loss of confidence in the judiciary remained corruption (39.2%). In 2011, 32.6% of the respondents said corruption was the key factor negatively influencing the judiciary.

Table 61: Reasons for loss of confidence in Judiciary

	Total
Unfair/unjust decisions	15.90%
Corruption	39.24%
Competence of judiciary	12.45%
Lack of access to lawyers	3.20%
Lack of information	3.11%
Lack of security for judges	3.37%
Others	4.41%
RF	0.95%
DK/NA	17.37%

POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICES

The 2011 findings showcased a significant loss

in confidence regarding the police and security services. However, the 2019 findings suggested a positive change towards the performance of security services as there is an increase in people who are satisfied with police services (43.5%). Similar improvements are observed in responses from outer islands where there is an improvement in public perception of police services with 42.7% saying they are satisfied with their performance.

Table 62: Perception of police services, by region (2005, 2011, 2019), by region

	2005		2011		2019	
	Outer islands	Outer islands	Urban	Urban	Outer islands	Urban
Satisfied	60.60%	34.60%	50.50%	45.80%	42.71%	44.79%
Neither	6.40%	11.80%	8.30%	10.50%	7.07%	10.43%
Dissatisfied	40.70%	28%	29.40%	48.10%	34.76%	38.63%
RF/DK/NA	3.70%	5.60%	13.20%	3%	15.46%	6.16%

The most commonly cited reasons for dissatisfaction with police services were corruption (25.1%) and unavailability of the police when needed (19.4%).

Table 63: Reasons for dissatisfaction with police services

	Total
Can't get police when we need them	19.14%
Not dealing with crimes	6.58%
Lack of fairness/bias	5.14%
Corruption	25.12%
Torture	6.22%
Lack of information about cases/detainees	1.20%
Lack of access to detainees	1.91%
Releasing detainees back into the community	3.35%
Political influence	7.89%
Others	5.26%
RF	0.60%
DK/NA	17.58%

PRISON SERVICES

In 2011, more people said they were dissatisfied (38.7%) with the prison services than were happy with them (28.6%). This is in complete contrast to 2005 where people appeared mostly satisfied with the performance of correctional services. In 2019, more than half of the respondents refused to or did not know the answer to this question. It is likely that the reason for the high non-response

rate (66.1%) is the genuine lack of awareness about the services as a very small fraction of the respondents have direct experiences to relate about the prison services. 24.8% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the performance of the prison services and slightly more women (25.7%) were dissatisfied than men (23.4%).

Table 64: Perception of prison services, by gender

	Total	Male	Female
Satisfied	15.08%	15.63%	14.73%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4.63%	5.73%	3.93%
Dissatisfied	24.89%	23.44%	25.67%
RF	1.63%	2.60%	1.12%
DK/NA	53.77%	52.60%	54.56%

People who were dissatisfied with the prison services identified the reasons as corruption (10.7%), lack of supervision (5.2%), abuse (4.2%) and torture (2.5%) of prisoners.

Table 65: Reasons for dissatisfaction with prison services

	Total
Lack of adequate access to prisoners	2.04%
Abuse of prisoners	4.19%
Lack of fairness/bias	1.13%
Corruption	10.86%
Torture	3.51%
Lack of information about prisoners	0.34%
Lack of rehabilitation facilities	0.57%
Lack of supervision	5.20%
Lack of space and medical facilities	0.23%
Political interference	2.04%
Other	3.85%
RF	1.36%
DK/NA	64.71%

SOCIAL PROTECTION

With the enactment of the Social Protection Act in 2009, people are entitled to services and allowances under the schemes provisioned for in the legislation. It is thus important to assess people's perception about the reach of social service schemes.

Generally, people are in agreement that social services have not been expanded to facilitate better outreach over the years and thus have remained at the same level. An average of 24.0%,

however, were of the view that the service has been expanded. More women believe the services have not seen an improvement. It is to be noted that in 2011, 30% of respondents considered social security to have improved.

Table 66: Opinion on social services, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Improved	21.88%	25.53%	24.16%
Got Worse	11.72%	13.18%	12.72
No Change	29.95%	34.22%	32.70%
RF	2.60%	2.95%	2.82%
DK/NA	33.85%	24.12%	27.61%

People generally believed that progressive steps are being taken to improve health services, access to education up to grade 12, access to safe drinking water, access to electricity, improve sewerage facilities, improve housing and financial assistance, improve waste disposal system and social security services. In all areas except the improvement of housing (46.0%), more than half the respondents were convinced that the government was taking adequate measures to improve these services with regard to the availability of resources. In 2011, people reported that they were less satisfied with efforts to ensure housing, social security, health services and improved waste disposal systems, in comparison to the 2019 findings.

Table 67: Do you consider the government is doing enough to ensure the following, 2011, 2019

	2011		2019	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Improving Health services	46.40%	44.70%	50.00%	39.00%
Improved access to education up to grade 12 (grade 10 in 2011)	68%	22.70%	61.00%	26.00%
Improved access to safe drinking water	58.60%	31.20%	61.00%	27.00%
Improved access to electricity	60.80%	29.60%	57.00%	30.00%
Improved sewerage facilities	54.30%	34.90%	59.00%	26.00%
Improved housing, including financial assistance	52.90%	36.6%	46.00%	41.00%
Improved waste disposal system	48.40%	39.60%	62.00%	26.00%
Improved social security	43.40%	42.90%	51.00%	32.00%

People were asked what services should be considered a priority of the government. Most respondents believe the government should

put more effort into improving health services (49.0%) and ensuring housing along with financial assistance.

Table 68: Services to be considered as a priority of the government

	Total
Improving Health services	49.04%
Improved access to education up to grade 12	8.55%
Improved access to safe drinking water	1.64%
Improved access to electricity	3.09%
Improved sewerage facilities	2.27%
Improved housing, including financial assistance	16.92%
Improved waste disposal system	1.73%
Improved social security	6.01%
Other	1.27%
RF/DK/NA	9.46%

ACCESS TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION

People were not satisfied with the access to public information they were granted in 2011. In fact, the level of dissatisfaction had increased from 2005 to 2011 with half the respondents unhappy with the level of access. In 2019, the majority of people stated that they were dissatisfied with the access to official information made available to them.

Table 69: Access to public information, 2011, 2019

	2011	2019
Satisfied	25.8%	31.43%
Neither	13.8%	5.99%
Dissatisfied	42.9%	41.87%
RF	17.5%	1.82%
DK/NA	18.89%	20.71%

With the enactment of Right to Information Act in 2014, there is a need to understand and assess how this law has facilitated access to information for citizens. More than one third of the respondents (36.1%) reported that this legislation's enactment has been helpful.

Table 70: Is the Right to Information Act helpful in obtaining information

	2019
Yes	36.06%
No	1.73%
RF	21.25%
DK/NA	40.96%



Right to Participate in Government and Take Part in Decision-Making

Voted for Parliamentary Election



77%
of the respondents participated in the last election.

By Gender



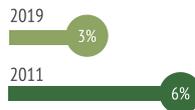
83%



65%

Aspects of Elections that Were Problematic

Inadequate polling booths



Mismanagement or incomplete voter registration



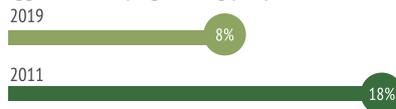
Last minute court election rulings



Lack of voter education



Aggressive campaigns along party lines



Insufficient duration for voting



Resource Allocation for Administrative Atolls and Islands

19%

were happy about the resource allocations for administrative atolls and islands



59%

were unhappy about the resource allocations for administrative atolls and islands



17%



20%



68%



54%



77%

of the respondents participated in the last election.

The democratic ideology is entrenched in the right of citizens to inclusively participate in matters concerning them. This by virtue requires participation in decision-making and engagement with matters of governance through the elected representatives. For participation to be effective, people should have broad access to information about policy deliberations, they must be consulted and allowed to participate in free and fair elections.

To this end, the survey inquired about the level of participation in the most recent general elections; the parliamentary elections held on 6 April 2019. 77.0% of the respondents confirmed having taken part in the election, with 83.3% of women and 65.4% of men responding positively. Despite the high voter turnout of women (105,077) in comparison to men (107, 002), only 4 women were elected to parliament. This response is representative of the 78.41% voter turnout from across the country in the 2018 April elections¹⁴.

People were also asked to point out any issues with the elections and 46.4% of the respondents were able to identify at least one. While 7.7% cited aggressive campaigning as an issue, 7.0% pointed to mismanagement or incomplete voter registration. 9.6% of respondents thought lack of voter education was a problem. More women (10.1%) than men (8.3%) seemed unhappy about the lack of voter education.

Table 71: Perception of problematic aspects of the elections, by region

	Outer islands	Urban	Total
Lack of voter education	5.95%	11.65%	9.55%
Mismanagement or incomplete voter registration	4.19%	8.58%	6.96%
Last minute court election rulings	1.54%	4.99%	3.72%
Inadequate polling booths	1.98%	2.94%	2.59%
Insufficient duration for voting	2.86%	3.84%	3.48%
Aggressive campaigns along party lines	11.01%	5.76%	7.69%
Other	21.59%	7.04%	12.39%
RF	1.54%	3.84%	3.00%
DK/NA	49.34%	51.34%	50.61%

People’s perception about fair and equitable distribution of resources between administrative atolls and islands was also assessed. More than half (59.0%) of the respondents were unhappy about the allocations. Indicating strong inclination for the need to effectively decentralize.

