

THE INVISIBLE SIDE OF EVERYDAY LIFE: GENDER STEREOTYPES IN DAILY ROUTINE

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Abbreviations and Explanations

WVA	World Vision Armenia
HH	Household
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RoA	Republic of Armenia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study has been conducted by funding from “Caring for Equality” Project, implemented by the World Vision Armenia. The aim of the project is to change and prevent the stereotypical attitude and behavior affecting women and girls; to contribute to establishment of such an environment where girls and boys are born and valued equally.

In recent times, the information on prenatal sex selection through abortion is presented by different public spheres, and is accompanied by negative assessments and [negative] demographic predictions. It is already a documented fact that such an issue exists and that it is important and alarming. We will reflect on this issue, with an attempt to see the root causes of the “secondary” role of women in the society and the discriminative attitudes towards them in everyday relationships.

The **goal** of this survey is to study the gender inequality manifestations in everyday relationships.

The **target groups** of the survey are:

1. **Residents of the targeted communities**, with whom in-depth (detailed) interviews have been conducted.
2. **Residents of targeted communities**, whose families were engaged in involved observations.
3. **Experts**, including a women’s rights NGO representative, a legislative field expert, and education field representatives.

1-2 **survey tools** have been considered for each target group of the survey, including: **In-depth interviews**, for implementation of which two tools have been applied: **a semi-structured questionnaire** and **a demographic data collection questionnaire**. A semi-structured questionnaire has been applied also during the expert interviews.

1. **Involved observations**, for implementation of which a guidebook has been envisaged. This method enables to receive type of information that may not be present in verbal descriptions of the survey respondents. The observation allows to identify phenomena that may not be noticed at first sight and may slip the researcher’s attention. Though in terms of application this is one of the most complicated and difficult methods, nonetheless

in frames of our survey, it has been applied, due to the following reasons: based on our experience in the field, we can attest that gender-based violence sometimes is of “intermediary” nature, i.e it is conditioned by social-cultural non-*immediate* factors. Its identification may be incomplete and/or distorted, if only interviews are conducted. Meanwhile, during involved observations, it is possible to identify factors related to the research that at first glance may seem not to be primary, but in fact, are the most important factors for problem formation. Another advantage of this method is that during the involved observation the link between the researcher and the research participant is not noticeably highlighted, and the research becomes less formal, thus allowing to comprehend almost all circumstances that generate the problem.¹

The survey results show that in our society **an unequal and discriminative attitude towards women** is in place in a number of spheres.

- Our society is patriarchal and lives with laws of interactions between men.
- **Women are left out of the communication that takes place in public life and during which** values, ideas and situations that are of importance to public are being shaped or transformed.
- An apparently **unequal distribution and discriminative behavior towards women** are manifested in terms of everyday work. Regardless of women’s employment status (whether they have a paid job, or not), they are involved in almost all types of everyday work.
- **The reputation (the status) of a woman carrying out daily routine work (a housewife) is lower**, than that of the man who earns living for his family. This means that the work carried out by women is less important, than the one carried out by men. With certain exceptions, this also refers to cases when the woman simultaneously earns money.
- Even if the man engages the woman in certain decision-making processes or participates in works that are usually done by women, **the right to make the final decision still “belongs” to the man.**

¹ Please see details of the survey methodology in the end of the work.

- Starting from the age of 8-9, the distinction of gender-based roles is instilled in children, whereas **girls encounter a greater number of restrictions and stricter methods of upbringing. The discriminatory attitude towards girls is apparent.** Compared to the boys, they participate in daily routine work (e.g. dinner preparation, house cleaning, shopping, cow milking, coffee preparation, dish washing, making the bed, baking cookies, taking care of younger siblings, etc.) more frequently.
- The society is yet unprepared to distribute the tasks, without gender-based discrimination.

The studied phenomenon has got quite solid and ingrained bases, and for making changes in this sphere, a number of difficulties will be met, since the same perceptions about the phenomenon are simultaneously shaped, based on two factors: knowledge, acquired mechanically in the family or the community and the capital knowledge, acquired purposefully. This means that it is impossible to transform the society in this sense, without changing its perceptions towards the phenomenon. There is no doubt that the same methods that formulate the perceptions about men-women relationships can be equally effective in making these changes. The talk here is about the educational institutions, mass media and other means of transferring information (commercials, different events, etc.). Nonetheless, **we suggest** the following, as possible options of changing the current situation:

- Enhance knowledge of pedagogues in educational institutions on formation of values, transformation, as well as the concept of “gender”.
- Review/reconsider the school books
- Implement a clearly developed policy through mass media
- Provide opportunity for women to acquire economic independence through proper education
- Implement projects that allow simultaneous involvement of all family members in it.
- Apply methods of child upbringing in the families, not making any stereotypical distinctions between boys and girls. At the same time, with the help of these methods, enhance fathers’ participation in upbringing of children, ensuring equal participation of parents in this matter.

1. INTRODUCTION

Importance and modernity of the survey topic: In recent times, the information on prenatal sex selection through abortion is presented by different public spheres and is accompanied by negative assessments and [negative] demographic predictions. Even though the phenomenon existed much earlier than there were opportunities to voice about it and make the issue public, nonetheless, it shows the importance of the phenomenon. **It is already a documented fact that such an issue exists and that it is important and alarming.** We will reflect on this issue, with an attempt to see the root causes of the “secondary” role of women in society and discriminative attitudes towards them in everyday relationships.

Topic Goal and Objectives: The **goal** of this survey is to study the manifestations of gender inequality from the point of view of everyday life. Taking into account that “everyday life” is a wide concept, we will observe the issue primarily from the aspect of family relationship formation and, as necessary, will refer also to the specifics of community-, workplace-, educational center environment, etc.

The following two points present the underlying causes for conducting the survey of the given topic:

- Consider the socio-cultural bases, leading to the formation of the problem, mainly manifested in everyday life, for example, in organizing the daily work, in the culture of having the right to speak (to have a say), i.e. to freely express oneself and be heard, in managing the area and having an opportunity to make decisions, etc.
- Observing the issue from this viewpoint will allow us to clarify whether in our society the gender-based violence is perceived and recognized as an issue that needs to be resolved, or whether it has become an ordinary part of the daily life, i.e. the knowledge on the above-mentioned gender inequalities and its application

have become undisputable part of the socio-cultural heritage that passes on from generation to generation.

Generally, in order to understand a certain phenomenon or an issue, and to find mechanisms of overcoming it in future, it is first of all necessary **to understand the environment in which the issue has been formed, the current perceptions about the given phenomenon and how they have been formed**; hence the above-mentioned questions are **the objectives of the current survey**.

The geographical area of the survey. Given the characteristics of the survey topic, the selection of the targeted communities has been implemented, based on a few important factors, including:

- Rural and urban communities,
- Communities close to urban or border areas,
- Resettled communities and communities where local people reside,
- In case of urban communities, districts in suburbs and in the city center.

With consideration of the above, the survey was conducted in the following communities:

- Gegharkunik Province, Vardenis, Sarukhan, Drakhtik,
- Shirak Province, Gyumri, Amasia, Kamo
- Aragatsotn Province, Aparan, Davtashen, Shenavan
- Syunik Province, Kapan,
- Yerevan` Qanaqer-Zeytun and Kentron (Center):

Target groups of the survey are:

1. **Residents of target communities**, with whom in-depth interviews have been conducted.
2. **Residents of target communities** whose families have been engaged in involved observations

3. Experts, including:

- 3.1. *Women's Rights NGO (hereinafter NGO) representative.* This interview will not only allow us to understand the quantitative and the contextual sides of the gender issues, but also to see the opportunities and the potential to overcome them.
- 3.2. *Legislative field expert.* An importance was given to the involvement of an expert from this sphere, not in terms of understanding what laws have been or will be adopted, but rather in terms of seeing how relevant and consequently, how feasible they are, given our cultural environment.
- 3.3 *Education field representatives:* The interviews with experts from this sphere will allow us to clarify how important and feasible the collaboration between the education system and the family is, in terms of resolving the issue, as well as whether inclusion of relevant subjects in the educational institutions may contribute to transforming the perceptions about the issue and consequently overcoming it.

Survey Tools: For each target group of the survey, 1-2 survey tools have been envisaged, including:

1. Two tools have been applied for conducting *in-depth interviews*:

1.1. Semi-structured questionnaire: It consists of four main sections, each of them consisting of a few subsections.

Section One: "Right"² to have a say, to make decisions in everyday life. We have examined the level of women's participation in decision-making processes in the household (hereinafter HH) and the community. Women's participation in decision-making processes of the HH have been examined in four main spheres: everyday life, education, agriculture, and finances. The main emphasis has been put on the issue of understanding the role the women currently have and the role they should have when making decisions in the

² When saying "right", here we do not refer to the legal definition of the word.

above-mentioned spheres of the HH.

Section Two: Conducting daily work: In this section, we have reflected on how much the daily works, implemented by women, are being valued, and on the standpoints of the survey participants, regarding the idea of equal distribution of works between men and women. Besides, we have tried to observe whether the women want to see any change in their daily life and, if so, the types of changes they expect to achieve. Are the expected changes ideological by nature, i.e. do they refer to the field of knowledge acquisition, or legal awareness raising, thus also contributing to changing the women's status in the society, or are they just stuck at the household level?

Section Three: Organization of Leisure within the everyday context. The main emphasis has been put on the opportunities and limitations of leisure organization for women in HH and outside of it. More specifically, are women registered in social networks, and if so, then through which means do they use it (e.g. do they use their own phones or the phones of their husbands/brothers)? What is the women's status in the family in terms of choosing the preferred TV channel? How frequently and in whose company, do the women attend leisure places-café, parks, cinema, etc.

Section Four: Children Upbringing. The level of men's involvement in children's upbringing is observed. Is there any distinction, in terms of children upbringing by parents, conditioned by the child's gender? On the other hand, a reflection was made on the roles of boys and girls in the family, etc.

In relevant sections, we will provide more details on each of the questions, touched upon in all sections.

1.2. Demographic data collection questionnaire. Besides the semi-structured questionnaire that has served as the main tool, a demographic data collection questionnaire has also been applied

for the target groups that have been involved in in-depth interviews. The questionnaire encompassed all possible characteristics of the interviewee (interviewee): sex, age, education level, specialization, marital status, employment, employment sphere, family composition, number of family members, place of residence. The above-mentioned characteristics will allow us to see their impact on the formation of the examined issue.

2. The guidebook, envisaged for the implementation of ***involved observations***, mainly consists of the same approaches/formulations that were found to be important in the course of in-depth interviews. However, in contrast with the in-depth interviews, these are not questions, but rather formulations that have the purpose to describe possible situations. This is why exceptions were made for the questions that could have not been responded through observations. In targeted families the following situations have mainly (but not in all cases) been observed.

The level of women's participation in HH decision-making processes, related to everyday life, education, agriculture and finances.

The types of work, carried out by women in everyday life, including info on types of work that women carry out without complaint, as they consider them, as part of their duty, and on types of work that women consider to be difficult or unimportant to them. We have also tried to observe cases when men help women in household tasks that are generally considered to be "works intended for women" and cases when, on the contrary, women carry out heavy physical work. In order to understand when (the age of children at which) the distribution of work starts between men and women in the family, the household tasks carried out by children (boys and girls, aged 10-17), have been observed in the targeted families.

The involvement of women and men in upbringing of children, including the following: do men participate in upbringing of

children, and to what extent and in which aspects? Also, the involvement of women and men in upbringing of children has been examined, considering the child's gender. What role do grandmothers play in upbringing of children?

Organizing leisure time: The areas under observation are the following: Are women registered in social networks? If yes, then what means do they use (e.g. do they use their phones, or their husbands'/brothers' phones)? What is the status of women in the family in choosing the preferred TV channel?

3. For conducting **expert interviews** three questionnaires (different in terms of content) have been applied for experts, representing three different spheres.

The questionnaire, envisaged for the **women's rights NGO expert** mainly refers to the types of gender inequality, to possible means of resolving them, to transformation of women's attitude towards gender inequality that they experience, etc.

Through the questionnaire, envisaged for the **legislative field expert**, we have attempted to assess the level of women's legal awareness, the level of applicability of gender inequality laws, adopted in the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter RoA), the perceptions of judicial and legal system professionals on the issue of gender inequality, etc.

