



**RESEARCH REPORT  
REVEALING WOMEN'S  
IN LORIMER REGION**



**RESEARCH**  
**REPORT REVEALING**  
**WOMEN'S ISSUES**  
**IN LORI REGION**

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## *By initiators*

*The initiative group expresses its gratitude for the publication of the following report to all people with the help and participation of whom the implementation of these activities and the publication of the results became possible.*

*Anna Seyranyan, Hermineh Mashakaryan, Ani Asatryan, Tatev Sahakyan, Gayane Ghevondyan, Azatuhi Israelyan, Armanush Frangyan, Andzela Mamyran, Sona Mirzoyan, Armik Harutyunyan directly implemented research to determine women's issues in Lori region.*

*We also express our gratitude to the trainer MelineMaghakyan and the project advisor Milena Abrahamyan.*

# Introduction

In 2017, “Spitak Helsinki Group” human rights NGO with the support of Swedish “Kvinna till Kvinna” foundation has implemented a research study to determine women's issues in Lori region within the framework of the project called "Lori region's women are informed and powerful”.

In the course of 2015-2016 activities of the organization focused on women who faced gender- based violence, it became obvious that women deal with a number of issues: domestic violence, labor rights violations, gender-based discrimination, juvenile marriage, lack of access to education, financial instability and so on.

In 2017, we implemented a research study to learn precise information about the level of discrimination as well as the scale of its prevalence. It is worth mentioning that such kind of research was implemented for the first time.

The research study, with the purpose of revealing women's problems in Lori region, was carried out in five rural communities (Shirakamut, Margahovit, Odzun, Lejan, Metsavan) and in five urban communities (Spitak, Vanadzor, Alaverdi, Stepanavan, Tashir) in Lori region.

The following research was implemented in July-August 2017. Women working on the research study were the beneficiaries of "SHG", they also had a number of problems and overcame them with our support. These issues include domestic violence, juvenile marriage, gender-based discrimination, and so on. A training course was conducted for them, and after its successful completion, ten of them were involved in the process of developing questionnaire and the in-depth interview questions. These women implemented the research in Lori region and collected the results. Their involvement was very important in the research process because they easily understood the problems and the reasons for their occurrence.

During the research implementation we also highlighted the ethical requirements for conducting a research.

Along with these 200 surveys, 100 in-depth interviews were conducted in the 10 above-mentioned communities. These interviews were based on in depth questionnaires, and referred to all aspects of the women's lives and vital activities. They particularly dealt with personal questions: family, health, legal, educational, social live, entertainment issues, and traditions.

These in-depth interviews were conducted with different representatives of various institutions (school directors, teachers, doctors and nurses, pharmacy staff, employees of non-governmental organizations and local self-governing bodies, and culture house and business sphere employees) who shared a comprehensive view of strong and weak points of women's issues in that community. In depth interviews were also conducted with randomly selected women.

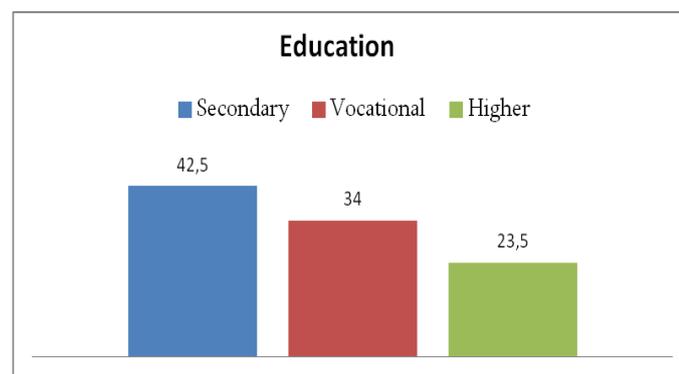
## Analysis of Questionnaires on Revealing Women's Issues in Lori Region

In the following research, 22% of participants were women of 18 to 30 years-old; 45% of them were 31-50 years-old, and 32.5% ranged over 51 years-old.