Table 72: Is the distribution of resources between administrative atolls and islands fair

	Total
Strongly Agree	5.63%
Agree	13.26%
Neither	3.27%
Disagree	35.88%
Strongly Disagree	23.16%
RF	1.73%
DK/NA	17.08%

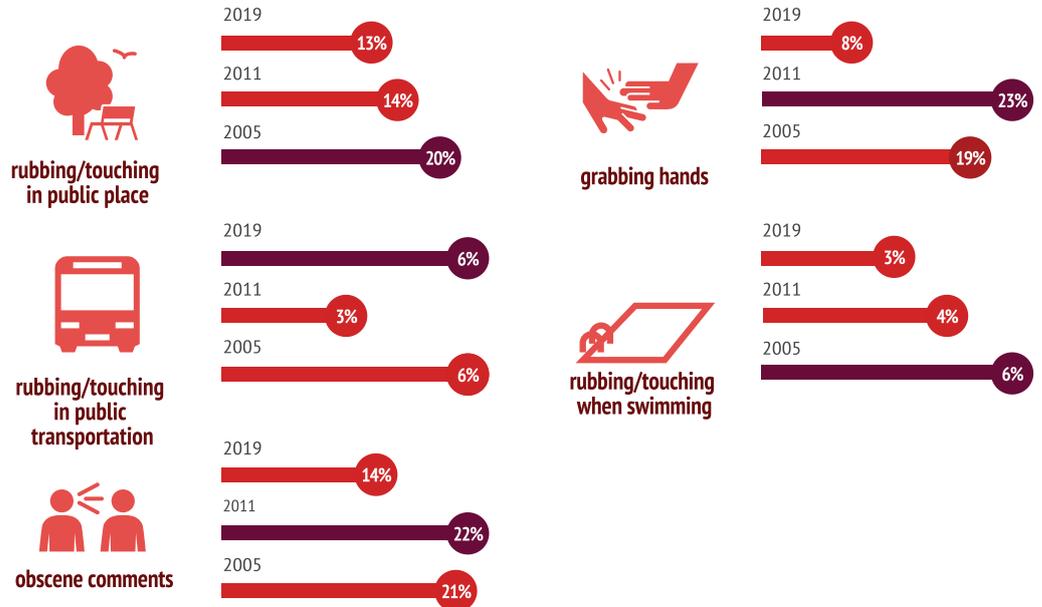
Incidentally, more people living in urban regions (67.5%) were unhappy with the distribution of resources between atolls than those in the outer islands (53.8%).

¹⁴ <https://www.elections.gov.mv/en/mediacenter/news.html>

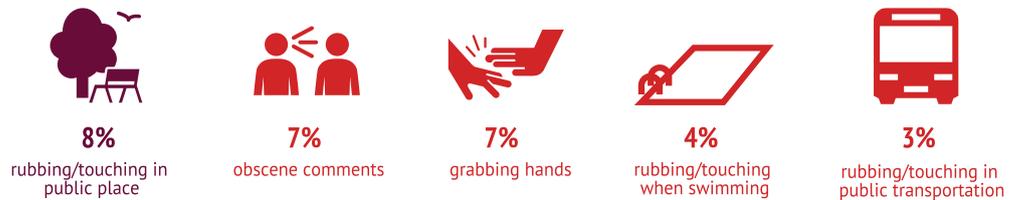


Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment Faced by Women



Sexual Harassment Faced by Men



Sexual Harassment at Workplace

60%+
of the respondents said they haven't faced any of the mentioned sexual harassment at workplace

Action Taken by Those Who Have Experienced Sexual Harassment at Workplace



Result From Actions Taken



Reason for Not Taking Actions

- 1 Not a serious enough problem/normal behaviour
- 2 Afraid I would not be believed
- 3 Police or authorities wouldn't do anything



8%

Took No Action

The "Rights" Side of Life Survey has been observing the patterns, occurrence and nature of sexual harassment in the Maldives. Since the publication of the last two reports, there have been multiple reports of sexual harassment on social media, and a movement to report these cases online under the hashtag "#nufoshey" ("don't harass") became widespread. Women and men of all ages joined this movement and started reporting and exposing perpetrators online to seek some sort of remedy to this rampant form of abuse. Therefore, understanding the present attitudes regarding the matter is key.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC PLACES

Sexual harassment in public places – faced by women

The first set of queries were designed to identify the nature of sexual harassment people were subjected to in public places. When women were asked about the most likely type of harassment they were subjected to, they said it was a man making obscene or offensive sexual comments (14.2%). The second most common type of harassment reported by women were of a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching them on their breasts or buttocks in the street, at the night market or any other public place (12.8%).

Table 73: Type of harassment in a public place faced by women

Incident	Ever	In the past 2 years	Never	RF/DK
Whether a man has rubbed himself up against or touched on the breast or bottom in public	12.83%	1.62%	68.00%	17.56%
Whether a man has grabbed hand in public	8.26%	0.66%	75.88%	15.20%
Whether a man has rubbed himself up against or touched on the breast or bottom on any vessel	5.91%	0.94%	80.78%	12.37%
Whether a man has made obscene or offensive sexual comments	14.22%	1.96%	64.58%	19.24%
Whether a man has rubbed himself up against or touched on the breast or bottom while swimming or performing other activities	3.05%	0.55%	85.73%	10.66%

These responses show a significant shift in

the nature of harassment identified from the previous report. In 2011 the most common type of harassment was cited as grabbing the victim's hand in public (22.9%) and the least reported types of harassment were a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching the respondents on the breasts or buttocks or when getting on and off on ferries or other vessels (3.4%).

Sexual harassment in public places – faced by men

Male respondents identified a woman rubbing herself against him or touching his private parts on the street or any other public place as the most common type of harassment (8.0%). The second most common type of harassment identified by men was having their hands grabbed by a woman in a public place (7.2%).

Table 74: Type of harassment in a public place faced by men

Incident	Ever	In the past 2 years	Never	RF/DK/NA
Whether a woman has rubbed herself up against or touched your private parts in public	7.95%	1.03%	74.62%	16.41%
Whether a woman has grabbed hand in public	7.18%	1.38%	81.77%	9.67%
Whether a woman has rubbed herself up against or touched your private parts on any vessel	3.25%	0.54%	82.93%	13.28%
Whether a woman has made obscene or offensive sexual comments	7.03%	0.78%	76.82%	15.36%
Whether a man has rubbed himself up against or touched your private parts while swimming or performing other activities	4.36%	0.82%	80.65%	14.17%

It is to be noted that even though both men and women are subjected to sexual harassment, there are some differences in the types of harassment experienced according to gender. However, the percentage of women who have experienced harassment in all categories is higher indicating that more women are subjected to sexual harassment than men.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

The majority of the respondents reported never

having had any experience of harassment at their workplace. Among those who acknowledged having had experiences of harassment at the workplace, the most commonly identified type of harassment was constantly using obscene or sexually suggestive language/remarks aimed at the respondent or colleagues (3.6%). Remarkably the percentage for both men and women who have been subjected to this nature of harassment is 3.4%. It is also to be noted that respondents who reported being subjected to the constant use of obscene or sexually suggestive language/remarks were mostly from urban regions (6.2%) as opposed 2.5% from outer islands.

It is concerning that 1.2% of the respondents reported that someone at work forced them to have sex with them against their will or attempted to do so.

Table 75 :Type of harassment at work

Type of harassment	Ever	Never	In the past 2 years	RF	DK/NA
Another employee, or your boss, touched you inappropriately at work, such as rubbing up against you, touching you on the breasts or bottom or patting, pinching or stroking you?	2.69%	66.72%	0.17%	2.35%	28.07%
At work, constantly uses obscene or sexually suggestive language/ remarks aimed at you or your female colleagues?	3.54%	65.49%	0.67%	2.69%	27.61%
At work, persistently suggested that you have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	2.71%	66.67%	0.68%	2.54%	27.41%
At work, you were shown/exposed to pornography or sexually explicit photos, text etc.	1.72%	68.10%	0.17%	2.74%	27.27%
At work, threatened you or implied trouble if you did not have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	1.20%	68.85%	0.17%	2.58%	27.19%
At work, forced you to have sex with him against your will, or attempted to do this [forced Ziney]	1.22%	68.47%	0.17%	2.96%	27.18%

The decline in the percentage of the respondents having experienced any of the listed behaviours shows a positive improvement in the workplace.

Table 76 :Type of harassment at work, 2005, 2011, 2019

Type of harassment	2005	2011	2019
Another employee, or your boss, touched you inappropriately at work, such as rubbing up against you, touching you on the breasts or bottom or patting, pinching or stroking you?	7.30%	8.30%	2.69%
At work, constantly uses obscene or sexually suggestive language/ remarks aimed at you or your female colleagues?	17.50%	11.50%	3.54%
At work, persistently suggested that you have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	5.50%	5.40%	2.71%
At work, you were shown/exposed to pornography or sexually explicit photos, text etc.	1.50%	5.40%	1.72%
At work, threatened you or implied trouble if you did not have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	1.50%	4.10%	1.20%
At work, forced you to have sex with him against your will, or attempted to do this [forced Ziney]	2.00%	3.40%	1.22%

When respondents who reported to having been subjected to some form of sexual harassment were further asked about the type of actions taken, most (82.2%) of the respondents replied they 'did not know' and refused to answer.

Among those who disclosed how they responded to the harassment; most (8.1%) people stated that they did not do anything about it.

Respondents who stated not taking any action following the harassment were then asked why they did not pursue the matter. Interestingly 34.2% of respondents said they did not believe it was serious enough and thought it was normal behaviour. The second highest reason for non-action was reported as fear that people would not believe them (10.5%).

Only 1.0% said they reported the case to a relevant authority such as Police, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services or Island/Atoll offices. Another 0.9% of the victims reported that they complained to their superiors. No respondents reported having filed a complaint with the Employment Tribunal or the committees established to investigate complaints of this nature in every organization. It is to be acknowledged that 5.5% of the victims told a friend.

Table 77: Type of action taken

Type of action	Response
No action	8.05%
Told a friend or a member of my family about what happened	5.51%
Told a colleague at work about what happened	1.69%
Complained to the boss at work	0.85%
Complained to another authority such as the police, Island Office, Atoll Office or the	0.64%
Submitted complaint to committee on harassment at workplace	0.42%
Submitted complaint to Labour Tribunal	0.42%
Resigned from work	0.21%
RF	3.60%
DK/NA	78.60%

A high non-response rate (92.4%) was observed to the question where the respondents were asked if the action they took brought about any changes. 4.3% who took action regarding the harassment acknowledge that it did not help them. However, 2.9% responded otherwise. More women (3.3%) than men (2.1%) reported that taking an action relieved them from the situation. Similarly, people from both the urban regions (6.5%) as well outer islands (1.8%) largely agreed that taking action helped to alleviate the situation.