The education sphere representatives have reflected on the following questions: Is it possible to mitigate the gender inequality through the existing educational systems? Is the generation ready for an ideological change? What obstacles arise on the way of applying the knowledge attained in the higher education institutions, beyond the latter's boundaries, particularly in the family, community, workplace, etc.?

2. SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 RIGHT TO HAVE A SAY AND TO MAKE DECISIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Still far in the past, it has widely been accepted to decide the place and position of its members, as well as their responsibilities in a society, and this has primarily been based on the members' sex and age. In different societies, including ours, this has been maintained to date. In our reality, we think that its maintenance has been conditioned by the social-economic, political situations, the culture and structures maintaining it.

As ethnographic research materials show, in the traditional system of the Armenian nation, both women and men have been brought up with the consciousness of fully and properly playing their roles in the society. The Armenian woman was obligated to follow some established traditional standards, like obedience, loyalty, readiness to accomplish household tasks, ability to get used to the cultural environment of the new family, etc. Life within the strict family conditions contributed to development of certain traditional laws that have been followed with sacredness [as something sacred]. Since childhood, the woman was raised with the spirit of protecting the family interests, maintaining loyalty and traditions, as well as obedience. By the way, the limitations of the woman's right to speak (to express her opinion) have been quite common also in our traditional culture and have their most extreme manifestations, including the tradition of being deprived of the right to speak "speechlessness"³ The fact that being obedient to her husband is one of the most important obligations of the woman is reflected not only in the ethnographic materials, but also in the religious literature.

³ Lalaya, Yer., 2004, Borchalu Province, Works, ch. 3.

2.1.1 The level of women's participation in decision-making processes of the household

Economic/household-related decisions: In this survey, the role of women⁴ in terms of participation in economic/household-related decisions have been reflected from two points of view: according to their notions and perceptions of the issue and according to the actual situation in the family. One of the reasons to reflect on the issue of participation in decision-making is that we wanted to see whether women, involved in almost all types of household works, participate in the relevant decision-making or not. Simultaneously, the women's participation in decision-making has been examined, according to their marital status and their role in the family.

Almost all participants of the survey have difficulty responding to issues, related to decision-making. They can clearly state who carries out the work, but they have difficulty answering to the question on how and by whom the decision is made about the work that needs to be done. One of the reasons is that, as we have already mentioned, the work is being organized automatically, as a habitual action. For example, there is no need for the HH members to decide who will wash the dishes, do the laundry or ironing. It is already decided that such activities need to be carried out by women.

In all cases when the interviewees mechanically respond that the household decisions should be made jointly with all HH members or spouses, when providing more details, it is clarified that, for example, it does not refer to cleaning the house. *“In household issues we both have the right, it is the decision of both of us (both man and woman make the decision)... But for example, I am responsible for the issue of the children's hygiene. The man should not interfere, it is something that I need to decide, ensuring that children are clean, neat, moderate and wear clean and ironed clothing when going*

⁴ The concepts of woman/women, man/men used in this topic refer only to the participants of our survey.

out. Noone will blame their father, instead everybody will blame their mother, if something is wrong with it. I also plan cleaning of the house on my own (Sarukhan, female, 38-year-old, married).

It is an interesting fact that women, carrying out all HH works, are convinced that they are the ones to rule in the family, if they make decisions about everyday life, e.g. what dinner will be prepared for the day, when should the cleaning of the house be done: *“In our family, matriarchy is established”*. (Vardenis, female, 29-year-old, married).

Men’s standpoints about the decisions to be made by women are divided into two groups: either these are considered non-important: e.g. *“It is the cleaning, the laundry, or similar minor things”* (Sarukhan, male, 28-year-old, single), or the woman does not have the right or is unable to make decisions, as far as her husband is alive: e.g. *“The woman cannot talk about such things, it is by all means the man who should say such things. If I die one day, then she can make a decision”* (Shenavan, male, 54-year-old, married).

There are some highlighted and undisputable standpoints, according to which household decisions are clearly divided between men and women, and one cannot make decisions, referring to the other’s activity area. Such perceptions are typical to both male and female representatives. *“A man’s decision cannot be made by a woman, and a woman’s decision cannot be made by a man”* (Sarukhan, fem., 28-year-old, single). *“The man should not poke his nose into the woman’s chores of preparing dinner, etc.”* (Qanaqer-Zeitun, fem., 48-year-old., married).

As to the decisions made by women within the HH, these are made in a joint manner, with mother-in-law’s dominant participation. Women with the status of a daughter-in-law in the HH are primarily not unhappy with the circumstance that the decisions are predominantly made by the mothers-in-law. *“To date, I consider the opinion of my mother-in-law in every issue. When leaving the house, I always tell her: of course, if I go out, how may I not let the elderly of my family know, how can it happen?”*

She is the mother-in-law and I am the daughter-in-law, it doesn't matter that I am almost 50, it means that I have grown up, but it doesn't mean that she has become younger; she has become older, too" (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 48-year-old, married).

Thus, according to the perceptions of our survey participants, the decisions made by women and men in HH are clearly distinguishable. Women make decisions within the frames of the following activities and situations: cleaning of the house, food preparation, relocation of furniture, in some cases, choice of the wall colour during renovation, etc. In other words, women are allowed to make decisions regarding everything that refers to the "indoor" activities.

According to the interviewees, the decisions made by men refer to the "outdoor" activities, including agriculture. When talking about shopping, here also a clear boundary is set: decisions about daily "small" shopping are made by women, like what needs to be bought for dinner preparation, minor things of daily use (e.g. laundry detergent, dishwashing liquid soap, etc.), and "big" decisions are made by men, including purchasing things for renovation, winter fuel/wood supply, equipment, car, etc. Let us make a note about another clear-cut decision. In case of repairing a household appliance/equipment, "making an appointment with the master" is absolutely a man's task. The wife keeps her husband informed, and only the latter has the right to make a decision and make an appointment with the master.

Nonetheless, the picture about some of the above-mentioned phenomena is slightly different in the Kentron (Center) Community of Yerevan. The perceptions of this area's interviewees differ both in terms of assessments and making decisions in the family. In their perception, the decision-making is not conditioned by the person's gender. *"It depends on the temperament of the person and how prepared he/she is to take on the family responsibility. It does not depend on gender". (Center, fem. 58-year-old, divorced):*

Among interviewees of the Kentron community, the woman-man distinction is quite weakly expressed in terms of making decisions. For example, in provincial residences it is the woman who decides that time has come to purchase laundry detergent, after which it can be bought both by woman, and in fewer cases, by man. Whereas, in Kentron community the men also participate in decision-making: “*On the way home, my dad can decide that laundry detergent should be bought and buy it, since it had finished*”. (Kentron, male., 21-year-old, single)”. And the opposite also happens: women make decisions that in provincial residences are considered to be “a man’s” decision, for example, inviting a relevant specialist [to fix something at home]. “*Well, you know, it depends, sometimes I do it, sometimes Mariam (refers to the daughter-in-law). For example, if I am not at home and the TV set gets out of order, or the children damage the vacuum-cleaner cord, she can decide to invite a specialist, can call and make an appointment*” (Kentron, fem. 58-year-old, divorced).

Decisions that refer to education: The ideological notions about making decisions with regard to children’s education somewhat differ from the reality. According to the perceptions of the male representatives, women (namely children’s mothers) should primarily be involved in decision-making processes of education-related issues, and these perceptions are being realized in daily activities. Among women representatives, a significant difference is observed in the way they perceive the reality and the reality they live in. The latter consider that the decisions, regarding children’s education, should be made by both parents, equally. However, the picture is different among the surveyed participants: it is primarily the mothers who make decisions, regarding children’s education, and it is again primarily them, and to some extent the grandmothers who lead the process. However, even the women-interviewees who consider that the men should also participate in decisions with regard to children’s education, think that the men’s role in this function should be quite restricted. Moreover, they think that the men should be involved in decision-making, only if the women’s authority does not work anymore. “*When I make my child sit down and do homework and (s)he doesn’t obey me, my husband*

will interfere and say ‘your mom is right, sit down and learn’” (Kamo, fem. 36-year-old, married). “It seems to me that in the morning when the child goes out, the mother should follow him/her, should make sure that the timetable is in place, everything is in order. It is the mother’s responsibility. If the child is naughty, then he/she should at least be somewhat shy in front of his/her dad” (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married).

The perception about the women’s primary role in children’s education is so deep-rooted in the society that it is also manifested in the education system, particularly in secondary schools. To the question whether a man is summoned to school, as a parent, the interviewee answers: *“This primality happens in cases when the conflict reaches its peak, or when a grave mistake is made.” (Kapan, fem. 32-year-old, single). Men are being involved in children’s education issues mostly in cases when financial investments are required: “It is mostly related to money, to expenses, in these cases, clearly the father has the say” (Drakhtik, fem. 31-year-old, married).*

Men’s participation in decision-making of children’s education or in related activities is very limited, even in cases when they do participate. Primarily, it includes helping out with homework of chess and sports’ issues, in cases when a child (and here we are talking about a boy child) attends a sports’ club.

There is also a clear distinction in the issue of children’s education, depending on the sex of the child: if both parents are involved in boys’ education, then in case of girls mostly mothers should get involved. *“Well, if the child is a girl, generally the woman and the mother should always get involved...There are issues that only women should be involved in” (Aparan, fem. 30-year-old, married) “ For example, singing and dancing, Do you think I will get involved in that? Will I decide, if she should dance or not? Mother knows better, if she would want to, she knows if it is allowed, or not...the mother should be the one to attend parents’ meeting, should take her to dancing classes” (Aparan, male., 30-year-old, married).*

And how do young people, who still have not formed a family, see this issue? The issue has been observed with participation of two young persons: one with secondary and the other with higher education. Given their different education levels, differences are also noticed in their perceptions of the issue. The notions of the interviewee with secondary education have the same widespread perceptions: mothers should get involved in helping out with homework, while fathers should get involved only in cases when there is a need for taking additional or stricter measures: *“Mothers should follow that the children prepare lessons properly and are attentive...men should get involved only in cases when the child does not obey the mother. Here, the father’s strictness will be needed”* (Davtashen, male, 28-year-old, secondary education, single). Nonetheless, the perceptions of the interviewee with higher education are different. In his opinion the decisions, related to children’s education should be made *‘by the parent who is cleverer; it may either be the father or the mother, whoever has got a higher education’* (Davtashen, female, 26-year-old, higher education, single).

Here, we should note about a negative phenomenon that is mostly manifested in rural communities. Noone is concerned by the children’s education, since the men aren’t at home for most of the time, while women prioritize household chores: *“Mother (she means herself) hardly manages to cook, clean, wash, iron or do other housework. It hasn’t been easy with 6 children. We didn’t have water at that time, we didn’t have a kitchen and a bathroom, it was a big house, everyone had gone away, leaving everything on my shoulders, including the care of this old woman (means her mother-in-law) (Shenavan, female., 55-year-old, married). And in some cases, comparatively older, and yet small children of the family helped out their younger siblings with preparation of lessons. And these were mainly girls: “When my daughter started to attend the first class, it seemed that she had an innate talent. Then, starting from 2-nd and 3-rd classes, she started to help her siblings with the lessons. I didn’t have the time, my husband was out at work, I was at the farm, also took care of the livestock, everything was on my shoulders. I didn’t have the time to*

sit down with my children or help out with their lessons” (Shenavan, fem. 55-year-old, married).