75% of respondents are married, 12.5% are unmarried, 4% are divorced and 8.5% are widowed.

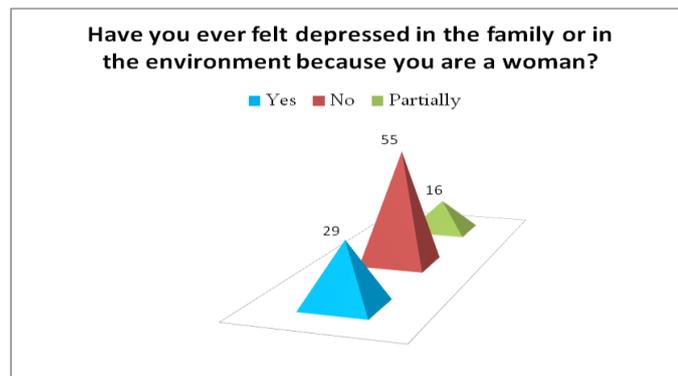


The research showed that 18.5% of the respondents are retired, 9% receive a disability pension, 28.0% are beneficiaries of government aid, 43% are employers, 80.5% of them do not have a disability status, and 19.5% have a disability status and 63.5% of the respondents complain of serious health problems. Despite the serious problems revealed in the result of the research; most women, 59.8%, are optimistic about the future.

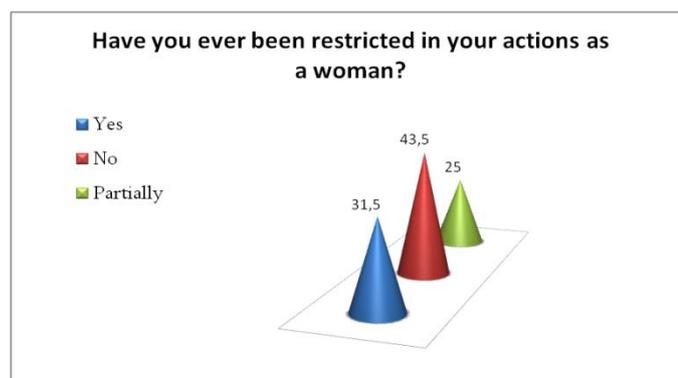


According to the results, the number of women who can independently control their own lives and activities is 63%, but 30% are influenced by their surroundings; therefore, women are highly dependent on others.

Most women reported being in a state of constant stress and tension and using medicine. The previous graphic shows that women generally have a negative attitude towards those women who do not want to have a child. On a similar topic, 59% of the respondents think that a woman may marry for the second time but a negative attitude towards those women is visible.



Based on the results of other questions, women have had many difficulties because of the peculiarities of their upbringing. Despite this, 48.5% of the respondents mention that they would like to bring up their daughters in the way they were brought up.

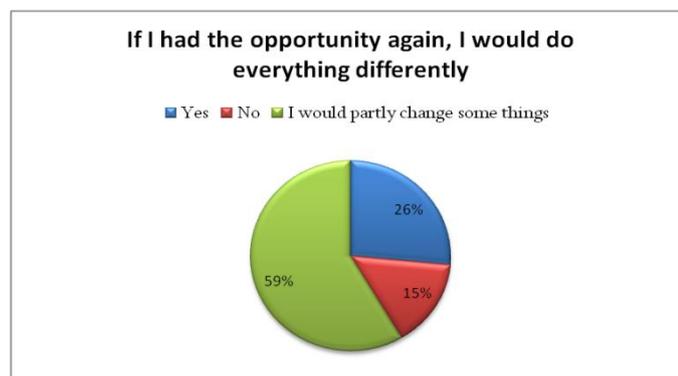


As depicted in the graphic, most of the respondents, 55%, did not feel depressed because of being a woman, but as can be seen from the actual results of the next questions, in reality their actions are mostly restricted, even in cases of appearance, 20.5% women are not free.