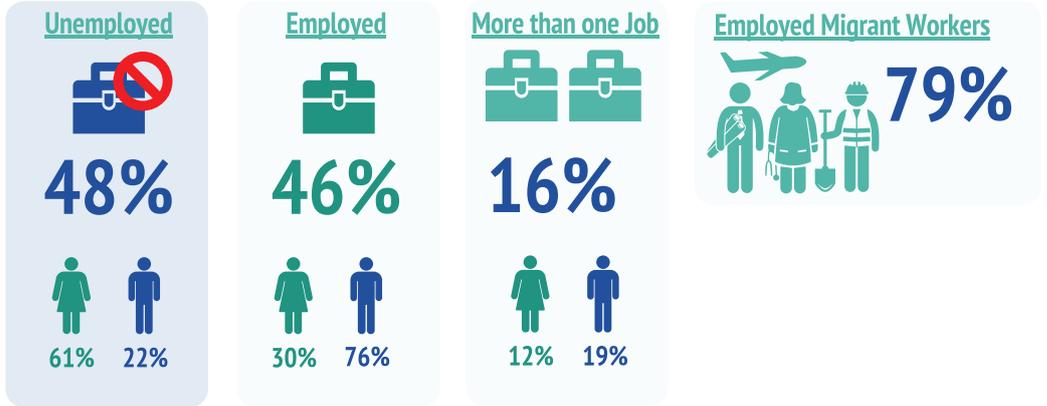
Table 78: Change in situation upon reporting, by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Situation got better	2.10%	3.28%	2.86%
Situation worsened	0.70%	0.36%	0.48%
No change	2.10%	5.11%	4.29%
RF/DK	95.11%	91.23%	92.38%

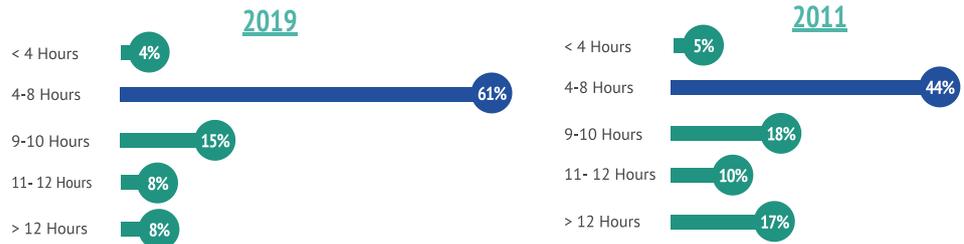


Employment Issues

Employment



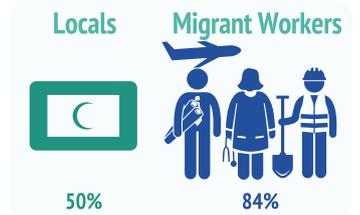
No. of Hours Worked



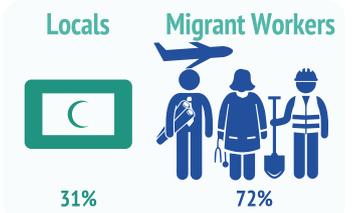
Working Days in a Month



Paid Holiday in a Month



Salary



57%
gets less than 4 days of paid holidays a month

Close to a half of the respondents of this survey reported being employed in a salaried job (46.0%), with 47.6% reporting that they were unemployed. Out of the employed, 75.8% were male and 29.9% female.

Table 79: In paid employment

Paid employment	%
Yes	45.96%
No	47.59%
RF	0.64%
Don't Know	5.81%

The sectors of employment can be seen below:

Table 80: Employment by sector, by local/foreign

	Local	Foreign	Total
Civil Service	14.55%	-	13.23%
Public Enterprise	7.58%	8.25%	7.64%
Private Enterprise	11.17%	76.29%	17.05%
National Security Service	1.13%	-	1.03%
Private house/own home or property	3.07%	2.06%	2.98%
Private place such as shop, tuition class etc	1.02%	-	0.93%
Others	2.56%	1.03%	2.42%
RF	3.18%	1.03%	2.98%
DK/NA	55.74%	11.34%	51.72%

Out of the 16% who were employed in more than one job, 19.0% were men and 12.0% were women.

According to clause 32(a) of the Employment Act (No:2/2008), 'No employee shall be required to work more than forty-eight hours a week'¹⁵. The 2005 and 2011 *The "Rights" Side of Life Surveys* highlighted that Maldivians work for long hours. 20.0% people worked for more than 12 hours in a day in 2005, and 16.6% worked for more than 12 hours in 2011. The number of people working for more than 12 hours seems to have decreased considerably to 7.5% in 2019. Out of the respondents 14.9% of the people said they were working an average of 9-10 hours. Most people (61.2%) reported working for 4-8 hours a day. Most migrant workers (58.8%) also reported working for 4- 8 hours a day.

Table 81: No of working hours, by local/foreign

No. of Hours	Local	Foreign	Total
less than 4 hrs	5.23%	22.35%	4.41%
4 – 8 hrs	61.66%	58.82%	61.21%
9 – 10 hrs	13.51%	100.00%	14.89%
11 – 12 hrs	6.32%	14.12%	7.54%
12 +	8.06%	4.71%	7.54%
RF	5.23%	0.00%	4.41%

No of Hours	Male	Female	Total
11 – 12 hrs	5.70%	1.65%	7.54%
12 + hrs	4.78%	2.57%	7.54%
4 – 8 hrs	32.9%	28.13%	61.21%
less than 4	0.37%	4.04%	4.41%
9 – 10 hrs	9.38%	5.33%	14.89%
RF	0.74%	3.68%	4.41%
Grand Total	53.86%	45.40%	100.00%

In line with the observation in the 2011 survey, close to one third of people work for more than 27 days in a month. This means many get little time off from work in the Maldives.

In 2005, 50.0% of people worked for more than 27 days a month which dropped to 37.9% in 2011. Further improvement was seen in 2019 with the decline in the figure to 31.2%. More women (34.4%) than men (29.0 %) worked for over 27 days a month.

Table 82: No of workings days, by local/foreign

No of Days	Local	Foreign	Total
Less than 20 days	3.79%	3.53%	3.75%
21 – 22 days	14.45%	2.35%	12.43%
23 – 24 days	12.80%	4.71%	11.44%
25 – 26 days	23.22%	56.47%	28.80%
27 days	7.58%	7.06%	7.50%
More than 27 days	32.23%	25.88%	31.16%
RF	5.92%	0.00%	4.93%

Majority of the respondents felt that they get enough leisure time from work and thus report being satisfied with their free time (73.0%). This seems to hold true across the sexes.

¹⁵ <http://agoffice.gov.mv/pdf/sublawe/Employment.pdf>

However, 56.5% of workers receive fewer than 4 days of paid holiday each month. The situation is slightly worse than in 2011 when 54.2% had under 4 days off in a month. It is concerning that 84.2% migrant workers get fewer than 4 days paid leave in a month.

Table 83: Paid holidays, by local/foreign

	Local	Foreign	Total
4 or less than 4 days	50.40%	84.15%	56.46%
5 days	5.87%	7.32%	6.13%
6 days	4.80%	1.22%	4.16%
7 days	5.60%	2.44%	5.03%
8 days	20.80%	2.44%	17.51%
More than 8 days	3.73%	1.22%	3.28%
RF	8.80%	1.22%	7.44%

Of the respondents 16.9% said they earned between MVR 11,000-15,000, while 14.7% reported earning more than MVR 15,000 in a month and 15.9% have stated that they earned between MVR 5,000-6,999.

Table 84: Salary, by local/foreign

Salary (MVR)	Local	Foreign	Total
Less than 1,000	3.16%	1.16%	2.81%
1.000 – 2.999	6.55%	10.47%	7.23%
3.000 – 4.999	7.52%	22.09%	10.04%
5.000 – 6.999	15.05%	19.77%	15.86%
7.000 – 8.999	12.14%	9.30%	11.65%
9.000 – 10.999	10.92%	13.95%	11.45%
11.000 – 15.000	18.20%	10.47%	16.87%
More than 15.000	15.29%	11.63%	14.66%
Reject	11.17%	1.16%	9.44%

A direct comparison between pay scales of 2011 and 2019 are not possible as the pay ranges indicated in the survey have changed. However, it appears that there is an increase in what people earn for paid work. It is to be noted that fewer women (11.0%) get a salary over MVR 15,000 in comparison to that of men (17.6%). Notably 22.7% reported getting less than MVR 1,000 from other sources of income (property income). The majority reported getting their salaries on time (73.0%)

Table 85: Frequency of salary payment, by local/foreign

	Local	Foreign	Total
Daily	1.54%	0.00%	1.40%
Weekly	1.02%	0.00%	0.93%
Fortnightly	0.10%	0.00%	0.09%
Monthly	36.48%	87.63%	41.10%
Others	1.95%	0.00%	1.77%
RF	3.59%	0.00%	3.26%
DK/NA	55.33%	12.37%	51.44%

Most people reported old age pension (21.0%) and free meals (20.0%) as the benefits they receive other than their salaries. The second most common reported in this survey were medical benefits (18.0%)

People were asked if they received a fair income for the work they do. Close to a quarter of the respondents (23.4%) believed that they received a fair income. It is imperative to note the fact that 20.4% of workers did not believe the salary they received was adequate.

It is also important to highlight that more women (57.4%) than men (22.7%) thought their salaries were fair and adequate.



Attitudes to Women's Rights

Right to Choose a Partner



2019

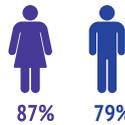
84%

believe men and women should have equal rights to choose a partner

2011

77%

believe men and women should have equal rights to choose a partner



Family Planning



2019

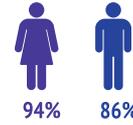
91%

supports husbands and wives to have access to birth control measures

2011

89%

supports husbands and wives to have access to birth control measures



Abortion

16%

knew a person who had an abortion



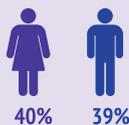
18%



15%

Should Women have Access to Safe and Legal Abortion

2019



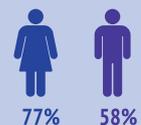
40%



45%



67%



21%



2011



91%

supports husbands and wives to have access to birth control measures

Perception on When Abortion Should be Legal

88% The pregnancy threatens the life of the mother

76% The pregnancy threatens the life of the child

27% Birth Defects

13% The pregnancy is a result of rape

10% The mother is under the age of majority

5% The mother chooses to have an abortion

5% The mother is unmarried

It is extraordinary that most of the questions regarding attitudes towards equal rights for women are yielding a high rate of non-response (more than 80%) in comparison to all the other questions of this survey. As a result, it was not possible to arrive at any conclusions based on the relatively few numbers of participants who responded to the questions. (ref to annex B for details)

It is concerning that a significant number of participants have not responded to these questions on equal rights for women specifically, mandating further investigation into the reasons for the high non-response rate.