Men are ready to take on some of the women’s tasks only in extreme situations: *“To wake the children up early in the morning, to prepare the breakfast, oh, no, not that....if she has been ill, or if she has been in a hospital (means his wife), well, I have been forced to do that. If she is sick in bed, I have to take care of the child, but it cannot happen every day, no, it is not characteristic to the Armenian nation” (Shenavan, male, 54-year-old, married).*

It is interesting to note that in the opinion of women-interviewees, it is the women who should be involved in the issues of children’s education. They do not see the men’s role or its importance in such issues: *“There isn’t any issue that only men can decide” (Amasia, fem., 29-year-old, married): “I bring the example of myself, I have put all the duties of my children on my shoulders. And I find it right.” (Gyumri, fem., 51-year-old, married).* According to women-interviewees, women should be more involved in children’s education, since they are more interested in the children’s future than fathers: *“The mother is more willing for her child to receive quality education, than the father. The men do not think like that.... the men do not find education important” (Kamo, fem., 36-year-old, married).*

As in case of decision-making in everyday life, some issues, related to children’s education are observed by parents, as something that they do not have influence on: *“Well, I don’t know....then the time came for the child to attend kindergarten, we hadn’t even made any decision, we just knew that the child should go, so the child started to attend.... Frankly, I do not remember who took the initiative, who made the decision, since the child was in kindergarten age, so he had to attend (Aparan, male, 30-year-old, married).*

In Yerevan, particularly in Kentron community, the interpretation of the issue is not as acute, as it is in the provincial residences. Here also the

fathers' involvement in children's education issues is either limited or is not present at all and in some cases its causative-consecutive association is also the same: the men are busier. However, they acknowledge that this is not a healthy approach, and possible mechanisms should be developed in the family, for enhancing the fathers' engagement in this issue. They also mention that both parents should equally participate in decisions, related to children's education: *"Equally: mother and father; and if in the family, as in our case, there is a big sister or brother (means an adult with higher education), then, they can also participate, and why not? They may have more modern outlooks, they may understand things better"* (Kentron community, male, 21-year-old, single).

Let us present a few of the results from the involved observations during which it has been possible to observe situations, regarding children's education in the given HH.

Involved observation 1. When there is a suggestion for a child to recite poems (or when a child is made to recite poems) in the presence of guests or for a guest, it is only the child's mother and/or the grandmother who prompt him/her. The father's silent presence talks about the fact that he is not familiar with the "list" of the poems that his children master. (Gyumri).

Involved observation 2. During the observation, it was the mother who would continuously warn her elder son to prepare the lessons, instead of sitting in front of the computer and would regularly make calls to her younger son, who was playing with his friends, demanding to return home, since he hadn't prepared her lessons (Sarukhan).

Involved observation 3. On the day of observation, when the children returned home from school, only the mother was interested to learn about the classes, she was the one to continuously remind them about their classes. She suggested that her daughter and son get prepared before attending their respective classes of piano and mathematics. (Aparan).

Even if in verbal discussions the interviewees mention that fathers do participate in decision-making of the children's education issues, during involved observations we haven't witnessed such situations.

Decisions with regard to agricultural issues. It is almost impossible to observe the decisions, regarding the agriculture, outside the frames of other implemented activities. That is why we will consider them all at once.

The interviewees make a clear distinction between the decisions made and the works implemented, in the area of agriculture. Both farming and animal husbandry works are divided between men and women. Women make decisions, regarding crops that occupy smaller pieces of land, e.g. tomatoe, cucumber, carrot, cabbage and other. Women are also the only ones, involved in the cultivation of such crops. Men are involved in cultivation of bigger areas of land, but here again women participate in the work. *In the village both men and women are primarily involved in the same activities. For example, if the man does some work in the garden, the woman always helps him. If the man does, then the woman should also do". (Drakhtik, fem. 33-year-old, married).*

In the interviewees' perception, if the physical ability of the woman allows, she should carry out all works, related to agriculture. Interestingly, the women also think that they should equally participate in agricultural works, together with men: *"If the woman does not work, how should a man complete all the work on his own?" (Shenavan, fem., 75-year-old, widow):*

If we only observe the issue of making decisions, then we'll see that the elderly of the family have a significant role in it. Even if they are not able to participate in the realization of those decisions, still they are the main decision-makers: *" I said, "kiddo, let us cultivate this much potato, this much beans and that much cabbage, etc., To date, I have been the one to tell them what to do. ...if I say here we should cultivate cabbage, then we'll do it together without uttering a word. ...if it is time to water, I say,*

“it is dry, go, bring and water it”. They will go and bring water, wordlessly.” (Shenavan, fem., 75-year-old widow) “If I take my uncle’s wife for an example: If Zalo says ‘let us cultivate in bigger quantities,’ and Paylo (refers to uncle Zalo’s son) or the daughter-in-law say ‘let us cultivate in smaller quantities,’ Zalo says ‘no, we should cultivate in bigger quantities, here and there’. She has the say here. This happens due to respecting the elderly”. (Shenavan, fem., 54-year-old, married).

In terms of decision-making and the implemented works, within the area of agricultural activities, there is just one distinct issue in which men are primarily involved in most of the cases. Here, we are talking about making an appointment with the specialist of technical issues. It is considered to be “a man’s work”. Even though in case of men’s absence, women get involved or can get involved in many other works, still they cannot act in the same way in case of making an appointment with a relevant specialist. If there are no men at home, either permanently or temporarily (e.g. men have left for an outgoing work), then this work is done either by male relatives or by another man from the community: *”In no way, should a woman go and talk...the woman can tell her brother-in-law. For example, my son, my elder son, was not at home last year, so my grandchildren brought...isn’t it shameful for a woman to go and speak? (Shenavan, fem. 75-year-old, widow).*

If in case of implementation of works the women should have equal participation, then in terms of decision-making their role is less significant, as compared to men: *“Women should be involved in decision-making of minor issues, while men should decide greater and more complicated issues (Amasia, fem., 29-year-old, married).* Interestingly, women underestimate their abilities, too, considering that they can participate only in decision-making of less important issues. In their opinion, men should carry out *“...the more serious works that women don’t comprehend” (Amasya, fem., 29-year-old, married).*

Women, especially daughters-in-law of the family, have a trivial participation in the issues of agricultural goods’ sale. *“If there is something to*

sell, then they are the ones to decide. If I say 'let us sell', they will tell me (mostly refers to the father-in-law) 'you do not have the right', so this is why I do not interfere" (Kamo, fem. 36-year-old, married). The survey results show that the sale of larger agricultural goods (e.g. livestock, land, etc.) is organized primarily by men. Women are involved in sale of goods that are financially of lower value, like mild, eggs, matsun (Armenian yoghurt), etc.

In many cases, our woman-interviewees think that if the decision of growing a particular crop has been made by them, then *they* are the only ones to be involved in its cultivation. *"There are things in the farming work that the woman should decide, what should be sown, whether it should be some greens, beans or cabbage. How can a man know what greens need to be sown"* (Shenavan, fem. 33-year-old, married). This also means that if the decision is made by the woman, then the man should not cultivate.

With regard to animal husbandry and related decisions and activities, here also there is a division of work between women and men. It is the men's work to feed the animals with grass and to clean the barn, while it is the women's work to milk the cow and to process the milk. But here also the women, along with their works, carry out men's works too, while men, for example, never milk the cow (at least within the frames of our survey). For example, in the perception of a grandmother from Sasoun, *"It is the woman's work to milk the cow, while the man should feed the animal, clean the farmyard manure (Davtashen, fem. 79-year-old, widow). "Well, let me again bring you the example of the animals, the man brings the grass, provides with everything needed, so let the woman clean, feed the animals, milk the cows, process the milk, so this is what a woman should do. But let me tell you, dear girl, I also help her (Sarukhan, fem. 63-year-old, married).*

We have also witnessed milking of a cow during an involved observation. In Aparan, the man of the family, as a sign of respect towards his guest, carried out all the activities, regarding the animal, that usually can also

be done by the woman. However, he interrupted the conversation the woman was having with the guest, for the woman to go and milk the cow. Even though there was only one cow in the HH, however, the man did not implement that work (*Aparan*):

In some cases, women themselves initiate taking on a duty that in their own definition “is envisaged for men” and consider it to be an occasion for being proud. *“The daily activities should be done by women, for example, Vera’s husband also does, but I have not allowed my husband, he works in the school, I wouldn’t allow him to do such works, otherwise he’ll had to deal with unpleasant odour. Her husband is at home, so it’s the way they divide the work between them. Can you understand what is the issue about? My husband would do the same, if that were the case. He has always worked at school, it wouldn’t be good if he smelled bad. Let me put it this way: he should go out of house in tidy clothing.”* (*Sarukhan, fem. 63-year-old, married*): Whereas each of us know that in rural communities women pedagogues are simultaneously involved in animal-husbandry, farming and pedagogical activities.

Financial decisions: Since the framework of making decisions is quite wide-ranging, the HH members’ participation in them is also quite diverse. Some differences are obvious, especially depending on the place of residence, whether it is rural or urban, as well as depending on the family structure, whether two or three generations live in a family.

In provincial residences, women primarily participate in decision-making of everyday issues, including purchase of household goods, daily food, as well as cash provision for children’s needs attending school or kindergarten. However, the situation is different in families where only the couple lives or where they live together with their children. In such families, women participate in a little bit wider range of financial decisions, for example, acquisition of a property, house repair, etc. Here we should also mention about an important fact: the education level of a person also has its effect on the phenomenon. We came across a similar example in Drakhtik community of Gegharkunik Province, where in a family of one

generation, the spouses made their financial decisions almost equally. In our interviewee's perception there is not any decision that a man should make on his own: even car repair issues are being discussed together with his wife.

As we mentioned before, the women of rural communities practically do not participate in decisions, regarding the livestock sale. It also appears that they do not participate in management of the amount received as a result of the sale, either: *"When we intend to sell cattle, my husband sells it, takes the amount received, utilizes it on his own, we do not interfere. My mother-in-law may ask some questions, but I do not interfere at all. Mostly, he is the one to handle the money (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married).*

Let us present a few cases that are considered to be financial decisions to be made by men and some that need to be made by women: *"Decisions, related to everyday expenses need to be made by women-clothes, household goods, tableware" (Vardenis, fem., 29-year-old, married). "Whatever relates to the kitchen" (Sarukhan, male, 28-year-old, single). Decisions that are made only by men. "Men should take care of general expenses, should earn the living, should be engaged in big businesses" (Vardenis, fem., 29-year-old, married). "Issues not related to the family, issues outside the family, some kind of bargain or trade" (Sarukhan, male, 28-year-old, single). "If money needs to be invested in a bigger business, then the man's word is the last". (Davtashen, male, 28-year-old, single). "The man makes decisions about cattle sale, taking a loan, etc. For example, initiating a big business, is something that the man does; the woman only has to agree, and it does not matter whether she approves of it or not" (Aparan, fem., 50-year-old, married).*

The perception that the women should get involved in minor, unimportant issues, while the men should resolve important issues, is already formulated among the girls that haven't got married yet: *"Women should get involved in everyday household issues, those minor issues, while big issues will of course be resolved by men." We do not allow men to get involved*

in those minor issues; we take care of those ourselves: my mother or I, for example, buy the soap. Men should be engaged in bigger and more important issues” (Davtashen, fem. 26-year-old, single): This means that this tradition has become an ordinary part of the daily life, a stereotypical perception, which is transferred to the next generations both through cognizant upbringing and unconscious automatic activities.

Interesting fact that the female representatives themselves think that a woman does not need money: *“Well, you know, the rural women are at home all the time, busy with everyday work. In other words, they do not need to make an expense” (Davtashen, fem. 26-year-old, single).* The families where all members have got higher education have a different position in this matter, too: *“The women and men should equally get involved and make decisions in all kinds of financial issues. The situation is the same in our family. My dad does shopping every morning, he goes to buy a cigarette, and also brings bread, primary things, like sugar, coffee. I go to work, mom is busy with household work, and dad does the shopping. As to what kind of bread or coffee should be purchased, mom and dad decide together. There are no issues in our family that only men or only women should decide, with exception of hygiene items that family members buy on their own” (Gyumri, fem., 26-year-old, single).*

In some cases, women are not aware that they are deprived of an opportunity to make financial decisions. Even though all the financial decisions of the family are made by the man and the whole budget is managed by him, the woman may still interpret this phenomenon as equality: *“Our family budget is managed by the man; if something is needed, we will ask for some money, he will give us the needed amount and we will buy. There is no concept of “mine” or “yours” in our family” (Shenavan, when talking to the mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law interfered to express her opinion).*

In families, where three or four generations dwell, the financial decisions are mainly made by involvement of middle-aged women, who have the status of a mother-in-law. In their perceptions, they are considered to be

“good mothers-in-law”, if they do not give cash to their daughter-in-law, but rather purchase whatever is necessary for her, including hygiene items: *“Everything that she needs....she doesn’t lack anything that she needs, starting from cosmetics, from eye pencils, etc. It would be good for you to see her dressing table and the pier glass. I buy everything for her. She (refers to the daughter-in-law) says: ‘Mom, isn’t it expensive, the perfume costs 6000 AMD?’, I say ‘well, you use it only once daily before going out; I don’t care about that 6000 AMD at all’ “(Drakhtik, fem. 56-year-old, married).*

In some families it is normal to have “a family budget” where the money earned by all HH members is put together. It is kept at home by one of the HH members. According to our interviewees, the “family budget” is mainly held by a woman. This fact is highlighted both by women and men. However, in most of the cases the woman’s function is limited to physically holding it; the woman does not have the right to make decisions about it or to manage/utilize it without informing. If making expenditures from that budget, the women should be accountable to their husbands, considering it to be the right thing to do: *“Yes, you know what, it is a tradition; I am accountable to my husband with regard to the budget, I cannot allow myself to spend money on any extra things” (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married).* *“My husband may bring and give the money to me and say ‘keep it, and then give me back, whenever I ask for it’. So, it stays there, I do not take and spend it. If there is a need, I ask.He will not get angry, if I take without asking, but the right thing is to ask, first” (Drakhtik, fem. 33-year-old, married).* One of the reasons for such an approach is that according to women, the money should be managed by men, since they make better financial decisions and are better at organizing and implementing the expenses: *“In my family, it is the right thing for him to do. I know my husband’s character very well. It is better if he handles the money. I do not spend much, but it is better if he spends, because he knows how to manage the money. For some time, the money was handled by my mother-in-law, but it has been already 3-4 years that my husband manages it” (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old,*

married). However, the perceptions about this issue are different in the city of Kapan. Here, especially women think that they should have participation in all decisions that are made in the family. Such a perception is also characteristic to unmarried girls, i.e. before forming a family they already have the notion of their role in the family: *“I would have said “all”, but “all” is a bit global. But, for example, if my husband makes some big financial expenses, I should for sure learn about it, how should I not learn about it, if we have a shared budget? There should be an agreement, whether it is worth spending that much money on that thing or not. In any case, the mutual consent is the most important thing”* (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old., single).