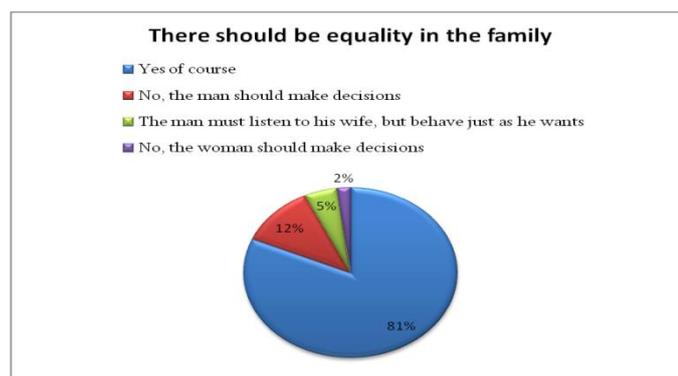
As the research shows, the majority of Armenian women, 73%, are indifferent to their appearance. Only 15.5% highlight the importance of having good looks.



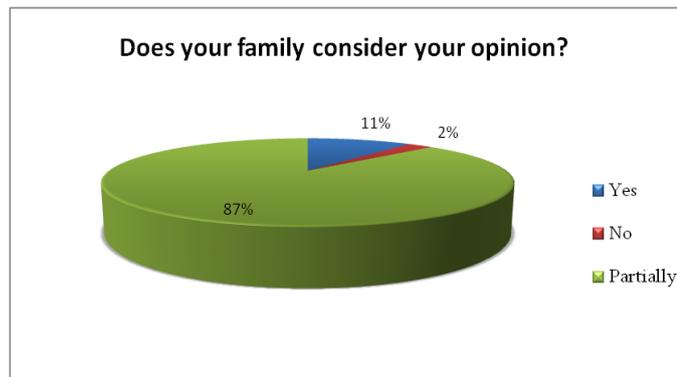
Most of the respondents, 33%, attribute their failures to external circumstances, and blame others for their failures. 28.5% realize the consequences of their own choices, and 39% think that those both factors have impacted their lives.



It becomes clear from the graph that many women are not satisfied with their current state and, if possible, they would make radical changes in their lives.

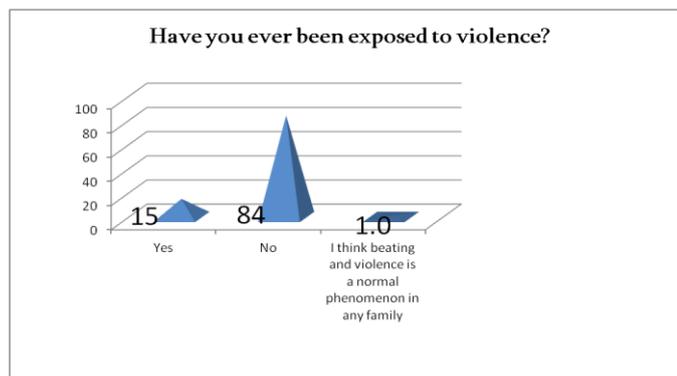


It is worth noting that 81% of the respondents emphasize the importance of equality in the family, but, as shown below, the reality is different.

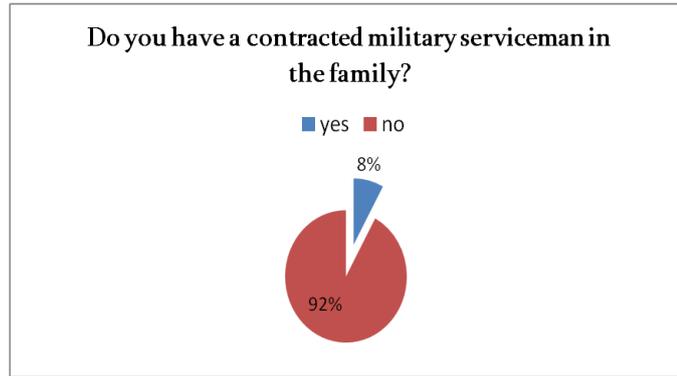


This is evidenced by the fact that most of women, 87%, partly consider themselves as full members of their families, because they sometimes participate in the decision-making processes. Despite only 87% of women's opinions being partially considered, 42.5% of the respondents report that the decision of how to rear children is shared and 34% of women say that they bring up their children together with their husbands.