Thus, this chapter outlines only the outcomes of questions that the participants responded to.

RIGHT TO CHOOSE A PARTNER

In order to understand what people thought about the autonomy of men and women to choose their life partners and when to get married, the survey asked the participants if they believed men and women should have the right to choose the person they want to marry and when to do so. There was overwhelming support for the right of men to exercise their autonomy in choosing a life partner and when to get married with 84.1% of the respondents responding positively. This is a more positive response to this question than in 2011 with 76.6% of the respondents agreeing that men and women should have equal rights to choose a partner. There were no significant differences between the responses from men and women, but it is seen that people living in urban areas (87.2%) agreed more readily than those from outer islands (82.2%).

Table 86: Autonomy on choosing a life partner, by gender

	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
Total	84.11%	10.45%	1.27%	4.18%
Male	78.65%	11.72%	1.82%	7.81%
Female	87.24%	9.68%	0.84%	2.24%

In 2011, young adults belonging to the 16-19 age group (84.0%) were the strongest proponents of this right. However, in 2019 it is those aged between 60-69 (89.1%) who appear to yield stronger support.

FAMILY PLANNING

Right to reproductive health and the right to reproductive self-determination are basic principles of women's right to health enshrined in the CEDAW and other human rights conventions. The 2016 research conducted by HRCM on the *Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights* indicate most youth do not have access to reliable information on reproductive health¹⁶.

There was overwhelmingly strong support for husbands and wives to have access to birth control measures (91.2%) and this support is strongest among women (94.0%). This finding is synonymous with that of 2011 (89.3%). Interestingly, more people living in urban region were in support of access to birth control measures for women.

Table 87: Women to have access to birth control measures, region

	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
Outer islands	88.95%	3.83%	1.47%	5.74%
Urban	94.79%	3.79%	0.00%	1.42%
Total	91.19%	3.81%	0.91%	4.09%

However, it is to be noted that 69.1% of migrant workers were in favour of equal rights to access to birth control measures

ABORTION

The 2011 UNFPA study on *Reproductive Health Knowledge and Behaviour of Young Unmarried Women* indicated the prevalence of risky sexual and reproductive health behaviour among unmarried young women¹⁷. Additionally, the 2008 study on the *Sociocultural Factors and Unsafe Abortions in the Maldives* conducted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) also reported on the prevalence of pregnancy and unsafe abortions among unmarried youth¹⁸.

In order to understand perceptions around abortion, three inquiries were made in this survey. Most people reported having never known a woman who has had an abortion (68.9%).

16 <http://www.hrcm.org.mv/publications/otherreports/RightToSexualAndReproductiveHealthEducation2016.pdf>

17 https://maldives.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPARHReport_reduced.pdf

18 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44529/9789241501118_eng.pdf?sequence=1

Table 88: Knowing a woman who had an abortion, by gender

	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
Male	16.41%	66.15%	0.78%	16.67%
Female	15.29%	70.55%	1.54%	12.62%
Total	15.71%	68.85%	1.36%	14.08%

In 2019, 15.7% reported knowing a person who has had an abortion and there were no significant differences observed between sexes. In 2019, 17.5 % people from the urban regions and 14.6% from outer islands reported knowing a person who has had an abortion. While in 2011 more people from outer islands (23.6%) reported knowing a person who has had an abortion in comparison to that of 16.0% from urban regions.

Table 89: Knowing a woman who had an abortion, by region

	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
Outer islands	14.58%	64.06%	1.77%	19.59%
Urban	17.54%	76.54%	0.71%	5.21%
Total	15.71%	68.85%	1.36%	14.08%

It is to be noted that while there is no significant difference between the percentage of respondents who reported knowing a person who had undergone the procedure between 2011 (15.9%) and 2019 (15.7%), the number of women who reported knowing someone who has had an abortion has fallen from 24.0% in 2011 to 15.3% in 2019.

Table 90: Knowing a woman who had an abortion, 2011, 2019

Year	Yes	No	DK/NA
2019	15.71%	68.85%	15.44%
2011	19.8%	70.0%	10.3%

When asked if women should have access to legal and safe abortions most people disagreed (45.3%). This is a worrisome shift from 2011 when most people (67.1%) believed that women should have access. It is even more concerning that a higher percentage of women (48.3%) compared to men (39.8%) believed that women are not entitled to these resources.

More respondents from outer islands (50.5 %) compared to those from urban regions (37.0%) think that women should have access to legal and safe abortions.

This survey also inquired into the circumstances

when people believed an abortion would be justified. The majority of the people were in support of an abortion if either the life of the mother (88.3%) or the baby is at risk (76.4%). It must be noted that 72.7% of people do not think a pregnancy resulting from a rape should be terminated. More women (78.8%) subscribed to this belief than men (61.7%). Additionally, respondents from the outer islands (74.4%) in comparison to those from urban regions (70.0%), were stronger supporters of the view that a woman cannot have an abortion even if her pregnancy is the result of a rape.

People below the age of 50 strongly supported this view in comparison to older age groups.

Table 91: Access to safe and legal abortion if pregnancy is the result of rape, by age

Age Group	Yes	No	RF	DK/NA
16 - 19	13.04%	71.74%	8.70%	6.52%
20 - 29	11.70%	72.08%	2.64%	13.58%
30 - 39	16.45%	70.32%	4.19%	9.03%
40 - 49	9.71%	79.61%	2.43%	8.25%
50 - 59	9.35%	72.90%	7.48%	10.28%
60 - 69	17.39%	69.57%	4.35%	8.70%
70 and above	25.00%	66.67%	8.33%	0.00%
NA	12.70%	68.25%	0.00%	19.05%
Grand Total	12.99%	72.66%	4.00%	10.35%

Equally worrying is the fact that 76.4% of people think that even if the mother is under the age of eighteen years, the pregnancy should not be terminated. Again women (81.2%) were in strong support of the view that a girl cannot have an abortion compared to men (68.0%).



Conclusion

This report highlights human rights concerns that have magnified over the past seven years since the publication of the previous *The "Rights" Side of Life* survey. These concerns have manifested into serious issues demanding immediate and concerted national responses.

The RSL2 highlighted a worrying decline in support for gender equality and conviction in equal rights for women. The support for gender equality has diminished and women's rights seem to have suffered even more over the years. What is significantly worse is the emergence of a religious extremist narrative that has been used to weaken support for gender equality and women's rights. Gender equality remains one of the most commonly cited reasons for incompatibility of human rights with Islam.

Findings of the survey manifest the acceptance of both men and women that the woman has a subordinate relationship in marriage. It is not viewed as a partnership by most respondents and the man is accepted as dominant in the marriage more readily by women than men. This study brings to light the lack of support for the woman's consent in marriage and requires immediate advocacy intervention. More than half of the respondents reported that a woman is expected to have sex with her husband even if she does not want to and increasingly, more women than men support this view.

There is an immediate and real concern regarding the persistent acceptance of violence against women, especially as an increasing number of women have begun to find justification and acceptance for acts of violence against them by their husbands.

The findings of several chapters in this survey evidently suggest associations with each other. Increasingly, more people are of the opinion that human rights and Islam are incompatible. The reasons cited for the perceived incompatibility; human rights advocate for equal rights for women and rights of the child; human rights impede Islamic Shariah; human rights conflict with Islamic values, are worrying. This manifests signs of radicalization and growing violent extremism. This survey also notes that women, young girls and children as those who stand to lose most, when respect for human rights decline.

The fact that growing concern regarding child sexual abuse has been consistently highlighted in all three *"Rights" Side of Life* surveys, indicates the inadequate response of the State to remedy this issue. The majority of respondents were unhappy with the protection provided for children. This is also aligns with the response of this survey, identifying child rights as the most important human right.

Similarly, most respondents were also dissatisfied with the protection ensured for persons with disabilities. Access to education and elimination of discriminations against persons with disabilities were identified as the most important areas to be strengthened for better protection.

It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the protection afforded to the elderly. People identified prevention of neglect and abuse of the elderly as imperative measures to ensure protection.

The newly incorporated chapter on domestic violence highlights significant issues. Neither women nor men recognize an intimate relationship between a man and a woman outside marriage as a domestic relationship. There is concern that violation of rights, abuse and violence in these relationships will go unreported.

It is heartening to note that an overwhelming majority of respondents know they can seek a protection order and are aware of the institutions they can report to. However, most respondents were dissatisfied with the performance of these institutions and this should be an imperative focus for policy makers, the judiciary, investigative and oversight bodies and institutional heads.

Substance abuse, financial stress and lack of adequate housing were named as root causes for domestic violence by the respondents. These socio-economic issues must be addressed with more expediency to prevent domestic violence.

Significant number of people reported knowing a domestic abuse survivor and also admitted to being a survivor themselves. Some survivors of domestic violence shared that the most abuse they suffered pertained to being forcefully impregnated while they were trying to remove themselves from harmful marriages. Additionally, the fact that so many survivors reported experiencing a range of acts of domestic violence from their in-laws needs to be addressed.

Synonymous to the concerning reports of sexual harassment on social media, the findings of this report reaffirm the rampant existence of harassment in both public places and at work. Several forms of verbal abuse and physical abuse in public places and at workplaces have been reported. Also, of concern is that many victims chose not to do anything about the harassment and the fact that a significant number of those respondents said they did not pursue any action because this kind of behaviour is seen as normal and not 'serious enough'.

This study yielded strong support for democracy, with a significant number of respondents agreeing that a democratic form of government is good for the country, and perhaps this is linked to the high voter turnout in elections. Nevertheless, respondents do not appear convinced about the success of the democratic processes and have identified corruption as the main hindrance.

The high voter turnout in the last two elections

is reflected in the responses of the majority of respondents who confirmed they voted in the last parliamentary elections. More than half of the respondents were unhappy with the unfair allocation of resources between administrative atolls and islands.

While most people were satisfied with schooling and education in the Maldives, the majority, especially those from the outer islands, were highly disappointed with health services and believed that the sector has not progressed over the years. This year's survey highlighted that people were happy with the performance of the police and respondents' satisfaction rate has seen an increase from that of 2011. On the other hand, people remain dissatisfied with prison services as they reported corruption, lack of supervision, abuse of prisoners, and torture as the reasons for their disapproval. Generally, people were in agreement that social services have not improved over the years.