If the HH budget solely consists of the benefit or pension, its management is implemented by the woman (daughter-in-law). There are two main reasons for it: first, the amount is quite small, and the woman can manage it, and the second, the amount is small, and it is necessary to realize all the expenses throughout the month, staying “within the limits” of that small amount. In case if the family has other sources of income, besides the pension/benefit, the woman still manages that ‘not so big amount’ received from the state: *“My father-in-law had received the pension, but when I went home, I did not see any pension. He doesn’t give his pension to me. Since he borrows vodka, or other things from the shop, he then has to pay off his debts with his pension. And when I receive the state benefit, I pay for the electricity, I buy household items. My husband is carried away with his friends; whenever there is money available, he goes to the city and spends time with his friends. This has been the way of my life for already ten years”* (Kamo, fem., 36-year-old., married).

In some families, the man does not provide the woman with the amount of money, necessary for doing the daily shopping, but rather accompanies her to the shop; the wife selects whatever is necessary and the husband pays: *“For example, I do not interfere in any issue. I select myself whatever is necessary for preparing dinner, for doing the laundry, but the bill is paid by him. If a certain item is not available in our shop, then my*

husband brings it from somewhere else. At our home, the whole financial budget is handled by my husband; he is the one to manage it. To date, my husband has never provided me with an amount of money to be spent throughout the month, for everyday shopping purposes (Shenavan, fem., 33-year-old, married).

In cases of a man's absence (here we are talking about being absent from home for a few hours) and if it is a case where the man makes financial decisions and manages the whole household budget, the woman applies a method that has become a rather deep-seated phenomenon especially in rural communities, i.e. borrowing items from community shops with a condition to pay at a later stage: *"We'll borrow the goods before he comes. They trust us in the shop, they give us the goods, then we go and pay them for that"* (Shenavan, fem., 75-year-old, widow).

During the prolonged absence of men (and not only in case of absence) the financial decisions of the family are made by the woman who has the status of a mother-in-law: *"My husband has got the money, if I need to buy something, I ask my husband. If he is on duty at the border, then I tell my mother-in-law"* (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married). *"If the daughter-in-law needs some money, then she tells her husband, if he is at home; if not, then, yes, she tells either me or her father-in-law"* (Aparan, fem., 50-year-old, married). Similar to the men's case described above, in case of the mothers-in-law being the ones to make financial decisions, the daughters-in-law approve of it considering it to be the right thing to do: *"Our family budget is managed by the grandmother, since she handles the expenses in a correct manner"* (Vardenis, fem., 29-year-old, married).

We witnessed the decision-making process of the woman with the status of a mother-in-law in HH during the involved observation. When we were there, the men intended to travel to Gavar by car, to buy a spare part for the car. The woman with the status of a mother-in-law took her chance to join them announcing that she needs to buy some fruit and other things. The daughter-in-law didn't interfere in the decision of the

mother-in-law, didn't make any suggestion to buy additional things, and the mother-in-law on her turn didn't ask the daughter-in-law, if she would like something for herself or would suggest buying something. Neither did any of the HH members suggest that she joined them (*Sarukhan*).

We noticed the same phenomenon also in Aparan. During the involved observation there was a need to buy bread in the given HH: the adolescent daughter was going to do the shopping. The grandmother was the one to send the girl to the shop to buy bread and give her 1000 AMD. When the child asked how much lavash should be bought, her mother said that 1000 AMD is a lot and that she should buy lavash for 500 AMD. The final decision was made by the grandmother who said that 10 pieces of lavash should be bought (*Aparan*).

The situations created during the observation showed that in terms of doing the shopping, and in general, in terms of decision-making, the daughter-in-law is not completely independent. For example, when it took quite long for the observer to stay with the family, it was the man's (not the woman's) suggestion to lay the table, and it was his decision to buy and bring some meat products for just one guest. When the observer refused the suggestion of having supper, the HH daughter-in-law was in the kitchen, feeding the children: the husband and the mother-in-law went to the kitchen for several times, after which the daughter-in-law prepared the supper. This means that the decision to prepare supper for the guest was made by the husband and the mother-in-law (*Gyumri*).

This case contradicts to the opinion expressed by the interviewees during the in-depth interviews that the woman with the status of daughter-in-law makes decisions about the everyday food preparation. In reality (in most of the cases) they implement only the physical side of the activity.

As to how the family members manage the money, we tried to observe in urban settings of two different provinces. For instance, we tried to figure out if it is right for all members of the HH to have some amount of money, so that in case of need they can independently make a decision

and manage it. We have selected the city of Aparan with its traditional and conservative environment and the city of Kapan with its comparatively less stereotypical perceptions. *“No, it is not a family then, nothing like that, our family is not like that” (Aparan, fem., 50-year-old, married)⁵. “Money is kept by me, by my mother-in-law and by my husband. It is not put in one place, and we don’t have to ask anyone, in order to take it from some particular place” (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, married).*

In the end of the topic, we will reflect on the participation of women in decision-making processes in the city of Yerevan. The picture here is different: here, the perceptions about the issue differ from the perceptions of provincial residences, in terms of a few aspects. Such differences are observed both among women and men. Even if in terms of everyday life, it is not fully practiced, however, at the perceptions’ level, a certain change is already observed: *“I think in all issues women should participate. There is such an expression ‘behind every successful man, a clever woman is standing’, correct? In my opinion, women manage money better, in all issues; I think, even when buying a car or a house, men should ask women’s opinion, but in the Armenian society it is not much accepted” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem. 20-year-old, single). “I think, you also agree that the financial issues will be solved with participation of both spouses. There are no issues that only the woman should resolve. If, for example, I need a certain thing, I don’t go and tell my husband, ‘Do you know, dear husband, I need to buy powder for doing the laundry, may I go and buy? Do you allow me?’ However, each activity should take place with mutual consent of both spouses” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 48-year-old, widow). In our family there has not been any case, when a financial decision was made only by men; I don’t remember such a thing” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 48-year-old, widow).*

In the Kentron community of Yerevan, the women acknowledge that if they work and earn for living equal to the men, then they also have the right to equally make decisions: *“No, it can’t be that way, because I earn*

⁵ Please note that the response sounded with an offended tone.

money as much as he does ” (Kentron, fem., 58-year-old, divorced). The men’s perceptions living in the Kentron community also differ, with regard to this issue: “If, for example, my father says that a given issue should be resolved in a given way, and my mom understands that it is not the right thing to do, they will discuss it together and, coming to the conclusion that it is the wrong way to go, my father will obviously give up the idea. If my father tells something, it does not automatically mean that it should be done that way. And generally, it is considered to be the right approach” (Kentron, male., 21-year-old, single).

In some cases, keeping the woman under control and depriving her of the right to make decisions may lead to divorces. Let us directly quote a section from our in-depth interview that we conducted with one of the interviewees: *“My mother-in-law would never allow us to make a decision on our own about any kind of issue. In the first years of marriage, if something was needed, my mother-in-law would buy and bring. Then, the time came when we started living on our own; we were separated, but not completely, since our entrance was still the same; simply we were provided with a separate room, so that we would live on our own, but my husband seemed to be unable to live without his mom. Not that he was unable, but his mother..... If we lived on our own as a normal family, her mother would not allow him to enter their house, to sit down with them and to drink a cup of coffee. If he said ‘mom, prepare a cup of coffee for me,’ she would say ‘you have your own family, go and ask your wife to prepare your coffee.....’. And my husband avoided from appearing in that kind of a situation and was somehow forced to go there regularly, as a result of which I was neglected all the time: I was neglected in the New Year period, on the 8th of March, on my birthday...whatever he would buy for the children’s birthday, he would take there, and I was left here alone, again neglected.*

All of this started when she (means her mother-in-law) didn’t allow me to use what we had. For example, if someone would bring me a present, I couldn’t use it the way I wanted. For example, I would enter the bathroom

to clean my teeth, she would come and say 'you should clean your teeth in the morning, no one cleans teeth in the evening.' Similarly, she would follow me to the bathroom and say that I should wash in the morning, not in the evening. She would allow herself doing such things that I can't even put in words...I don't know.

For example, she would buy hair mask for me, I would use it for a period of time that she would define, if she decided that I should use it in the course of the whole month, then I had to make sure that it lasts for the whole month. In case if the hair mask finished earlier, she wouldn't buy again. Another example is that she would count the sugar by a coffee spoon....For example, they put half spoon of sugar in one coffee cup, so she would count that each spoon will be enough for two cups of coffee. Thus, she would count 20 spoons of sugar, keeping in mind the number of coffee cups that could be prepared with that amount of sugar. And if it finished, then that would be it: she wouldn't add sugar into that pot again. And I did not have the right to look for sugar, she would tell me 'what are you digging for'?

She decided what we should eat. She would allow herself doing such things that it would even be a shame to speak about. For example, she wanted the house to be clean. Since they had a daughter-in-law in the family, she was the one to keep the house clean. However, as the daughter-in-law, I was obliged to follow the mother-in-law's rules for keeping it clean. For example, she would buy bleach, but I wouldn't be allowed to use it for cleaning the floor, so that it didn't finish. I had to clean the floor without bleach. Even if I would use the bleach for cleaning and she would want me to keep the house clean, whenever they returned home, they would walk into the room with muddy shoes, ignoring the fact that the floor was still wet: if you are the daughter-in-law, you should clean again and again. And as I saw that it didn't make any difference to them, since I would clean, but they wouldn't say 'we shouldn't bring in and leave the mud on the wet floor with our shoes; let us take off our shoes or let us wait for the floor to get dry,' or 'it's a private house, we can enter in

a while, I concluded that they do not need tidiness. And when I stopped keeping the house clean, she said that her daughter-in-law was clumsy.

I had the right to sleep until 10:00. Everytime I left the house, she would enter my room, mix everything up there, to see what I had and where I kept different things. Her purpose was to find something that would allow her to humiliate me at any cost, saying that I am not able to keep my room tidy” (Aparan, fem., 35-year-old, divorced).

Hence, in spite of some exceptions, the picture of women’s participation in decision-making of family issues is quite clear:

- **Both the women and men, participating in the survey perceive the HH decisions, as automatically determined and mechanically taken.** The interviewees have difficulty in clearly defining, as to how a certain decision is made in their family: for example, should the child attend a kindergarten or not, who should prepare the daily food, who should do the everyday cleaning of the house, who should make an appointment with the specialist, etc? These activities are considered to have been determined a long time ago, and the interviewees do not see their participatory role in the formation and/or transformation of those activities. The majority of the interviewees hasn’t ever given a thought or got concerned about how and when such a division in decision-making and implemented activities, resulting from those decisions, has been formulated.
- **In case of presence of several women, representing different generations, the primary decisions in the HH are made by the woman having the status of a mother-in-law.** In some cases, the mothers-in-law make decisions about hygiene items to be purchased for the daughter-in-law and define the periods within which these items should be utilized.
- All the decisions that are usually made in the family by the man, in case of the latter’s absence are being made by the woman, representing the older generation of the house.