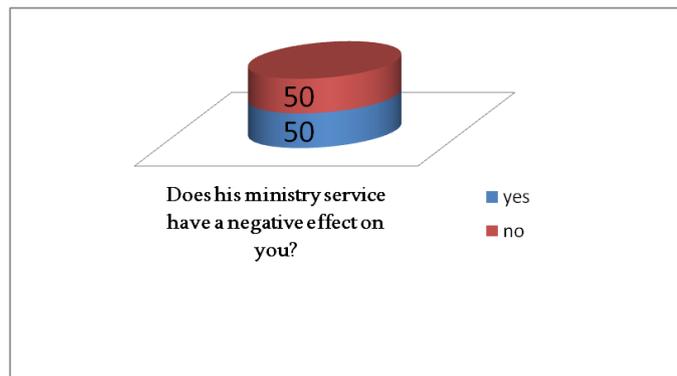
While raising the children, 53.5% of men also work abroad and do not participate in the upbringing of their children. Most parents believe that a child should be informed of the financial status of the family at a very early age.



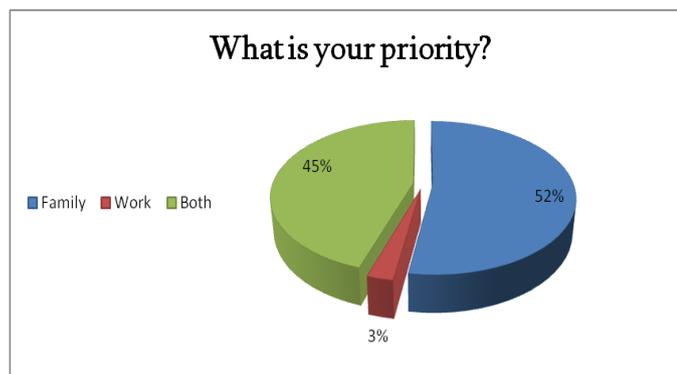
Questions regarding marriage showed that the majority of women, 84%, report that they had never been subjected to violence, but associated violence only in case of a *physical violence*, not *sexual* or *psychological violence*. These questions also showed that 40% of women say that their husbands sometimes compare them with other women and 62.5% of women do not compare their husbands to other men. It is also worth mentioning, that the majority of the respondents married at age 17-18 but consider the best age for marriage 25-30.



As seen from the schedule, most of the respondents do not have contracted servicemen in their families. The next schedule shows that in the families where there are contracted servicemen, their service still has a negative impact on the quality of women's life.

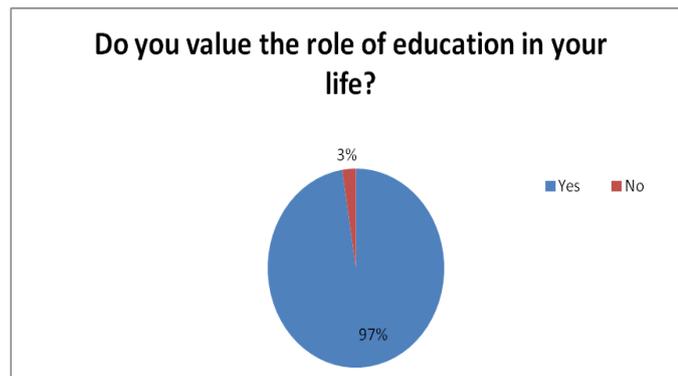


71.5% of the respondents do not have a job, 69% insist that if they had the opportunity they would work with great pleasure. 46.5% claim that the main reason for not working is the lack of job. 95.5% say that the existence of a job in a woman's life is very important because it provides the woman's autonomy, financial independence and it becomes a mean of self-determination for a woman.