More than half of the respondents were convinced that the government was taking adequate measures to improve services in all areas except housing including financial assistance.

It is concerning that majority of the migrant workers get less than 4 days of paid leave in a month which is below the minimum standard set under the Employment Act.

Finally, the decline in the approval rate of HRCM in relation to the 2011 findings has to be considered with gravity. This inadvertently affects the respect for human rights among people in general, perception and faith in the institution and the impact of the current and future work of HRCM. It underlies the findings in this report suggesting that the majority of Maldivians are now aware of HRCM. Similarly, the lack of awareness on the constitutional role and functions of HRCM as an oversight body, should also be a primary concern for the Commission to address.

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ANNEX A - SURVEY INSTRUMENT

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF THE MALDIVES

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire Design by Peter Hosking

Demographic Information

1. Atoll (if in Male indicate Ward)
 2. Atoll Code
 3. Island
 4. Island Code
 5. Household Number
 6. Sex:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Refused
 - d. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 7. Age (at last birthday)
 - a. Age
 - b. Refused
 - c. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 8. Into what age group do you fall?
 - a. 16 – 19
 - b. 20 – 29
 - c. 30 – 39
 - d. 40 – 49
 - e. 50 – 59
 - f. 60 – 69
 - g. 70 or over
 - h. Refused
 - i. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 9. Nationality
 - a. Maldivian [Skip to Qu 13]
 - b. Bangladeshi
 - c. Indian
 - d. Sri Lankan
 - e. Other ----- (Specify)
 - f. Refused
 - g. Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Enumerator: "I am now going to ask you about your immigration status. I remind you that this survey is strictly confidential and no-one will know your answer to this question. However, knowing about peoples' immigration status will help the Human Rights Commission protect their rights."
10. Do you have a valid visa for the Maldives?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Refused
 - d. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 11. What is the total number of people who live in this household?
 12. Relationship to Head of Household
 - a. Household Head
 - b. Spouse
 - c. Child
 - d. Stepchild
 - e. Brother / Sister
 - f. Grandchild
 - g. Parent / Step parent
 - h. Son-in-Law / Daughter in Law
 - i. Other relative
 - j. Non relative
 - k. Domestic servant (Maldivian)
 - l. Domestic servant (Foreign)
 - m. Refused
 - n. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 13. What is your highest education level achieved?
 - a. Adult literacy
 - b. Local certificate
 - c. Primary (grade 1 to 7)
 - d. Low secondary (grade 8 to 10)
 - e. High Secondary (grade 11 to 12)
 - f. Diploma
 - g. Higher Education (first degree onwards)
 - h. Refused
 - i. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 14. Did you ever leave your home to further your education on Male [Were/are you a "boarder" child?] (This question is aimed to all except foreigners)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Skip to Q. 18)
 - c. Refused (Skip to Q. 18)
 - d. Don't Know/Not Applicable (Skip to Q. 18)
 15. If yes, for how long?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1 – 2 years
 - c. 2 – 3 years
 - d. 3 – 4 years
 - e. 4 – 10 years
 - f. Over 10 years
 - g. Refused
 - h. Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Enumerator: "I now want to ask you some questions about this house"
16. Does the house have electricity?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Refused
 - d. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 17. Do you have drinking water available at all the times?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Refused
 - d. Don't Know/Not Applicable
 18. From which source do you get your drinking water? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- a. Rainwater tank / storage facility in the household compound
- b. Well water in the household compound
- c. Public/community rainwater tanks
- d. Desalination plant
- e. Public piped water supply
- f. Mineral water (ie bottled)
- g. Other (Specify)
- h. Refused
- i. Don't Know/Not Applicable

19. What type of sanitary/sewerage system does the household have?

- a. Toilet connected to sea
- b. Toilet connected to septic tank
- c. Open area [gifli] surrounded by walls connected to the sea
- d. Open area [gifli] surrounded by walls connected to septic tank
- e. Open area [gifli] (without toilet seat/ septic tank)
- f. Other (specify)
- g. Refused
- h. Don't Know/Not Applicable

Enumerator "I now want to ask you some questions about your employment"

20. Are you in paid employment?

- a. Yes
- b. No [Skip to Q. 25]
- c. Refused [Skip to Q. 25]
- d. Don't Know/Not Applicable [Skip to Q. 25]

21. Are you employed in more than one job?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Refused [Skip to Q. 25]
- d. Don't Know/Not Applicable [Skip to Q. 25]

22. In what sector are you employed? [More than one answer possible]

- a. Fishing
- b. Government job
- c. Home business eg pastry-making
- d. Private business outside the home
- e. Handicraft
- f. Day labour
- g. Tourism Industry
- h. Agriculture
- i. Retail shop
- j. Joint venture
- k. Domestic worker (servant)
- l. Other ----- (specify)
- m. Refused
- n. Don't Know/Not Applicable

23. What is your employment status? [More than one answer possible]

- a. Employer

- b. Employee
- c. Group worker
- d. Self-employed [Answer Q. 26, 27, 28 and go to Q. 32]
- e. Household duties and childcare [Answer Q. 27, Q. 32 and then go to Q. 37]
- f. Unpaid family worker (Answer Q. 27, 28 and go to Q. 37)
- g. Other [Specify.....]
- h. Unemployed [Skip to Q. 37]
- i. Refused
- j. Don't Know/Not Applicable

24. What employment sector are you in? [More than one answer possible]

- a. Civil Service
- b. Public Enterprise
- c. Private Enterprise
- d. National Security Service
- e. Private house/own home or property
- f. Private place such as shop, tuition class etc
- g. Other [Specify.....]
- h. Refused
- i. Don't Know/Not Applicable

25. How many hours a day do you work?

- a. Less than 4 hours
- b. 4-8 hrs
- c. 9-10 hrs
- d. 11-12 hrs
- e. More than 12 hrs
- f. Refused
- g. Don't Know/Not Applicable

26. How many days a month do you work?

- a. Less than 20 days per month
- b. 21-22 days
- c. 23-24 days
- d. 25-26 days
- e. 27 days
- f. More than 27 days
- g. Refused
- h. Don't Know/Not Applicable

27. How many days paid holiday do you get each month, including weekends?

- a. 4 days or less than 4 days
- b. 5 days
- c. 6 days
- d. 7 days
- e. 8 days
- f. More than 8 days
- g. Refused
- h. Don't Know/Not Applicable

28. Do you consider that in your own job you have adequate time off for leisure and to spend with your family and friends?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Refused

- d. Don't Know/Not Applicable
29. How much did you receive from your employment excluding self-employment in the past month? (Wages and salaries including other benefits)
- Less than MVR 1000 per month
 - MVR 1000 – 2999
 - MVR 3000 – 4999
 - MVR 5000 – 6999
 - MVR 7000 – 8999
 - MVR 9000 – 10999
 - MVR 11000 – 15000
 - Above MVR 15000
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
30. How much did you receive from property income (such as renting) or profits from self-employment or family business in the past month?
- Less than MVR 1000 per month
 - MVR 1000 – 2999
 - MVR 3000 – 4999
 - MVR 5000 – 6999
 - MVR 7000 – 8999
 - MVR 9000 – 10999
 - MVR 11000 – 15000
 - Above MVR 15000
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
31. How do you get paid?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Fortnightly
 - Monthly
 - Other
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
32. Does your pay or allowances get late?
- Always on time
 - Sometimes late
 - Usually late
 - Always late
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
33. What benefits do you get in addition to your pay? [more than one answer possible. Please read the answers]
- Free meals
 - Subsidized meals
 - Meal allowance
 - Free accommodation
 - Subsidized accommodation
 - Accommodation allowance
 - Free medical care
 - Pension
 - Health Insurance
- Housing Loan
 - Credit Scheme
 - Hajju Scheme
 - Other
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
34. Do you consider your wage and benefits fair for the work you do?
- Yes
 - No
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
35. Do you consider that workers who are required to live on their employer's site should have time off to spend with their families and friends in addition to normal holiday entitlements?
- Yes
 - No
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
36. How does your household compare economically with the other households in your community?
- Well below average
 - Below average
 - Average
 - Above average
 - Well off
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Awareness of the Human Rights Commission**
37. Have you heard of [are you aware of] Human Rights Commission of the Maldives?
- Yes
 - No [Skip to Q. 48]
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
38. Thinking about how well [how good a job] Human Rights Commission of the Maldives is doing, do you think the Commission is doing:
- An excellent job
 - A good job
 - A satisfactory job
 - Not that good a job
 - A poor job
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
39. What is the role [job] [what are the responsibilities] Human Rights Commission

of the Maldives?

[Do not prompt - more than one answer possible]

- a. Protect human rights
- b. Receive/Investigate complaints about human rights
- c. Promote/educate about/human rights
- d. Advise the State about human rights
- e. Monitor the human rights performance of the State
- f. Other [Please state.....]
- g. Refused
- h. Don't Know/Not Applicable

	More	Less	About the same	Refused	Don't Know/Not Applicable
40. <i>Protect human rights?</i>					
41. Receive/Investigate complaints about human rights?					
42. Monitor the human rights performance of the State?					
43. Promote/educate about/human rights?					
44. Advise the State about human rights?					
45. Protect the rights of vulnerable population (children, women, elderly and people with disabilities)					

Awareness of Human Rights

46. How do you rate your own awareness about human rights?
- a. High awareness
 - b. Moderate awareness
 - c. Low awareness
 - d. Refused
 - e. Don't Know/Not Applicable
47. Please name up to five human rights which you consider the most important, if you can (Please do not prompt)
- a. Children's rights
 - b. Access to good quality of education
 - c. Access to health services
 - d. Adequate food
 - e. Women's rights to equality
 - f. A secure family life
 - g. Right to a safe and clean environment to live in
 - h. Right to adequate/decent standard of housing
 - i. Security of property
 - j. Employment opportunities/Right to a job/work
 - k. Right to adequate living standard/income
 - l. Right to fair conditions of work (including fair pay)
 - m. Freedom of expression
 - n. Right to justice/a fair trial
 - o. Freedom of opinion, conscience and religion
 - p. Freedom of assembly and the right to protest within the law
 - q. Right to vote/participate in government
 - r. Freedom of association, including the right to form political parties and trade unions

- s. Right to personal security/ to be free from violence
- t. Freedom from arbitrary arrest/torture
- u. Freedom of movement, including the right to stay on the island of one's choice and adequate transport services
- v. Other (specify).....
- w. Refused
- x. Don't Know/Not Applicable

48. How many rights was the respondent able to name?

- a. Able to name 5 human rights
- b. Able to name 4 human rights
- c. Able to name 3 human rights
- d. Able to name 2 human rights
- e. Able to name 1 human right
- f. Not able to name any human rights (Don't know)
- g. Refused
- h. Not Applicable

49. [Show Flash Card] Some human rights are listed on the card I have just given to you. I would like you to tell me which you think are the ten most important ones in your life or in your community.