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- The women primarily participate only in financial decisions that are made to address the minor daily issues, including purchase of daily food and household goods, or as the interviewees would describe, in “minor” decisions. Such participation of women is both acceptable and right in the perceptions of both men and women.
 - In the interviewees’ perception, the women should not participate or cannot participate in decision-making of “big” or “important” issues, for example in a vehicle or a real estate purchase. Moreover, women cannot participate in decisions that relate to establishing a business or making any kind of investment. **The perception that women cannot participate in decision-making of “big” and “important” issues is already formulated among unmarried women, as well. This means that such a perception has already been transferred to them both through intended and purposeful upbringing methods and unintended activities.** When saying ‘unintended activities’, we mean the current family reality where young, unmarried girls observe the women’s role in terms of decision-making and consider it to be “right”.
 - A clear division is observed also in terms of decision-making and implementing the activities of agricultural nature: all decisions that relate to equipment are made exclusively by men. It is unacceptable and shameful for a woman to talk with an equipment specialist/technician and to make an appointment with him. In case of permanent or temporary absence of men from the given HH, such issues are resolved either through involvement of male relatives or other male residents of the community. Only the cow milking is an exclusively woman’s activity.
 - Decisions, related to children’s education, are primarily made by women. In the interviewees’ perception, the men should be involved in decisions, related to children’s education, only in case if the children do not obey their mother and it is necessary to scold them. Men participate in decisions, related to children’s

education primarily in cases when financial resources are needed to continue the study in higher educational institutions.

- The above-mentioned perceptions are somewhat different among the interviewees from Yerevan, especially from the Kentron community. The latter mostly share the opinion that the women should participate in all decisions of the HH. Some women-interviewees of the Kentron community consider that if they work and earn money, then they have the right to participate in decision-making. In the Kentron community women make decisions that in rural communities are considered to be unacceptable, for example making an appointment with the equipment specialist. Men, on their turn, participate in making decisions that in rural communities are made only by women, for example the decisions on buying laundry powder or cleaning the house with vacuum-cleaner.
- Actually, **the unequal participation of women** in family decision-making is due to the existing traditions. Moreover, according to the survey participants, it is necessary to maintain the traditions in all issues that refer to woman-man relationships within the family, to the role women and men have in the family issues, as well as to the issues, related to children.

2.1.2. Women's participation in community decision-making

The planning and organization of a person's daily routine are greatly affected by the community of neighbors, ties of blood and kinship. Taking into account the wide range of daily activities, we tried to observe the women's opportunities and their level of participation in community decision-making within the scope of the following questions:

1. Do women participate in community decision-making or does it take place only with participation of men?
2. If women participate in public discussions, then which issues/what

- type of issues are discussed during those? Why do they participate in discussions of namely these issues?
3. What are the types of issues in which the women do not participate at all? Why?
 4. If community women participate in discussions, is their opinion taken into account or given importance to during the discussions?
 5. If the women's participation in the discussions is limited to just being present, and their opinion is not taken into account, then why do they participate?
 6. According to the interviewees, in which of the community decisions and discussions should women participate, if they currently don't? Why?
 7. According to the interviewees, in which of the community decisions and discussions should only men participate? Why?
 8. According to the interviewees, who are the three people in their community who are reputable/decision-makers? The purpose of the inquiry is to clarify, if there are women among those people.

The perceptions and the actual situation with regard to women's participation in community decision-making differ quite a lot. In rural communities, the women barely participate in the community life, for which a several reasons exist:

1. Public opinion: *"Let me bring my personal example; I will never join a men's gathering, let me tell you that; I will not do such a thing. The people will say 'Vardush's daughter-in-law has come and makes a speech'. When you sit in a car to go to Sevan, everybody says 'you see, Liana sat into this car and left'. Yesterday, I went after the medicine for my daughter, she has broken her leg, I took her to the doctor to fix it; one of our remote relatives took us to the doctor. Yesterday, as I returned home, and then went to the neighbor's house, everybody knew that I had gone with Kamo. I am lucky that my daughter was with me. Kamo is an old man, but it doesn't matter"* (Drakhtik, fem. 33-year-old, married).

2. Men's prohibition: *"Men will not allow women to get involved in such issues"* (Shenavan, fem., 33-year-old, married).
3. Being unaccepted by men: *"When I see that women already start making 'speeches', I try to stay away from that place. When a woman gets involved in decision-making of a serious issue, the situation already goes beyond being reasonable, because men have seen a lot in life and have a greater ability to find a good solution of the given issue, as compared to women"* (Sarukhan, fem., 28-year-old, single).
4. The phenomenon may be considered as shameful: *"We may be disgraced in the village, it is a shame"* (Shenavan, fem., 33-year-old).
5. The atmosphere of fear. In provincial environments, according to the survey results, whenever women decide to voice about the injustices, either they have fears to express themselves or other community members frighten them. Those fears are connected to the fact that people in higher positions may harm the given person. We encountered a few of such cases: let us quote one of them: *"There is a tricky habit among the Armenians: a few years ago, the wind had taken away the roof (means the roof of their house), a few women came to the square, I also went there with my child, she was small. They told me, 'you bring the child, come and show them and tell them that your child is small and the house is cold'. There I made a speech against the leaders, it was a strong one. We went there, the women became thoughtful and didn't utter a word; I was the only one to speak. Then, I said that it is the leader who does not allow anyone to help the people in Aparan.Alvard said: 'hey girl, you will go now, they will detain you and will take you away'"* (Aparan, fem. 50-year-old, married).

However, it should be noted that the interviewees do not express their opinions on women's participation in community discussions or on their

holding positions within the community in a drastic manner: *“Why should only men do? Any issue can be resolved by women.”* (Drakhtik, fem., 56-year-old, married). *“When there is a woman candidate in the village, I will not pay attention that it is a woman, I will elect her. It’s even better”* (Shenavan, fem., 75-year-old, widow). *“If there would also be a woman, it would even be good. For example, in schools there are many women. If there were a woman candidate for the position of the village mayor, I would elect her. Perhaps a woman can be a better leader. My aunt has been the head of the Lusakert village council, she has been leading it for 20 years; it means that she has been a good leader”* (Shenavan, fem., 55-year-old, married).

Men’s perceptions on this issue are interesting. Those men, who show a positive attitude towards women’s participation in community and public life, have difficulty in finding such women in their families and the community. In their comments, when describing such a woman, they primarily mention that the woman should be clever and “normal”: *“Of course, if the woman is “normal”, considerate, and literate, she also can”* (Aparan, male, 50-year-old, married). To the question: “Would you support a woman candidate?”, the interviewee responses: *“If I feel that she is normal, then I will definitely support”* (Shenavan, male, 54-year-old, married). This means that men are able to break the stereotype that they have inside, in case if the issue is of a more global nature and is beyond the frames of their narrow family environment.

We noticed a unique approach towards the phenomenon in the Drakhtik community of Gegharkunik province. The community was resettled in 1988 with Armenian residents who were forced to leave Azerbaijan or where deported from Artsvashen village. Women of the community do not participate in community discussions; however, they express their opinion in the presence of their men at home, who on their turn voice them out in the community. *“They express their opinion in front of men who are dear to them, like their son, husband, who then go into the community and express it there”* (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married).

“If the discussion is in the village center, then definitely they do not participate. And if it is at home at the given moment, then all of them participate. For example, if we are sitting at home, and we want to decide what plan we should make for tomorrow, how we should do it and what we should do to make it work, or who will tell us, what should be done, then it is discussed openly. My wife can also participate; she also can tell her opinion or make a suggestion that we involve another person. But if it is in the community, she surely should not come to participate” (Drakhtik, male, 31-year-old, married).

The interviewees see women’s participation in community issues mostly in the sphere of education. One of the reasons is that in the Armenian reality the pedagogues are mostly women: *“It is pleasant to see, for example, that the heads of kindergartens are women, the employees are women, too. Well, I think, the women would be better in their interaction with children, would treat children better, would understand them better” (Aparan, the interviewee’s wife interferes in the conversation). “I think in case of kindergarten, and in all other cases, where the issue relates to children, the women are more organized, just given the fact that they are moms, I mean. I think the women’s involvement would be the right thing in this issue” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 48-year-old, widow).* The perceptions about the same phenomenon are different in the community of Kentron. The idea that the educational institutions are suitable only for women to work is considered to be wrong: *“No, even though in our case, it is like that (means that in school mostly women work), but perhaps it would be preferable, if it would not be like that, but in our case, yes, it is considered to be good, it is considered to be a job, suitable for women, since it is a quiet one. Also, in the mentality of our “rabiz” men [slang used to describe mostly uneducated men, or those not having good taste], women can go and work at school, since just a few men work there. Yes, it seems they won’t have a reason to be jealous, since there is only an old man, or a war veteran, in his eighties who works as a housekeeper, and another teacher of physical-training, who will not manage to pay*

attention to all women of the staff, so that is why men think that their wives (if they are teachers) work in a good place, but let me tell you that it is just the beginning of the disaster” (Kentron, fem., 58-year-old, divorced).

There are certain community decisions that need to be made only by men: *“For example, there are issues, related to sewage repair, sewage cleaning, changing the roofs of apartmental buildings: decisions like that are made by men. There is not any practice for a women’s group to get organized, to stand up and make a decision on renovation of our roofs. Primarily, it is the men who make decisions around those issues” (Vardenis, fem. 29-year-old, married). “Suppose, the mayor’s office (village council) decides to go to see a certain place, to build something, or to organize a visiting tour, you can be sure that women will not get involved in such issues” (Sarukhan, fem. 38-year-old, married). “For example, in the sphere of business they (refers to women) do not participate at all, neither do they participate in the sphere of trade. It is considered to be a man’s job and that is it” (Shenavan, the husband interferes during an interview with his wife). “The men’s role is significant in issues of maintaining the village tidiness, asphaltting the roads, village lighting and improvements; it is considered to be a man’s job” (Davtashen, fem., 54-year-old, married).*

One of the interesting approaches is that the selection of entertainment place location and type are also to be decided by men. As we’ll see in the following section of this work, one of the reasons for it is the fact that, if there are entertainment places in rural communities, then these are only visited by men: *“It should be the decision of men as to what type of entertainment place will be built” (Shenavan, fem., 33-year-old, married).*

In this case also, the issue is slightly differently perceived by people who have high level of education and reside in provincial cities. It is hard to assess, as to how practicable it will become in life, however it already makes part of their mentality: *“Both women and men have the same*

mentality. A woman may say such a clever thing that a man may never say in his life. It depends on a person's mentality, brain, education, interaction with people. How can her opinion be ignored, whether it is your wife or just a woman?" (Drakhtik, male, 31-year-old, higher education, accounting-auditing, married). "There are certain issues for which the women's say should also be considered, the man may not be able to think the way the woman does. It seems to me that women think farther than men, because women are....I don't know ... mode of their life, mentality, behaviour, psychology may also be considered. Men and women think differently. And there are issues, even in a family, that when a woman talks, it may cause doubts, and in reality, the woman's role may be greater, the woman's speech may be simpler and clearer, as compared to man's role, and it may even be decisive" (Sarukhan, fem., 38-year-old, higher-education, philologist, married).

Women's participation in public life is comparatively active in Gyumri and Kapan. However, the difference is that in Gyumri it is primarily the youth and the adolescents who are active, while in Kapan the age group of active people has a wider range, which proves that in Gyumri the stereotypical approach about this issue is just being gradually overcome. Nonetheless, in Kapan the [traditional] perceptions and approaches about the same phenomenon have been overcome much earlier: *"Recently, discussions were held about placing statues in the streets, and I admired the young girls who together with young boys of their age just spoke against that idea, not allowing it to happen and telling that the time for the older generation has passed; they declared that it is their city and they are the ones to decide. 'We will not allow them to overwhelm the city with artificial statues.' And they succeeded. And they, together with the boys, stood up and fought against it" (Gyumri, fem., 40-year-old, married). "Now, the fathers are more open-minded, they allow their daughters to stand for their rights. If I compare today's reality with the times when I was young, it wouldn't even occur to me that my father could allow me to participate in a demonstration. They didn't*

even allow me to study in Yerevan. But 25 years have passed since the times of having such a mentality” (Gyumri, fem., 40-year-old). “I prefer that both men and women participate” (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old., single). “It seems to me that it is [the opinions] taken into account, it is 50/50, for men and women”. I don’t think that we have such traditional things “only suitable for men” in our community. Perhaps, everybody is respected. Being a woman myself, I have never noticed a discrimination between women and men. For example, no one has told me ‘you are a woman, please leave, this is not an issue of your concern’ “(Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, married). “For example, we witness speeches, where the municipality women express their opinion fearlessly and with pleasure, we don’t notice any constraints, the head of the education department at the provincial administration (marzpetaran) is a woman, she is free in her actions and speeches” (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, single).