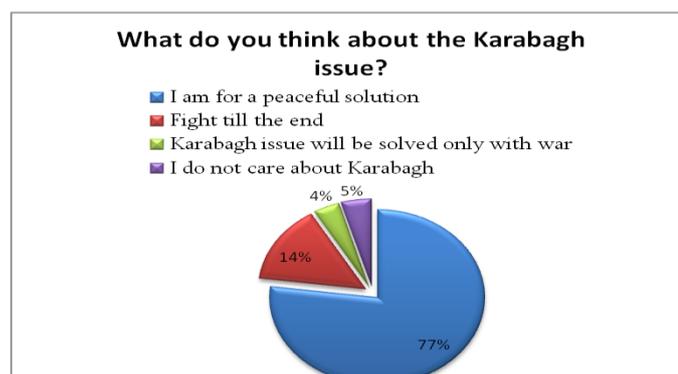
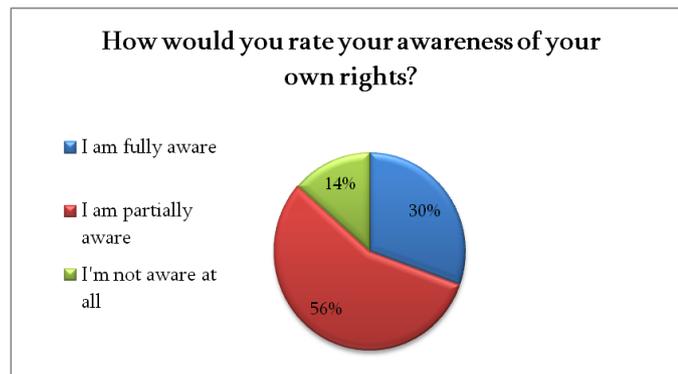


As can be seen from the graph for 52% women dominate the idea that the priority for a woman is the family and the process of continuing the generation. 26.5% women have a job, but only 5% of them work in the profession.

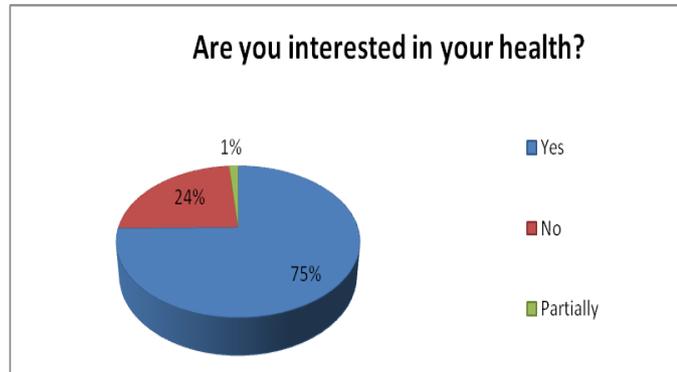
97.5% of women emphasize the role of education in their lives, but only 68.5% of women highlight the importance of their spouses' education.



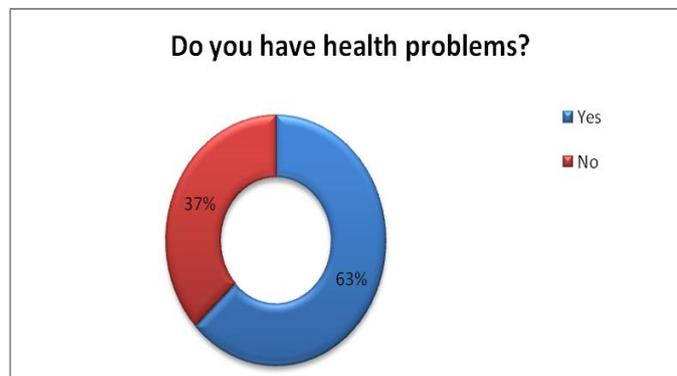
56% of the respondents are partially aware of their rights and although 30% report, that they are fully informed of their rights, almost 61% think that men have great advantages in the legal field. 71% of the respondents have a positive attitude towards women leaders, 10.5% have a negative attitude and 18.5% have a neutral attitude.