- a. Children's rights
- b. Access to good quality of education
- c. Access to health services
- d. Adequate food
- e. Women's rights to equality
- f. A secure family life
- g. Right to a safe and clean environment to live in
- h. Right to adequate/decent standard of housing
- i. Security of property
- j. Employment opportunities/Right to a job/work
- k. Right to adequate living standard/income
- l. Right to fair conditions of work (including fair pay)
- m. Freedom of expression
- n. Right to justice/a fair trial
- o. Freedom of opinion, conscience and religion
- p. Freedom of assembly and the right to protest within the law
- q. Right to vote/participate in government
- r. Freedom of association, including the right to form political parties and trade unions
- s. Right to personal security/ to be free from violence
- t. Freedom from arbitrary arrest/torture
- u. Freedom of movement, including the right to stay on the island of one's choice and adequate transport services
- v. Other (specify).....
- w. Refused
- x. Don't Know/Not Applicable

Democratic Reforms

50. A new Constitution came into force for the Maldives in 2008 with a Chapter on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. How important do you think it is for people to know these rights and freedoms?

- a. Very important
- b. Somewhat important
- c. Not important
- d. Refused
- e. Don't Know/Not Applicable

51. Have you read the Fundamental Rights in Chapter II of the Constitution?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Refused
- d. Don't Know/Not Applicable

52. Do you consider every household should be provided with a copy of the Constitution by the Government?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Refused
- d. Don't Know/Not Applicable

53. In your opinion, have there been benefits from the democratic reforms brought to the Maldives?

- a. Yes (skip to Q.57)
- b. No
- c. Partly
- d. Refused (skip to Q.57)
- e. Don't Know/Not Applicable (skip to Q.57)

54. In your opinion, what are the reasons democratic reforms have not been successful or only partly successful? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- a. Mistrust among political parties
- b. ineffectual Parliament (Majlis)
- c. Ineffective politicians
- d. Lack of understanding about democracy by the public
- e. Insufficient resources allocated for democratic strengthening
- f. Government/executive influence/ interference with Majlis or judiciary
- g. Corruption
- h. Other [Specify.....]
- i. Refused
- j. Don't Know/Not Applicable

The Right to Personal Security and Crime

55. Do you personally know anyone who has been a victim of crime in the past 12 months?
- Yes
 - No (skip to Q.61)
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
56. Thinking of this person (or one of them if more than one), was this person (victim):
- A member of your household?
 - A neighbor?
 - A member of your community?
 - None of the above
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
57. Was this person (victim):
- Male?
 - Female?
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
58. What was the age of this person (victim)?
- 15 or under
 - 16-18
 - 19-34
 - 35 or above
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
59. Do you consider the crime rate in your community/on your island has increased in the last 12 months?
- Greatly increased
 - Somewhat increased
 - Neither increased nor decreased [Skip to Q. 64]
 - Decreased [Skip to Q. 64]
 - Greatly decreased [Skip to Q. 64]
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable [Skip to Q. 64]
60. To what do you attribute this increase in the crime rate? [Select from the list below. Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
- Economic reasons
 - Lack of work
 - Absence from school without approval from parents and schools
 - Neglecting parents responsibility
 - Drugs
 - Gangs
 - Release of criminals from jail/detention by Police
 - Release of criminals from jail/detention by Courts

- Political issues
- Housing issues
- Lack of law enforcement
- Lack of government attention to crime
- Other [Specify]
- Refused
- Don't Know/Not Applicable

61. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to do something about the increased crime rate? [Select from the list below. Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
- The Parliament (Majlis)
 - The Government
 - The Police
 - The Courts
 - The Atoll Council
 - The Island Council
 - Parents
 - Human Rights Commission
 - Society (all)
 - Other (Specify).....
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable

Human Rights and Religion

62. Do you consider the human rights practiced in Maldives to be in conflict with religion?
- Yes
 - Some rights
 - No [Skip to Qu 66]
 - There is no connection between human rights and religion (Skip to Qu 66)
 - Refused
 - Don't Know/Not Applicable
63. Can you give me any examples of human rights that are in conflict with religion?

[Enumerator – do not show the Flash Card]

- Names 1 right (List).....
- Names 2 rights (List).....
- Names 3 rights (List).....
- RF
- DK/NA

Attitudes to Women's Rights

Enumerator: "In this community, people have difference views about women's rights to equality with men in the family, in the courts, in relation to custody of children and on dissolution of marriage and their rights to inheritance. The Human Rights Commission is interested in your confidential opinion about some of these issues."

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	RF	DK/NA
1.1 Do you agree or disagree that women should have equal rights with men matters relating to family responsibilities and work?	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.2 Do you agree or disagree that women should have equal rights with men before the courts?	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.3 Do you agree or disagree that women should have equal rights with men in relation to divorce?	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.4 Do you agree or disagree that women should have equal rights with men in relation to work?	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.5 Do you agree or disagree that women should have equal rights with men to take part in the government and be elected to political positions?	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.

65. Thinking about the recent parliament elections, and the fact that very few women were elected to Atoll Councils and Island Councils, why do you think this is?

[Select from the following list. Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- a. No women candidates
- b. No qualified women candidates
- c. Men were better qualified than women candidates
- d. Men do not want to vote for a woman candidate
- e. Women do not want to vote for a woman candidate
- f. Lack of family support for candidates
- g. Lack of societal support for candidates
- h. Candidates' lack of funds
- i. Other [Specify.....]
- j. RF
- k. DK/NA

66. Do you think that women and men should themselves have the right to decide when to get married and to whom?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

67. Do you think women and men should have ready access to family planning (birth control) measures?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

68. Do you personally know anyone who has had an abortion outside of the conditions allowed in the Maldives "Nuthufaa nathaalumaa Hayyarun Nattuvaalumaa Dharivattaalumaa Behey" Fatwa?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

69. Do you think that women should have access to safe and legal abortion in accordance to Maldives Islamic Fiqh Academy's "Nuthufaa nathaalumaa Hayyarun Nattuvaalumaa Dharivattaalumaa Behey" Fatwa?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

70. In what circumstances do you think abortion should be legal?

- a. YES
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

71. In what circumstances do you think abortion should be legal?

	YES 1	No 2	RF 3	DK/NA 4
70.1 The pregnancy threatens the life of the mother	1	2	3	4
70.2 The pregnancy threatens the life of the baby	1	2	3	4
70.3 Birth defects	1	2	3	4
70.4 The pregnancy is the result of rape	1	2	3	4
70.5 The mother is unmarried	1	2	3	4
70.6 The mother is under the age of majority	1	2	3	4
70.7 The mother choose to abort	1	2	3	4

Attitudes to family and ideas about acceptable behaviour in the home

Enumerator: "In this community and throughout the Maldives, people have different ideas about families, and what is acceptable behaviour for men and women in the home. I am going to read you a list of statements and I would like you to tell me whether you generally agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers – the survey is just trying to discover people's attitudes to these things. Also, I want to remind you that this questionnaire is confidential. No-one else here will know what you have answered to these questions."

72.

	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree	6. RF	7. DK/NA
72.1 A good wife always obeys her husband even if she disagrees	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
72.2 Family problems should only be discussed with people in the family	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
72.3 It is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
72.4 The wife should obey the husband if he asks to do anything that is against Islamic law.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.

72.5 It is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn't feel like it	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
72.6 If a man mistreats his wife, others outside the family should intervene	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.

73. In your opinion, does a man have a good reason to hit his wife if:

Instance	1 . Strongly agree	2 . Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Dis-agree	5 . Strongly Disagree	6 . RF.	7. DK/NA
73.1 She does not complete her housework to his satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.2 She disobeys him	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.3 She refuses to have sex with him	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.4 She asks him whether he has other girlfriends	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.5 He suspects that she is unfaithful	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.6 He finds out that she has been unfaithful	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.7 She goes against Islam? [haraam]	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.8 She beats the children	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
73.9 Other (Specify.....)	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.

74. In your opinion, a man should never hit his wife.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. RF
- g. DK/NA

75. In your opinion, does a woman have a good reason to hit her husband if:

Instance	1 . Strongly agree	2 . Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Dis-agree	5 Strongly Disagree	6 . RF.	7. DK/NA
75.1 he does not complete housework to her satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.2 disobeys her	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.3 refuses to have sex	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.4 he asks her whether she has other boy-friends	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.5 She suspects that he is unfaithful	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.6 She finds out that he has been unfaithful	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.7 he goes against Islam? [haraam]	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.8 he beats the children	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.
75.9 Other (Specify.....)	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7.

76. In your opinion, a man should never hit his wife.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. RF
- g. DK/NA

77. In your opinion, can a married woman refuse to have sex with her husband if:

Instance	1. Yes	2. No	3. RF	4. DK/NA
77.1 She doesn't want to	1	2	3.	4.
77.2 He is intoxicated	1	2	3.	4.
77.3 She is sick	1	2	3.	4.
77.4 He mistreats her	1	2	3.	4.