The perceptions and standpoints about the discussed phenomenon are different in the capital, as compared to provincial residences. Unlike the provincial residences, where women’s participation in public and community life is primarily limited to the education sphere, in Yerevan this framework is much wider and involves larger spheres. “For example, in Armenia, all wardens in the women’s prisons are men, it would be good to also have women in the role of prison wardens. ... I have even seen women-drivers in Yandex and GG taxi services.I am not against it, the woman also should bring income [to the family], let her work” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 20-year-old, single). “Now women participate in rallies a lot, they stand for their rights, equal to men: in my opinion, it is good. Now women enter political (means political life) very often: formerly, it was accepted that only men could be lawyers. If we observe the relevant departments (even if we just take the international relations department) of the universities now, we will see that there are more girls who study there. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that now they also strive to managerial positions, and it seems to me that in future they will reach their goal (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 20-year-old, single).

In the community of Kentron, it is not discussed whether women should participate in community decision-making or not, rather it is discussed whether women involved in public and political life express themselves in a right manner (and to what extent). Seemingly, in Kentron community the phenomenon is not problematic, and the participation in decisions is not defined by gender, but rather by other values. The interviewees of the Kentron community not only speak about the issue, but also provide their interpretation on it, for example the division between women and men in terms of participation in decision-making is explained by the differences in generations. *“To be honest, among the individuals of older generation, in my opinion, and as I observe from internet, the majority of decision-makers are men. But I cannot state that it is the same case with my peers”* (Kentron, male., 21-year-old, single). *“As an example, I can take the financial sphere, where, as I have noticed, there are many women, over the age of 30-40, who play a significant role there, occupy high positions and are very smart. Still, the distribution [of higher positions] here is unequal, but in the NGO sector, I have seen many women in higher positions. ...for example, at my workplace, the director is a man and the deputy director is a woman, but their opinions are heard equally. ...no, I cannot say that there are spheres belonging exclusively to men, in my personal opinion, if a woman is a better specialist, the gender shouldn’t matter here, she can be a good engineer; we are just used to seeing that an engineer should be a man, but if the given woman does the work even better, then she should do it. ...We should be reasonable in our judgments and not radical about the issue of equality among individuals, at least I think so. If you are a better specialist, you should be provided with a job that corresponds to your qualifications”* (Kentron, male., 21-year-old, single).

In the end of the community-related inquiries, let us reflect on the interviewees’ perceptions as to who the three reputable persons /decision-makers in their community are. The inquiry entails two main purposes: first to see if there are women among those people, and

the status they have, and second, the characteristics people use when describing men and women. Thus, nine of the reputable persons mentioned by the interviewees were women. As to their status, five of them are pedagogues, which once again proves that the public primarily sees women's role in the education system.

It is interesting to note that most frequently the community leaders were mentioned among the reputable men. The main characteristics, describing men, are being a leader and an organizer, generous, demanding, loved by the public and respectful. These men are considered to be reputable, since they have implemented the following activities: have helped people with money, haven't allowed the police to enter the village, have improved the community roads, etc. The women are respected, because they are smart, pleasant, hard-working, respectful and are good specialists.

The perceptions on this issue again differ in Yerevan. Firstly, the interviewees have difficulty to name such people in Yerevan, since the concept of "community" here is rather wide. When enumerating names of people, neither personal characteristics nor the speculative approaches are taken into account, but rather the scope of activities that a person has implemented for the Armenian people. Among people respected by them, the interviewees mention Ruben Vardanyan, since he enhances the country's reputation, the prime minister⁶, since he leads the right policy, Charles Aznavour, since he is the brightest representative of the Armenian nation, etc.

Hence:

- The level of women's participation in discussions of community issues is so low that we can even consider that it doesn't exist at all. The community discussions mostly take place with participation of men and based on their decisions. The public opinion that the political and/or the social activity are predominantly in the

⁶ The given survey was conducted in February-March, 2018, before the changes in the Government structure.

men's domain is still relevant in the provincial communities. Even though the viewpoints about the phenomenon have changed, as the survey data show, it is still early to talk about their practical application.

- A certain difference is observed in terms of the perceptions of the issue in provincial communities and in Yerevan. In provinces, the women's role is primarily seen within the limits of the education sphere-pedagogue, school headmaster, deputy headmaster. The interviewees residing in Yerevan have a wider range here, they talk about the level and quality of women's participation in community decisions, as well as changes that take place in these terms.
- **Women are left out of the communication, taking place in public life, where values and situations of public importance are being formed and/or transformed.**
- **In fact, among the survey participants there is a widespread opinion that the public life is formulated by men: they are the masters of rules that form and transform it, women are not. We can also mention that prohibiting women's participation in public life or being against it, is conditioned by the circumstance that men do not want to handover their "authority" to women.**

2.2. CONDUCTING DAILY WORK

2.2.1 The Importance and Classification of Daily Work Conducted by Women.

The decision-making, as well as the implementation of the daily work are clearly divided between women and men. However, men typically never participate in works performed by women, while women either equally help, or totally do the work that are to be performed by men. This relates

to the works that are not defined, as purely men-specific, and are not forbidden for women.

In the basis of work division again lies the concept of “indoor” and “outdoor”. However, if all the indoor works are performed by women, the outdoor works are performed both by women and men. Here, the impression is that the work in the barns is also considered to be among the indoor works. The “indoor” works conducted only by women are considered to be food preparation, washing, ironing, cleaning, taking care of children and helping them with homework; in the rural areas also lighting the fireplace, milk processing, etc.

Within the scope of the survey, we have tried to observe those types of works “intended for women” during which the men help. This question provides the opportunity to study this issue from two viewpoints at once: according to the interviewees, which works are considered to be women’s works and in which cases do men participate in conducting them?

In many cases, women interviewees consider that the works intended for women include bringing water and firewood, lighting the fireplace, cattle-breeding, cleaning the pipes of fireplace. The fact that men help them in these works is being mentioned with a great enthusiasm: *“For example, when we do not have water, it happens that the husband helps in bringing the water; similar cases may also happen, related to the fireplace: they may bring the firewood, clean the pipes of the fireplace”*. (Drakhtik, fem. 40- year -old, married).

In some cases, the women-men division of work is so rooted that women themselves are being against men’s participation in works, intended for women: *“To be honest, the duties about the house are not hard for us, to be unable to perform, and to require that our men help us. House cleaning is mainly performed by me, and the kitchen work is performed by the grandmother, so that when everyone comes home, everything is ready and in place. It is not that we are not managing and need our men’s support”* (Vardenis, fem., 29-year-old, married). *“I think that there are borders that should not be crossed. I am against it, as a woman. For example, it would be unacceptable for me, if I visit someone’s house, my*

friend and I would sit together, and her husband would get up to wash the dishes or clean the floor. Now it is frequently noted that in foreign countries it is this way, or in Russia it is another way, but we have our own coloring, our genes. I do not accept that today I have to wash the dishes, and tomorrow my husband has to do that (Amasia, fem. 29-year-old, married).

During these observations, we did not witness a case when the men in the house made coffee for the guests or participated in making the dinner. All of the work connected with hosting the guests was carried out by women: making coffee and dinner, serving, washing dishes, etc. Despite the fact that the guest was a well-respected person in these families, leaving the latter alone, the housewife had to go to the kitchen to make coffee; even in this case, the husband would not get involved in coffee making. From the functions, related to kids, men participated only in their entertainment and in few cases in giving them water. When housewives were busy with entertaining the interviewers, and there was a need to change kid's diaper, none of the men was performing this task, despite baby's intense crying. As already mentioned, from the agricultural works, milking a cow is a purely women's work. During the observations in the rural areas, men were performing all the tasks related to barns, except for milking. Women were stating that the men were being that much engaged in participation of the works, related to the barns, only because of the presence of the guest. However, the presence of the guest did not force them to make an exception and milk the cow. Even during the observation, conducted in Amasia, the grandfather of the family mentioned that in their family there were only "respectful" men who never milked cows.

If women are against men performing works "intended for women" then what is their attitude towards the idea of sharing the works equally? Which of the works are the men ready to perform together with women? Women interviewees negatively reacted to the idea of performing the works equally, in some cases considering that "illegal" and "not suitable for Armenian women". *"If the wife is sitting and chatting with the neighbor,*

while the husband is gathering what she had scattered, it is an awful thing for an Armenian woman, it is something that is illegal” (Shenavan, fem., 55-year-old, married). “A woman should know her limits within her family, ...whatever concerns to a woman” (Drakhtik, fem. 40-year-old, married). “It is in my nature: I cannot love a man who is wiping the floors with me” (Vardenis, the daughter-in-law of the interviewee is responding). Men interviewees completely exclude the idea of equally participating in the women-related works, as well as reject the role of women in making “men’s decisions”, as women cannot be clever enough to correctly orientate: “If there is a need to think and deeply study the issue, at that moment women may probably comprehend the matter less” (Sarukhan, m., 28-year old, single)

In the families, the elderly, especially the mothers-in-law, hinder participation of men in daily works. Maybe in the core of this lies the social revenge: if in their time they have performed these tasks, then now it should be performed by their daughters-in-law. “For example, when my son wants to clean the dust, the grandmother (mother-in-law of the interviewee) says not to do that as it is the work of women” (Shenavan, fem., 55-year-old, married).

Now let us refer to the cases when in households there is no strict division of work, and men also participate in the “indoor” duties of the house: “For example, washing the rags, it is a big rag, how can you not help in bringing it out, so that they can wash it, and then in hanging it on the rope or some other place for drying? Hanging the curtains are for women, but it is a dangerous work. Besides that, I like when it is hanged straight, I help mainly for that reason” (Drakhtik, m. 31-year-old, married). “In many times my son has cooked the meal better than I do. In this work he is a professional, he likes it and asks me to let him cook. He cooks great borshch with meat, also fish and boiled meat (khashlama). There are many works intended for women which he can perform successfully. Before marriage, my sons were cleaning the house, washing the rugs and the floors together with me; these are works intended for women, but my three sons were doing these works equally with me (Vardenis, fem.,

62-year-old, widow). *“My father was doing the vacuum cleaning. When we were baking a cake, my father would beat the cream, he was doing it successfully. During NewYear time when my mother was baking gata (Armenian pastry), my father, even if he was not helping with its preparation, would sit next to the oven all night long to see when the pastry was ready”* (Gyumri, fem. 26-year-old, single). *“Maybe I will not manage to sweep this part of the floor, he takes the broom and sweeps, without making any problem. There may be a case when the coffee cups are on the table, let us suppose I forget them, he washes and puts them in their places”* (Sarukhan, fem., 38-year-old, married).

The above-mentioned cases, when men participate in tasks intended for women, concern mainly to the families consisting of one or two generation(s), where only a young couple lives or where the couple lives with its children.

Interestingly, if men participate in indoor works, these are works which are not seen by others. For example, they do not hang the laundry, or wash the windows. The only interpretation of this is the importance they give to the society’s opinion. *“During the spring-clean of the house, our men work equally with us. My son cleans all the walls in the bathroom. They were like this from childhood. We do the spring-clean of the house, and they help us. I am not telling that they are washing the windows, but they are helping. Of course, we will not leave the laundry to men, but he can wash the dishes...washing the windows is a shame, of course, this is Gyumri, my dear. I have 10 fingers and can close 10 mouths; how can I stop other rumors?”* (Gyumri, fem., 51-year-old, married). *“I had hard pregnancy and that day I did the laundry and was feeling very bad, then my husband hanged the curtains. Our house is positioned in a way that the inside is seen from outside, so he hanged the curtains early in the morning, so that nobody will see that”* (Drakhtik, fem. 33-year-old, married).