As it is seen from the graph, 75% of respondents are interested in their health, 24% is not interested, and 1% is partially interested. Despite the high interest of their health, however only 83.4% apply to the doctor if necessary and mainly ignore health problems.



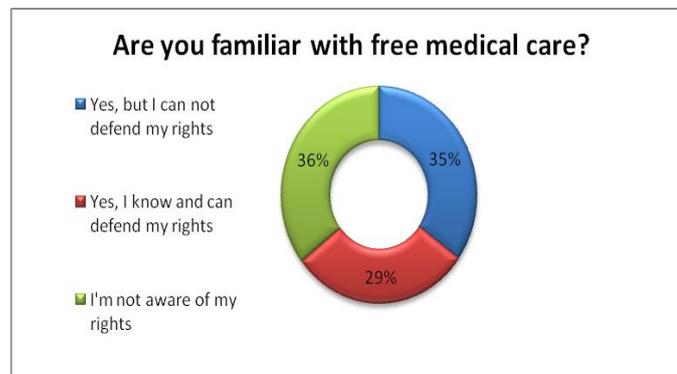
Family members cover most of their health care expenses, particularly male children and only 15.5% are able to solve this problem independently. When attending a doctor, family members usually accompany them but rarely their husbands, since they are not in Armenia when their women need them the most.



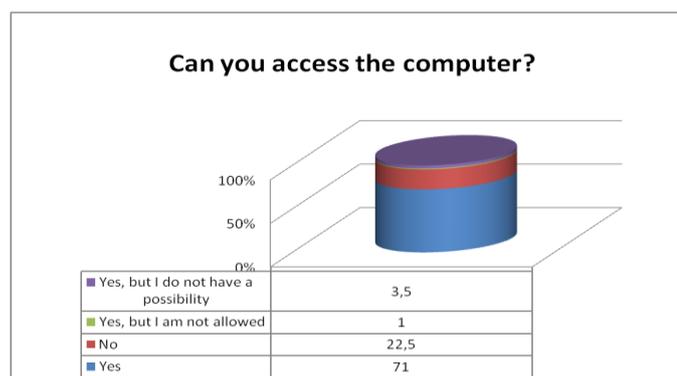
As seen from the graph the difficult lifestyle of Armenian women could not remain without consequences.



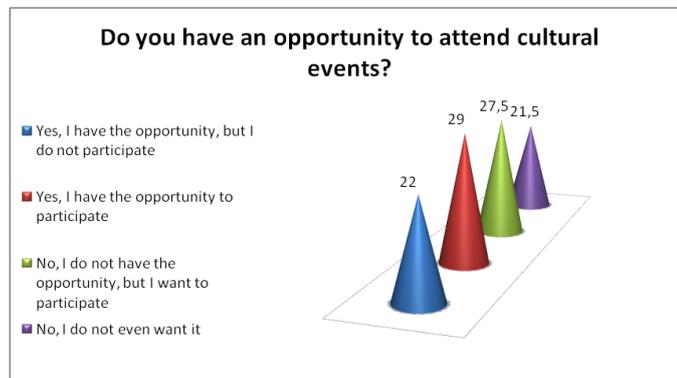
Although a high percentage of women have negative attitudes towards abortion but most of them, in particular, 49.5% turned to that step by reasoning financial and health problems. Only 45% of them have applied to the doctor, the rest made the abortion of pregnancy with the help of appropriate medicines and by national "popular" means.