78. In your opinion, can a married man refuse to have sex with his wife if:

Instance	1. Yes	2. No	3. RF	4. DK/NA
78.1 he doesn't want to	1	2	3.	4.
78.2 She is intoxicated	1	2	3.	4.
78.3 he is sick	1	2	3.	4.
78.4 She mistreats him	1	2	3.	4.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Knowledge

79. Are you aware that you can apply for a Protection Order if you become a victim of domestic violence?
- Yes
 - No
 - RF
 - DK/NA
80. Please name at least 5 (you may name more than 5) acts which you consider as acts of domestic violence?
- Physical abuse
 - Verbal abuse / psychological abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Economic / Financial abuse
 - Impregnating the spouse, without concern to her health condition and against any medical advice to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time
 - Impregnating a women, who is trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage, against her will;
 - Deliberately withholding the property of a person;
 - intimidation;
 - harassment;
 - stalking;
 - damage to property;
 - entry into, and being present thereafter at the victim's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence;
 - any other act which may be described as controlling or abusive behavior towards the victim;
 - coercing, intimidating or forcing the victim to commit an act which such person would not have consented to or committed by their own volition;
 - confining the victim to a place or restricting their movement against their will;
 - attempting to commit any of the foregoing acts or causing apprehension of such acts; or
 - Causing a minor to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a minor in such situation where such minor may witness or hear an act of domestic violence.
 - Other.....
 - RF
 - DK/NA
81. Please name up to 5 relationships which you consider as a domestic relationship?
- Persons who are or were married to each other
 - Persons who share or have recently shared the same residence
 - Persons who are the parents of a child or are persons who have or had parental responsibility for that child
 - Persons who are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or marriage
 - Persons who are domestic child carers or domestic workers
 - Persons who are in an intimate relationship
 - RF
 - DK/NA
82. If you have reason to believe that an act of domestic violence has been, or is being, committed, do you know what institution(s) to report it to?
- Yes
 - No [Skip to Qu 85]
 - RF [Skip to Qu 85]
 - DK/NA [Skip to Qu 85]
83. If yes, what institution(s) should you report it to?
- Police
 - Ministry of Gender and Family
 - Family Protection Authority
 - Hospital / Health center
 - HRCM
 - Others
 - RF
 - DK/NA

Perception

84. Considering the works that the institutions responsible for prevention of domestic violence are doing, how well [how good a job] are they doing?
- An excellent job
 - A good job
 - A satisfactory job
 - Not that good a job
 - A poor job
 - RF
 - DK/NA
85. In relation to the institutions working towards prevention of domestic violence in what way(s) do you think they can improve their services? (you may give more than one answer)
- Create public awareness
 - Capacity building of staff
 - Rehabilitation of perpetrators
 - Adequate, timely and convenient assistance to survivors
 - Other.....
 - RF
 - DK/NA
86. In your opinion, what factors contribute to domestic violence? (you may give

more than one answer)

- a. Economic reasons
- b. Drugs
- c. Patriarchal beliefs
- d. Lack of Education
- e. Housing issues
- f. Other.....
- g. RF
- h. DK/NA

Prevalence

87. Have you ever experienced any form of domestic violence?
- a. Yes
 - b. No [Skip to Qu 8g]
 - c. RF [Skip to Qu 8g]
 - d. DK/NA [Skip to Qu 8g]
88. Has anyone close to you (your relative/close friend) experienced any form of domestic violence?
- a. Yes (if yes i,ii,iii)
 - b. No
 - c. RF
 - d. DK/NA

(if yes to question 86 and 87, please ask the following 3 questions)

(i) What type(s) of abuse was it?

- a. Physical abuse
- b. Verbal abuse / psychological abuse
- c. Sexual abuse
- d. Economic / Financial abuse
- e. Impregnating the spouse, without concern to her health condition and against any medical advice to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time
- f. Impregnating a women, who is trying to remove herself from a harmful marriage, against her will;
- g. Deliberately withholding the property of a person;
- h. intimidation;
- i. harassment;
- j. stalking;
- k. damage to property;
- l. entry into, and being present thereafter at the victim's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence;
- m. any other act which may be described as controlling or abusive behavior towards the victim;
- n. coercing, intimidating or forcing the victim to commit an act which such person would not have consented to or committed by their own volition;
- o. confining the victim to a place or restricting their movement against their will;

- p. attempting to commit any of the foregoing acts or causing apprehension of such acts; or
- q. Causing a minor to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a minor in such situation where such minor may witness or hear an act of domestic violence.
- r. Other.....
- s. RF
- t. DK/NA

(ii) From whom?

- a. Husband / Wife
- b. Father
- c. Mother
- d. Exhusband / Exwife
- e. Boyfriend / Girlfriend
- f. Exboyfriend / Exgirlfriend
- g. Relative
- h. Inlaws
- i. RF
- j. DK/NA

(iii) When did the act(s) of violence happen?

- a. In the past 12 months
- b. In the past 1-5 years
- c. In the past 5-10years
- d. 10 years ago
- e. RF
- f. DK/NA

Sexual Abuse of Children

Enumerator: "The next two questions ask the extent to which you think the sexual abuse of children is a problem in the Maldives."

89. The purpose of this question is to identify how serious do you consider the sexual abuse of children in Maldives

	A serious problem 1	A problem, but not serious 2	Not a problem 3	RF 4	DK/NA 5
89.1 how serious do you consider the sexual abuse of girls	1	2	3	3	4
89.2 how serious do you consider the sexual abuse of boys	1	2	3	4	5

Other Rights of Children

[Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

90. In relation to children's rights, are you satisfied how these are adequately protected in the Maldives?

- Satisfied [Skip to Qu 93]
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- RF
- DK/NA

91. In relation to children's rights, in what areas do you think children's rights need improved protection?

[Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- Better access to education
- Malnutrition
- Infant mortality
- Gender stereotyping/discrimination
- Inadequate sanitation
- Geographic isolation/access to basic services
- Violence against children
- Drugs
- Crime and/or gangs
- Other [Specify.....]
- RF
- DK/NA

Rights of Older People

92. Are you satisfied that there is adequate protection for the rights of older people in the Maldives?

- Satisfied (Skip to Qu 95)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- RF
- DK/NA

93. In relation to the rights of older people, in what areas do you think the rights of older people need increased protection?

- Abuse (physical or mental)
- Neglect
- Lack of legislation and/or policies to protect older people
- Inadequate pension
- Inadequate attention to health status of older people
- Inadequate housing for older people
- Lack of information/knowledge about benefits from Aasandha Health Insurance (including medications, dentures, hearing aids etc)
- Lack of oversight (registration) of caregivers of older people
- Lack of respite care to ensure that family and volunteer carers are not overburdened
- Lack of residential care/nursing home facilities
- Other [Specify.....]
- RF
- DK/NA

94. Are you satisfied that there is adequate protection for the rights of people with disabilities in the Maldives?

- Satisfied (Skip to Qu 97)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- RF
- DK/NA

95. In relation to the rights of people with disabilities, in what areas do you think the rights of older people need increased protection?

[Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- Lack of access to education
- Lack of schools for children with special needs
- Lack of facilities in existing schools for children with special needs

- d. Inadequate health care (including mental health care) for people with disabilities
- e. Stereotyping/discrimination
- f. Lack of employment/employment services
- g. Inadequate benefits/lack of information/knowledge about benefits from Aasand-ha
- h. Health Insurance
- i. Access to buildings and on transport
- j. Other [Specify.....]
- k. RF
- l. DK/NA

Right to equality of access to services

Enumerator: "In this section of the questionnaire, I will be asking you about your satisfaction levels with various government services. In relation to each service, I will be asking whether, overall, you are satisfied with the service, whether you are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or whether you are dissatisfied with the service."

- 96. In relation to schools and the education system, are you:
 - a. Satisfied
 - b. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - c. Dissatisfied
 - d. RF
 - e. DK/NA

- 97. In your opinion, what aspects of the education system need further improvement? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
 - a. Education to higher grade on islands
 - b. Better trained and qualified teachers
 - c. Better facilities, such as library, laboratory
 - d. Better qualified Principals
 - e. Better monitoring systems
 - f. 6. Other [Specify.....]
 - g. RF
 - h. DK/NA

98. This question focuses on level of health:

	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	RF	DN/NA
98.1 In relation to access to health are you	1	2	3	4	5
98.2 In relation to access to medicines are you	1	2	3	4	5
98.3 In relation to access to hospitals are you	1	2	3	4	5

99. In your opinion, what aspects of the health system need further improvement?

[Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]

- a. More health centers
- b. Better services at health centers
- c. More hospitals at a regional level
- d. Better services at hospitals
- e. Other [Specify.....]
- f. RF
- g. DK/NA

100. With regards to the following what is your opinion?

	1. Satisfied	2. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. RF	5. DK/NA
100.1 In relation to employment and work opportunities, are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.2 In relation to access to markets to sell your products, such as fish, produce, handicrafts etc are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.3 In relation to transport services (ferries, air services etc) are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.4 In relation to banking and credit facilities, are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.5 In relation to access to radio are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.6 In relation to access to television are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.7 In relation to access to information via the Internet, are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
100.8 In relation to access to postal services, are you:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

101. In relation to the judicial system are :
- Satisfied [Skip to Qu 104]
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [Skip to Qu 104]
 - Dissatisfied
 - RF
 - DK/NA
102. If not satisfied, in your opinion what is not working properly in the judicial system? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
- Unfair/unjust decisions
 - Corruption
 - Competence of judiciary
 - Lack of access to lawyers
 - Lack of information
 - Lack of security for judges
 - Other [Specify.....]
 - RF
 - DK/NA
103. In relation to the security services providing safety and protection, are you:
- Satisfied [Skip to Qu 106]
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [Skip to Qu 106]
 - Dissatisfied
 - RF
 - DK/NA
104. If not satisfied, what do you consider is not working properly in the security services? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
- Can't get police when we need them
 - Not dealing with crimes
 - Lack of fairness/bias
 - Corruption
 - Torture
 - Lack of information about cases/detainees
 - Lack of access to detainees
 - Releasing detainees back into the community
 - Political influence
 - Other [Specify
 - RF
 - DK/NA
105. In relation to the prison services, are you:
- Satisfied [Skip to Qu 108]
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [Skip to Qu 108]
 - Dissatisfied
 - RF
 - DK/NA
106. If not satisfied, what do you consider is not working properly in the prison system? [Do not prompt – more than one answer possible]
- Lack of adequate access to prisoners
 - Abuse of prisoners
 - 3 Lack of fairness/bias
 - Corruption
 - Torture
 - Lack of information about prisoners
 - Lack of rehabilitation facilities
 - Lack of supervision
 - Lack of space and medical facilities
 - Political interference
 - Other
 - RF
 - DK/NA
107. In your opinion, in the past year, has the provision of social security by the government for those in need of assistance:
- Improved?
 - Got worse?
 - Stayed about the same?
 - RF
 - DK/NA

[Enumerator - The government is legally obliged by international law to ensure that everyone in the Maldives is entitled to equality in access to services without discrimination, subject to the availability of resources.]