Further, we have reflected on the issue of women’s participation in works, that according to the interviewees, are considered to be men’s activities. As opposed to the previous case, in this case there is no work, considered

to be shameful or not acceptable for the society. Women perform works, envisaged for men, including the following: feeding the cattle, throwing away the manure, digging the orchard, haying, moving the grass piles, cultivating, cleaning the fireplace, lighting the fireplace, cleaning snow from the garden, moving heavy items and sacks, in some cases, also works, related to electricity, etc. *“When the car comes and brings one sack, fifty sacks, sixty sacks of potatoes, we carry them inside together with men. For some 20 days, we sit from early morning till 1 or 2 a.m. at night and sort them, premium is premium, small is small and big is big”* (Sarukhan, fem., 90-year-old, widow). *“Right now the tap is broken, I should go, bring and fix it”* (Aparan, fem., 50-year-old, married). *“I bring the firewood and manure for burning, move sacks of wheat and potato. Very often I repair the electricity switches”* (Kamo, fem., 33-year-old, married).

In many cases, women perform men’s works in order to ensure serenity of the family and for not being judged by the neighbors: *“For example, I am so offended by my husband, I am carrying the bags or the barrels, but he does not even understand that his wife has undergone a surgery and has a thromb, so it would be nice, if he also carried these heavy things. He does not think of that. I am getting angry and then I think ‘what am I fighting against?’. He can start shouting, the neighbours will hear, so I am doing it all by myself without complaining. At this moment, I am doing everything, washing the cows, taking the manure out, feeding the cows. During wintertime, I clean the area in front of the house door. When it snows, I am cleaning the paths where we walk, there are kids at home, who can go out and fall down. It is the same story everyday: bring manure, bring the firewood, bring everything to the house from outside”* (Drakhtik, fem., 56-year-old, married).

As we have noticed, women are involved in various works performed daily. And which are the most difficult and important daily works according to the interviewees? The perception of difficult daily work is different among rural and urban interviewees. In rural areas, the most difficult daily works are agricultural works, in particular the ones, related to cattle

breeding: *“Well, the most difficult is the work in a barn: We have to fill the barrows with manure and move that heavy thing to the upper part of the orchard” (Drakhtik, fem. 56-year-old, married). “The life of villagers is difficult, especially because of cattle breeding. We wake up early, clean the barn, milk the cows and take them out. It is very difficult. The fact that you have to wake up at 5 a.m. itself is very difficult” (Drakhtik, m., 31-year-old, married). “Besides milking the cows, we also have to think about milk processing and ensuring that the grass is available. We have to wake up early, take the cow to the fields, milk, sell the milk and together with all of these activities, manage doing all the work about the house” (Drakhtik, fem. 40-year-old, married).* The difficulties of horticulture works are also voiced out by women interviewees, which one more time testifies their essential participation in these works. The participation of women in agricultural works is so substantial that the interviewees mention that the indoor works are not difficult for them at all.

The difficulty of daily works is defined and perceived differently in Kapan and Yerevan. The interviewees of these regions talk about psychological (ensuring quality of life and harmony) rather than physical difficulties: *“To organize our daily life, to ensure the harmony at home and to ensure the quality of the family” (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, single). “Shopping and other works are not difficult, these are just boring, it is not hard to do that kind of work, it is already uninteresting, it is difficult psychologically” (Kentron community, fem., 58-year-old, divorced).*

In the Kentron community we have witnessed a phenomenon, which was not registered in any of the provincial communities. Men were voicing out about the difficulties of such daily works, which usually are under the women’s domain. It is about doing the laundry: *“For me, maybe, laundry is what I do with much difficulty; there were cases when I did it. I do it with much difficulty. ... to hang it and sort it afterwards, the whole process is difficult, it is not only about putting it in the washing machine” (Kentron community, m., 21-year-old, single).* This fact also proves that in the Kentron community the division of work is not that strict as is in provincial communities.

With regard to the question of the most important daily works, there is not much difference in perceptions of the interviewees, conditioned by place of living, age or education level. Especially women interviewees believe that the most important daily work is cleaning of the house, and then comes food preparation. *“The cleaning, the house should be clean” (Shenavan, fem. 55-year-old, married). “The house should always be clean, laundry should be done and food prepared” (Shenavan, fem. 33-year-old, married). “The most important is keeping the house clean, it should be clean, in order, and neat, it should not smell bad, so that when you open the door, it will not strike you, toilet should be clean, it should be kept cleaner than the house. Also, the entrance should be clean, so that when you clean the whole house, your feet will not be in dirt. The dishes should be clean, and there should not be one spoon of food put in a plate, and thus, in the refrigerator, or there should not be a piece of dried food left somewhere, the dirty dishes should not be left unwashed as it also stinks and also attracts bugs” (Qanaqer –Zeytun, fem., 48-year-old, widow).*

And how is it defined in the HHs, as to which of the daily works should be performed by women and which ones by men? Do the interviewees see their participatory role in this or not? And if they do, then which of the family members have the decisive role. We believe that to reorganize and change any social phenomenon, firstly it should be studied and the perceptions related to it should be understood. To what extent does the society recognize its role in shaping and transforming the social phenomenon?

The study reveals that the interviewees have almost no clue as to how it is defined in their family who will perform the particular work. The work division is considered something that is done automatically or decided from the very beginning. The interviewees have never asked themselves when and how this work division was done, and to what extent it is in line with today's realities. Moreover, they are unable to judge, if they can change it or not: *“Everyone knows what needs to be done. There is no need to tell someone something. We wake up in the morning, drink*

coffee, he goes to the barn to do his works, and I stay to do works about the house, as simple as that” (Drakhtik, fem. 40-year-old, married). “It has been predetermined from above, from the very day when I came here” (Vardenis, fem. 40-year-old, married). “We already know that the men-specific works should be performed by the man, and I should do the works about the house. We do not decide, it is done that way automatically” (Shenavan, fem., 33-year-old, married). “Well, that foundation is laid already. Naturally, the kitchen works are for women, along with the children upbringing” (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, single).

When we tried to find out who decides in the family by whom this or that work should be performed, the interviewees mainly mentioned either the man of the family, or the mother-in-law: “I tell her to do this and that and go away, that is it” (Shenavan, m., 54-year-old, married). If the husbands’ decisions do not create disagreement in the family, it cannot be told the same for the cases when mothers-in-law are the ones to make the decisions. The decisions made by the mother-in-law, as to who should do what in the family, especially when the daughters-in-law are involved in these works, result in clashes and misunderstandings: “If we leave the decision to my mother-in-law, she will tell her son to sit down and let the daughter-in-law do everything. She says ‘let us go and do this job’ or ‘you go and do that’, this she does very successfully. She orders mainly, especially in wintertime, she sits and orders” (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married). “She says ‘you should obey me, in all possible ways’. We are old enough now, I am 50 years old, this (she means her husband) is 60 years old. “The red cow never changes its skin” [Translator’s note: An Armenian proverb, meaning that people don’t change]. (the interviewee is talking about her mother-in-law). I am her son’s 3rd wife. The previous wives divorced him due to this issue. Her other son had six wives. Again because of her. She provokes everyone” (Aparan, fem., 50-year-old, married). “In their house, she did not allow me to use the automatic washing machine, and I was so naïve or whatever..., what can I say, I was washing the laundry by hands, so that it will not remain dirty and the guests will not talk about that. She was telling: ‘I want that way’. She

was even taking out the connector of the washing machine. When she was using the machine, she was waiting until it stopped, then she was turning it off, taking the connector out and hiding it, to make sure that when she is not at home, I will not use the washing machine. (Aparan, fem. 35-year-old, divorced).

The division of work between woman and man, based on the sexes, begins from an early age, when the children are still juvenile. Girls perform works that are intended for women and boys perform men-specific works. It should be mentioned that especially in the rural areas children get involved in the daily works from a very early age (8-9 years old). Juvenile boys mainly perform the following works: hacking wood, arranging wood, giving water to the cattle and feeding them, putting/adding wood in the fireplace, cleaning the snow. Men involve their sons even in pure men-specific works like: washing the car, turning on the tractor's engine, going to the shop to purchase a cigarette.

The scope of works performed by juvenile girls are larger: cooking, cleaning the house, doing the shopping, milking the cow, making the beds, baking pastry, look after the younger kids, etc. *“My elder daughter (6th form) does everything, even when I was at the hospital, she was milking the cows” (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married).* *“Cleans the dust, makes coffee, helps with caring for the baby (5-months old), plays and entertains the baby, changes the diapers/clothes, if needed (6th form)” (Vardenis, fem., 62-year-old, widow).* *“Irons, washes the dishes, if needed, can cook, makes coffee” (Sarukhan, fem., 38-year-old, married).* *“Bakes pastry, cleans the house, collects the warehouse. There are cases when she also cooks and feeds us (14-year -old)” (Davitashen, fem., 79-year-old, widow).* *“She does everything; sweeping, washing, cleaning the house (10-year-old)” (Qanaqer-Zeytun, m., 40-year-old, married).*

The participation of adolescent girls in the household works is always presented positively. Parents are proud of the fact that their daughters are “skillful in housework”: *“As our neighbors say, she is just like a housewife” (Drakhtik, fem. 33-year-old, married).* Usually, mothers or

grandmothers instruct young girls to work. Fathers may only ask to bring a glass of water or to make a coffee.

During all of the involved observations, in all those HHs where there were juvenile girls, they were actively participating in serving the guests, making coffee, and laying the table. We never came across to a case when juvenile boys would participate in similar works. Even though mothers kept mentioning that their sons also help them, but as we understood, they participate in the household works only when there is no one else in the house, besides the HH members. In the observed families where there were children of both sexes, when the guests were present, the boys were mainly playing outside, while the girls stayed at home to help in household works.

During the involved observations, mainly mothers were instructing their daughters to perform this or that task, in fewer cases this was done by the grandmothers. We never witnessed a case, when fathers instructed their daughters to participate in carrying out this or that work at home.

Thus:

- **The work division between woman and man, according to the interviewees' perceptions is defined from the very beginning, automatically. The interviewees do not see their participatory role in making those decisions, and, hence, their role in changing them.** The interviewees never thought about why and based on which principles this division was done. Moreover, the latter also found it difficult to answer our questions.
- In general, the work is divided into two groups: "indoor" and "outdoor". The indoor works are intended for women, the outdoor works are intended for men. The "indoor" works include: cleaning the house, cooking, processing the milk, etc. The "outdoor" works include works, related to agriculture (horticulture and cattle breeding). As the study results show, **women participate in works, related to both women and men.**

This is acceptable for everyone. While in the opposite case, when men participate in works, intended for women, it is considered shameful. Even if men participate in performing such works, they do it in a way that is unseen by the neighbours. This means that even if men are ready and want to perform works intended for women, the cultural environment hinders them from doing so. We have met with men who mentioned that when working in other countries, they clean the house, do all the works, related to cooking, but when they return to their communities, they never do the same. The women are also against men's involvement in works, intended for women, for example in cleaning the windows, doing the laundry or ironing, and this is conditioned by the fact that the community, consisting of neighbours, relatives and family members, consider this phenomenon to be unacceptable.

- The society decides that the division of work between men and women should be done starting from the times when the kids are still adolescent, so that later, they will be ready for that. This means that at the age of 8-9, the young girls should be involved in works, like laying the table, cleaning the house, and bringing water, while the young boys should be involved in works, like starting the engine of the car, moving the sacks, giving water to and feeding the cattle.
- **The discriminatory treatment towards the young girls is evident.** Let us just note that from an early age, the limitation mechanisms are applied for the girls more frequently, not to mention the control mechanisms that are applied, too. On the other hand, as opposed to the young boys, the girls are more frequently involved in performing household works, like cooking, cleaning the house, doing the shopping, milking the cows, making coffee, washing the dishes, making the beds, baking pastry, looking after the kids younger than them, etc.
- In the rural areas, even if they want to make a change in the division or implementation of daily works, they see the opportunity for its realization in the cities. The reason is that in the rural areas, they

all know each other, and the first one who breaks the stereotype, will be blamed by the residents. Meanwhile, in the cities people do not know each other, and they can make changes in their lives more freely. As the grandmother, living in the village Davitashen responds to the question, related to the men's washing dishes: *"We are in a rural area. This is not a city, not to know each other"* (Davitashen, fem., 79-year-old, widow).