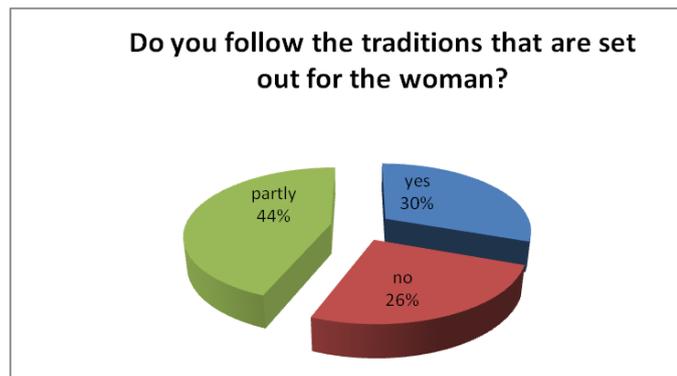
Obviously, the certain part of women is not familiar with free medical care, and although some of them are aware, they cannot defend their rights. As regards the cases of entertainment, having friends and personal life then here we also face serious problems. Although 91.5% of women choose their own friends but the difficult routine hinders their frequent meetings. Moreover for most women 79.5%, this sphere almost completely changes after their marriage.



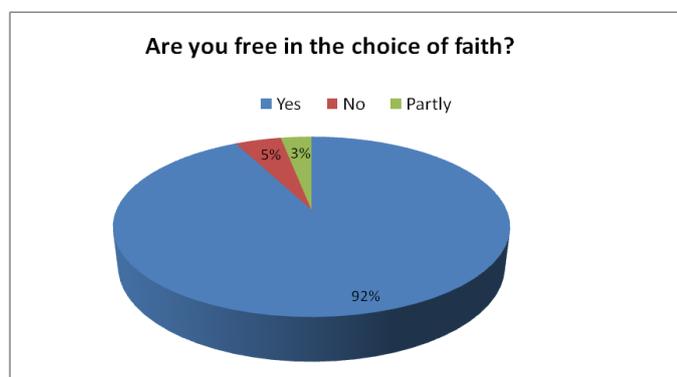
According to the graph, 71% of women have an access to the computer and 58.5% use social sites. According to the results, 39% of women do not like new acquaintances and therefore reject the requests from the strangers', 19% avoid strangers, only 9.5% accept and for 2.5% it is forbidden.



According to graph, women claim that they have an opportunity to participate in cultural events and participate in them. Nevertheless, the number of women who do not have an opportunity to participate in cultural events is quite high but they would like to participate if they have a chance. A great part of them is obviously indifferent to those events.

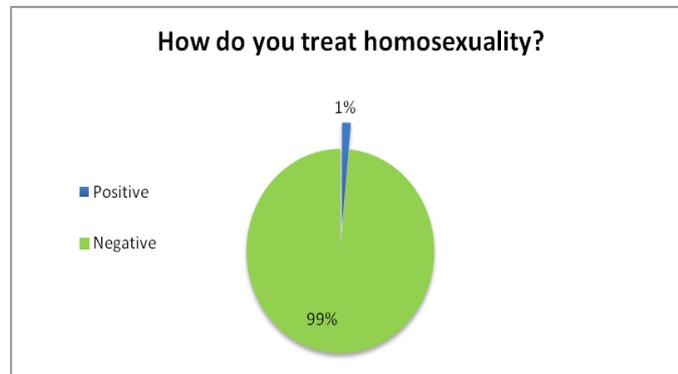


As can be seen from the graph, women do not pay much attention to the Armenian traditions but 64.5% still emphasize the meaning of "*karmir khndzor*", 34% do not pay any attention at all, and 1.5% think that it is the problem of couples.



82.5% of respondents never encounter difficulties because of their faith; only 6% acknowledge that they face difficulties and 11.5% sometimes have difficulties. 73% of the

respondents think that they are not superstitious but 26.5% acknowledge that they have superstitions.



Although 99% of women have a very negative attitude towards homosexuals, anyhow 3.5% acknowledge that they have been subjected to difficulties and discrimination because of their sexual orientation. 96.5% have never been in trouble.