108. Given the availability of resources, do you consider that the government is doing enough to ensure the following:

	1. Yes	2. No	3. RF	4. DK/NA
108.1 Improving health services?				
108.2 Improved access to education up to Grade 10?				
108.3 Improved access to safe drinking water				
108.4 Improved access to electricity				
108.5 Improved sewerage facilities				
108.6 Improved housing, including financial assistance				
108.7 Improved waste disposal systems				
108.8 Improved social security				

109. In your opinion, which one of the following more than anything else should be given priority by the Government? Enumerator: Only one answer possible]

- a. Improving health services?
- b. Improved access to education up to Grade 10?
- c. Improved access to safe drinking water
- d. Improved access to electricity
- e. Improved sewerage facilities
- f. Improved housing, including financial assistance
- g. Improved waste disposal systems
- h. Improved social security
- i. Other (Specify.....)
- j. RF
- k. DK/NA

110. In relation to access to information from central government and local administrations

- a. Satisfied
- b. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- c. Dissatisfied
- d. RF
- e. DK/NA

111. Do you believe you are able to use and benefit from the Right to Information Act?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

People’s right to participate in government and to take part in decision-making concerning them.

112. Did you vote in the latest Parliament elections?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. RF
- d. DK/NA

113. In your opinion, of there were problems in that election, what aspects of the election were they? [Do not prompt – more than 1 answer possible]

- a. Lack of voter education
- b. Mismanagement or incomplete voter registration
- c. Last minute court election rulings
- d. Inadequate polling booths
- e. Insufficient duration for voting
- f. Aggressive campaigns along party lines
- g. Other [Specify.....]
- h. RF
- i. DK/NA

114. Do you consider that there is fair and equal distribution of resources among atolls and islands?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. RF
- g. DK/NA

Sexual Harassment

[This section is to be administered by female enumerators for female participant and by male enumerators for male participants]

Enumerator: I now want to ask you about certain behaviour that has happened to women and men in the Maldives, and may have happened to you. In each case, I will ask if the behaviour has ever happened to you, and also if it has happened during the past two years. I want to remind you that this interview is confidential. However, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. Some questions may be difficult to answer, but many women have found it useful to have the opportunity to talk about these things.

115. select the most appropriate answer to these questions (ask questions to women only)

Instance/ Question	1 . Ever	2. In past 2 years	3 . Never	4 . RF	5. DK/NA
115.1 A man rubbed himself up against you [ungulhey] or touched you on the breasts or bottom in the street, at the night market or any other public place?	1	2	3	4	5
115.2 A man grabbed your hand in a public place?	1	2	3	4	5
115.3 A man rubbed himself up against you or touched you on the breasts or bottom on, or when getting on or off, a ferry or other vessel?	1	2	3	4	5
115.4 A man made obscene or offensive sexual comments to you?	1	2	3	4	5
115.5 A man rubbed up against you or touched you on the breasts or bottom when you were swimming with other people?	1	2	3	4	5

116. Select the most appropriate answer to these questions (ask questions to men only)

Instance/ Question	1 . Ever	2. In past 2 years	3 . Never	4 . RF	5. DK/NA
116.1 A woman rubbed herself up against you [ungulhey] or touched you on the breasts or bottom in the street, at the night market or any other public place?	1	2	3	4	5
116.2 A woman grabbed your hand in a public place?	1	2	3	4	5
116.3 A woman rubbed herself up against you or touched you on the private parts or bottom on, or when getting on or off, a ferry or other vessel?	1	2	3	4	5
116.4 A woman made obscene or offensive sexual comments to you?	1	2	3	4	5
116.5 A woman rubbed up against you or touched you on the private parts or bottom when you were swimming with other people?	1	2	3	4	5

117. The following questions need only be answered by employed participants:

Instance/ Question	1 . Ever	2. In past 2 years	3 . Never	4 . RF	5. DK/NA
117.1 Another employee, or your boss, touched you inappropriately at work, such as rubbing up against you, touching you on the breasts or bottom or patting, pinching or stroking you?	1	2	3	4	5
117.2 At work, constantly uses obscene or sexually suggestive language/ remarks aimed at you or your female colleagues?	1	2	3	4	5
117.3 At work, persistently suggested that you have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
117.4 At work, you were shown/exposed to pornography or sexually explicit photos, text etc	1	2	3	4	5
117.5 At work, threatened you or implied trouble if you did not have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
117.6 At work, forced you to have sex with him against your will, or attempted to do this [forced Ziney]?	1	2	3	4	5

118. If you answered yes to any question above (118.1 – 118.6) about sexual harassment at work, what action did you take? (more than 1 answer possible)

- a. No action [Skip to Qu 121]
- b. Told a friend or a member of my family about what happened
- c. Told a colleague at work about what happened
- d. Complained to the boss at work
- e. Complained to another authority such as the police, Island Office, Atoll Office or the
- f. Gender Ministry
- g. Lodged case at the Committee on prevention of sexual harassment and abuse based at work.
- h. Lodged case at Employment Tribunal
- i. Resigned from work
- j. RF
- k. DK/NA

119. Did the action you took:

- a. Improve the situation?
- b. Make the situation worse?
- c. Make no difference?
- d. RF
- e. DK/NA

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THOSE WHO ANSWERED QUS 117 & 118

120. If you took no action/ did not complain about what happened, why not?

(Circle as many as you like)

- a. Afraid I would not be believed
- b. Afraid of people knowing/bringing bad name to family
- c. Not a serious enough problem/normal behaviour
- d. Embarrassed or ashamed
- e. Afraid of losing my job
- f. Police or authorities wouldn't do anything
- g. Didn't know what to do or where to go
- h. 8. Other
- i. RF
- j. DK/NA

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

Annex B – Attitudes to Women’s Rights (Questions with the high non response rate)

EQUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE FAMILY

It is alarming that in the 2019 survey, 87.8% of the respondents either refused to answer or could not provide a definite response when asked if they believed women should have the same rights as men in the family. This phenomenon makes it challenging to infer deductive conclusions about the participant’s perception of equal rights for women in the family.

More women (49.3%) in comparison to men (44.7%) refused to respond and reported not knowing an answer. The non-response rate of urban inhabitants was much higher (94.5%) when compared to the outer islands (83.7%). This high rate of non-response and inability to provide a definite point of view is an extremely significant drawback for women’s rights.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN ON CUSTODY MATTERS

The majority of people chose not to respond to this question or reported not knowing how to respond, resulting in a response of just 12.2%. This in itself is a worrisome trend as there has already been a drastic drop in support for women’s equal rights on custody matters in courts from 92.5% in 2005 to 39.2% in 2011.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN DIVORCE

Owing to divorce, broken families are one of the biggest root causes of social issues in the country. The Maldives also has the highest divorce rate in the world and thus women’s rights issues around this social problem have remained a great concern¹.

Regrettably, the question regarding equal rights for women during the dissolution of a marriage was also met with a high non-response rate where 80.1% refused to answer this question or reported that they did not know the answer. The non-response rate to the question must be considered a statement in itself.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN TO AND AT WORK

Similar to other questions in this segment, more

¹ <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/highest-divorce-rate/>

than half of the respondents chose not to answer the question and over a third responded by saying they did not know the answer. As stated previously, it is extraordinary that questions regarding attitudes towards equal rights for women show a high rate of non-response in comparison to all of the other questions in this survey.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Although important legislative guarantees to overcome gender disparity are enshrined in the Gender Equality Law (2016), challenges to equal representation of women in political participation persist.

As a result, while only 35% of the cabinet are women, only 4 out of 87 seats in the Parliament of Maldives are held by women. In a recent development, for the first time in the history of the nation, the President of the Maldives appointed two female justices to the Supreme Court bench of seven after parliamentary approval. Out of the 134 magistrates, only 7 are women and just 3 female judges preside over the lower and appellate courts.² 21 out of 71 deputy ministers are women and where there have been 50 state minister appointments, a mere 12 are women.³

Only 36 female councillors were elected to office in the last local council elections alongside 653 males.⁴

When people were asked how they felt about the right to equal representation of women in public office, they responded positively in both 2011 (80.5%) and in 2005 (79.9%) However, 2019 shows a complete shift in attitudes towards women’s representation in public office, with only 8.4% agreeing with this statement. Out of the few people who responded to this question, men favoured this view more (14.75%) than women (5.01%).

Since the enactment of the new constitution, three parliamentary elections have been held.

² <http://www.judiciary.gov.mv/judge-related.html>

³ <https://presidency.gov.mv/Pages/Index/158>

⁴ <https://www.lga.gov.mv/councils>

The number of women elected to the parliament has remained disappointingly low. In 2019, only 4 women were elected to the parliament as opposed to 83 men. This survey set out to understand people's perception regarding the lack of women elected to the parliament. Respondents were provided with a list of reasons and were asked to identify the ones they considered had affected the election of women to the parliament.

The most commonly cited reason was the absence of a female candidate (27.7%) indicating that fewer women contested these elections. Respondents from urban regions (31.8%) were more likely to identify this as the reason for the lack of women in parliament in comparison to those from the outer islands (25.3%). More women (29.62%) reported this as the reason for the low number of women elected as well (24.3%). This response is reflective of the fact that only 35 out of 386 candidates were women in the 2019 parliamentary elections. Among other reasons, 13.9% of people said it was the lack of societal support for female candidates, and more women (15.8%) seem to agree with this statement. Out of the 10.5% who stated other reasons, the most commonly cited include women not contesting in elections, women's lack of confidence, better social perception of men and women's unpaid work in the family limiting their time seeking other jobs.

Reason for lack of societal support for female candidates, by gender

Reason	Male	Female	Total
No women candidates	24.34%	29.62%	27.72%
No qualified women candidates	10.84%	8.57%	9.46%
Men were better qualified than women candidates	2.25%	2.12%	2.15%
Men do not want to vote for a woman candidate	4.91%	5.57%	5.44%
Women do not want to vote for a woman candidate	3.89%	4.45%	4.30%
Women candidates lacking support from families	2.45%	2.34%	2.36%
Lack of societal support	10.43%	15.81%	13.90%
Women candidates lacking funds	5.11%	8.02%	6.95%
Other	12.07%	9.69%	10.46%
RF	1.02%	0.89%	1.00%
DK/NA	22.70%	12.92%	16.26%

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