As a final question, 83% of women consider them happy, 14% do not consider themselves happy and only 6% are partly happy.

## **Analysis of an In-Depth Interview**

100 in-depth interviews were conducted in five rural and five urban communities mentioned above in order to gain precise and reliable information on women's issues. We conducted these interviews with school directors, teachers, medical doctors and nurses as well as with pharmacy staff and employees of non-governmental organizations and local self-governing bodies, culture house and business sphere of those communities with randomly selected women.

The questionnaires of the in-depth interviews were composed of the following sections:

### **Healthcare**

Women have health problems, but do not take care of themselves because they do not have money or do not trust their community doctors. They point out that they apply to the doctor only in the most important cases. 100% of women have a bad attitude toward abortions but at the same time, it is widespread. It was also mentioned that the number of abortions has been reduced since the new generation is informed and able to avoid unwanted pregnancies by various means.

### **Rights**

All the members of the above mentioned communities noted that they are unaware of their rights. To some extent, those women are aware of their rights who work. And these women also have a problem of protecting their rights because they are not aware of the protection mechanisms. The majority have a normal attitude toward women leaders.

### **Domestic violence**

Women avoid talking about domestic violence even being aware of such cases in their communities. Some women report that it is a common thing and sometimes even women push their husbands to subject the women to violence. Women in rural communities tell that the village is almost empty, people leave with their families, men are mostly abroad. It was reported mainly by old women that there has always been violence but the women in

villages never talked about it. Most women tell that they are not subjected to domestic violence. They have heard of domestic violence, but they tell that there are few cases. By saying domestic violence, women basically understand physical violence. The fact that working for them is something they dream of, while their husbands forbid them to do that, is normal for them. Women are subjected to domestic violence not only by their husbands, but also by their mothers-in-law.

## **Job**

The biggest problem revealed during the survey is the lack of workplaces. All women consider it important to have a job, but they comfort themselves with the fact that even men do not have a job and leave abroad for a work. At that period women mostly do men's work such as farming and agriculture as well as do their responsibilities of bringing children up.

## **Traditions and customs**

Specialists from all spheres report that people do not give importance to traditions, they are developing but still women's virginity remains important for everyone. Medical workers report that even in the case of the problems raised after the first wedding night they take their daughter-in-law to the doctor and find out why she is not virgin. There are some cases that they visit the doctor beforehand.

## **Tolerance to religions and homosexuals**

All the respondents state that they are free in the choice of the religion; only women in Tashir community are not free. All women have a bad attitude towards homosexuality.

## **Entertainment**

There are no places of entertainment for women both in urban and rural communities. The only entertainment for women is drinking coffee with their neighbors. All these become the reason of tiredness and stress for them. They use social networking sites, but often this dissatisfies the elders, especially mother-in-laws as, according to them, their daughters-in-laws spend much time in social sites and do not pay attention to the home affairs.

## Conclusion

It becomes obvious from the results of this research that women in Lori region have a number of issues. They are as follows:

- The level of women's awareness of their rights is very low in Lori region which in its turn causes a number of problems.
- Women in Lori region do not have a job and that is why they are economically dependent on their husbands.
- Women in Lori region have health problems but they do not have a considerable amount of money for applying to medical institutions,
- Women in Lori region are frequently subjected to violence, mainly to psychological violence.
- Women need education
- Women do not have enough means to organize their entertainment which becomes the reason of tiredness and stress for them.

## About Us

"Spitak Helsinki Group" human rights NGO was founded in 2010. "Spitak Helsinki Group" is a human rights NGO dealing with human rights advocacy, it unites the principles of democracy and tolerance. The mission of "Spitak Helsinki Group" human rights NGO is to strengthen the protection of human rights at local, regional and national levels.

"Spitak Helsinki Group" NGO works with the following target groups:

- ◆ Socially insecure people
- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Women
- ◆ Other vulnerable groups

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