- **Based on the study results, it can be noted that our society is not yet ready to change the way of their everyday work division, not conditioning it by sexes.** As the interviewees say, all of this comes from "the times of Adam and Eve," and it will remain this way. The society is not yet ready for changes, especially if these are radical and abrupt. Even if they want to change something in everyday life at the opinion level, they see it away from their own selves and away from their families.
- **Even if the man involves the woman in making some of the decisions, or if he is being involved in women-related works, still the right of making the final decision "belongs" to the man.**
- **Thus, in the implementation of daily works, an unequal distribution and discrimination against women is clearly noticeable.** Regardless of whether or not the women have employment (paid employment), they are involved in almost all daily works. If in the past, this was explained by the fact that men are mostly engaged in paid jobs, and women have to carry out home-related work, then **in our days, the distribution of the society has changed**, yet the tradition has been preserved. A woman, who is performing hired work equally to men, should perform all the household work alone.

2.2.2 Changes in daily routine

As it was revealed, in terms of decision-making and performing works, the daily life of the interviewees is organized based on clearly set

principles and is hardly subjected to changes. Especially in rural areas, the only change in daily routine is mainly defined by the weather conditions: implementing more passive or more active agricultural works. We tried to observe, if the interviewees want to make changes in their daily routine and if so, what kind of changes they want. The answer to this question will give an opportunity to have a clear understanding of what the society's expectations are and what mechanisms should be developed to reach them, when implementing any initiative within this sphere in the future.

Before we refer to the mentioned changes, it should be noted that in many cases the interviewees have no clear aim or wish, as to what they want to change in their daily lives. *“If I tell you honestly, I have never thought of that”* (Kamo, m., 33-year-old, married). One of the reasons for this, as we have already mentioned, is that they think that the organization of their daily life is something, defined automatically, without their active participation. For this reason, they do not see their participatory role in changing all of it, either.

The survey results show that the expected changes are mainly of material nature; they are related to renovation of the house, purchasing of fixed and current assets: *“I wish that the child could change the ceiling, this is my dream, and I also wish that he could paint our floors”* (Drakhtik, fem. 56-year-old, married). *“I need to renovate my house as I wish”* (Drakhtik, m. 31-year-old, married). *“I wish I had a house”* (Drakhtik, fem. 40-year-old, married).

In terms of expected changes, the approaches are slightly different in urban communities, especially in the cities of Kapan and Yerevan. Here, they mention also about gaining and changing spiritual values, excelling in the career, living in families consisting of one or two, and not three generations, etc. *“..So that the couple builds its family life on its own, that neither the mother nor the father interfere. They should use their own brains and ideas, to build their family”* (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, single). *“I wish I had my own library”* (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, married). *“I wish I had my own one-room apartment, even if it were in this same building,*

so that I could have some private time there, being all by myself and not thinking of anything” (Kentron Community, fem., 58-year-old, divorced). Even though finding a job is also mentioned by the residents of the rural communities, as a change in their routine life, but gaining financial means is all that is expected from that job. In Yerevan this change is also mentioned, but from another point of view: having a job is considered as a means of self-actualization, changes in perceptions, self-expression in the society and even more importantly as a means for women to have independence: *“I wish I worked now. When you work, the more independent you are, I guess, the better for you. I also notice this change in my mother’s life. It is not that I have a problem, I just want to work. OK, I am telling you now, in the future when I get married, I want to work, because when my mother started to work, I have noticed positive change in her. First of all, in her way of thinking; when she was at home all day long she was thinking in a completely different way. You know, maybe it will sound a little rude, but before, she was more old-fashioned, limited, as if she had no relations with the society, she knew only what the relatives and neighbours were telling, she did not know at all how people were generally thinking in this world. I do not know, I have felt this change in her. That also makes the woman more independent. You know, she feels that she also can do more than the household works, you understand that it is not yours to do household works in all your life, you understand that you can do more of other things, be respected and loved by others (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 20-year-old, single).*

When talking about changes, the interviewees from Yerevan do not limit themselves to narrow personal topics; they also address more comprehensive issues: *“Let me tell you about the city; the overall architecture should not be distorted, more attention should be paid to the shop windows (storefronts) in the center of the city and slightly out of it, so that they are more systematized and appropriate to the city’s overall look” (Kentron Community, m., 21-year-old, single).*

During the last ten years, either no changes occurred in the HHs of the interviewees, or, if such changes happened, these concerned only

to *material* purchases, as was the case with the expected changes: *“We keep doing the same things with no change, whether it is now or 10 years ago. There is no change”* (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married). *“For example, now we have a washing machine. We had natural gas before, but no heater for water, so we had no hot water”* (Vardenis, fem. 28-year-old, married). *“We have purchased a washing machine, refrigerator, desk and furniture for the living room”* (Davitashen, fem., 79-year-old, widow).

The situation in the capital city is different, also with regard to this issue. Changes in the households are defined by situations, appropriate to the change in the rhythm of life, as in this example: *“Before, they were against the idea of women driving a car, now my brother wants to teach me how to drive. Now he is the one to suggest; he asks me, if I want to learn driving. I can state that his mindset has changed, but I can also surely state that in the past he would not approve of it. Maybe it is mostly in the past 10 years that the number of women drivers grew; earlier, both my father and my brother were telling me that it is a bad idea, but now they are not thinking that way, as they also want me to learn to drive”* (Qanaqer-Zeytun, fem., 20-year-old, single).

It was difficult for the interviewees to differentiate between changes in the family and changes in their personal lives. These two are so closely inter-linked with each other that it seems as if the interviewees have no personal lives. As a change in their personal lives, they continue to mention the convenience of having a washing machine and hot water: *“We have changed the wood and manure burning fireplace with a gas heater”* (Amasia, fem., 33-year-old, married). *“Before, I was doing the laundry with hands and now I am not”* (Gyumri, fem., 51-year-old, married). We see this picture mainly in the rural communities. If we compare this situation with Kapan and Yerevan, clear differences will be noticed among the perceptions of the interviewees: *“Work-related, various cooperations and work-related heights”* (Kapan, fem., 32-year-old, single). *“In the last five years, I am taking a holiday in summertime”* (Kentron Communiy, fem., 58-year-old, divorced). And to what extent is the society ready to have a participatory and direct

role in making any changes in its own daily life? When studying the issue from this point of view, clear differences were noticed, based on the place of living and age group of the interviewees. In the rural communities the interviewees hardly see their participatory role in making changes. In this issue the state government and the religion have defining roles: *“I rely on God, being the mother of an Armenian traditional family, let it be as God leads us” (Amasia, fem., 29-year-old, married). “The state should do, who else? (Shenavan, fem., 75-year-old, widow).*

If taken by age differences, middle-aged or older than middle-aged interviewees are those who mainly point out the primary role and the importance of the state government/leadership in the implementation of changes, even if the issue is related to changes in their personal lives, including to having peaceful family atmosphere. The interviewees in this age-group see the presence of financial means as the only basis for the changes taking place in their daily life.

So in fact, among the middle-aged and older than middle-aged interviewees, the perceptions about the direct and immediate links between the issues and the state government, formed during the Soviet era are preserved. They, either directly or indirectly, connect all the problem solutions and change implementations with the absence of work, which corresponds to the perceptions of Soviet era, according to which the government should create workplaces.

Among the young interviewees, especially of the urban areas, this kind of perceptions are expressed in a milder way or are completely absent. The latter already see their role in making changes in daily routine: *“If you want to change everything around you, change yourself first” (Kentron, m., 21-year-old, single).*

Thus, given the study results we can state:

- Most of our women interviewees do not want to change their daily life. Despite their huge involvement in the daily works and limited participation in the decision-making, the latter do not voice out their willingness to change all of this.

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- Some of the interviewees have not even thought about making any changes, which is explained by the fact that they consider their daily life, as something which is organized automatically, and therefore, they do not imagine that they can change it or that it is possible to change it at all.
 - The changes mentioned by the interviewees mostly relate to narrow household issues, including purchase of property and/or renovating the house.
 - According to them, it is only due to the social-economic factors that their desired changes are not fulfilled in the daily life. In this issue, based on their age, the majority of interviewees represent the generation of the Soviet period, with Soviet ideology, the basis of which was the economy, and other spheres derived from it. Hence, we can say that the perceptions of this age-group representatives are still defined by the Soviet ideology.
 - The cultural environment and the diversity of education resources contribute to the formation of world views and change in perceptions, which, within the frames of our survey, was visible in cases of Kapan and Yerevan interviewees. If the woman from a rural area perceived the renovation of the roof or the purchase of a washing machine, as a change or as an expected change in her personal life, the interviewees from the the above-mentioned urban areas were mentioning having a career growth and success, having spiritual peace, and changing the family model as such.
 - **Thus, in the cultural sense, the organization of daily life according to sexes is so strongly defined,** that women do not think of changing it.

2.3 ORGANIZATION OF LEISURE

In this topic we have observed the organization of women's leisure in family, community and out of community. In almost all our target rural communities, if there are leisure areas, then they are designed only for

men, where women are prohibited to enter, especially those, younger than the middle-aged. Thus, a distinct gender-based division is set within the community, in terms of [freedom of] movement and use of community areas. *“Yes, there are places for youth, something like snack bars, cafés – to sit, eat and drink, and talk – there are also such places. Girls don’t attend such places. It’s not suitable to go there with a girl, it’s only suitable for boys. There are games to play, it is such an atmosphere there that, how to say, these places are not suitable for girls”* (Sarukhan, male, 28-year-old, single). *“There are billiard, table tennis, checkers, and chess. Only men go there. According to the tradition, women in villages are not allowed to attend leisure areas. For example, there is a garden, women go there but with children, if a pair (a woman with a man) goes there then it may invite gossip* (Amasia, male, 23-year-old, single).

Survey materials indicate that there are two limitations or two types of dependence of women upon men, with regard to organization of leisure: first of all, the area is divided between women and men; second, without a man’s permission, a woman cannot organize the part of her everyday life that relates to leisure. In rural communities, the only place where a woman can go is the neighbor’s home – for drinking coffee – and this is not always the case: *“I go alone only to my neighbor’s home – for drinking coffee”* (Amasia, female, 33-year-old, married). *“I might think about going alone to my neighbors’ homes, at a certain point, or if she calls, I would go to drink coffee, then I come back”* (Davtashen, female, 54-year-old, married).

Participation of women in leisure organization increases in cases when their families make a visit to a relative. However, this does not relate to visits paid to husband’s friends, especially, if mainly men are present there. *“If all are men and my wife will be the only woman there, then I will definitely go alone”* (Drakhtik, male, 31-year-old, married).

If selection of the leisure place for a woman is controlled by her husband, then items to be taken when paying a visit is defined by the mother-in-law.

“What she wanted to control was that... if I thought of taking a box of candies or a package of coffee with me when making a visit, she would control me, so that I wouldn’t take it with me. ‘If you want to go, then go empty-handed’, or ‘my son cannot earn that much for you to do harm’” (Aparan, female, 35-year-old, divorced).

We encountered such cases, though not many, when mothers-in-law did not want to take daughters-in-law with them when paying a visit, and they had corresponding justifications for that. *“For example, it was my brother’s child’s “trndez” (Translator’s note: a feast of purification, also, Diarnt’arach), and wedding this time, and I went alone; my son was on duty, and as to my daughter-in-law... then, you know, the gathering was organized in an apartment, all of my sisters and brothers gathered together, in one room, 40 people seated there” (Drakhtik, female, 56-year-old, married).*

Women from rural communities are able to attend leisure areas, when they visit a doctor in a town due to their health problems. This can happen especially in those cases when the hospital is located in Yerevan: *“I go to leisure areas when I visit a doctor. I go to Yerevan only for visiting a doctor” (Drakhtik, female, 33-year-old, married).* Going to leisure areas in Yerevan is easier because the man-woman division here is either very weak or absolutely absent.

In provincial communities the division of leisure areas between man and woman is so deep-seated that people even do not dream about such an opportunity: *“In a village, it is difficult to even imagine of having a leisure place for women” (Davatshen, male, 28-year-old, single).* Perceptions of this phenomenon are so deep-rooted, that women think the same way, with regard to this issue. They are unable to respond to the question, as to what type of a leisure place they would love to have in their community – a place that they could also attend. Moreover, it is so unimportant to them, that an interviewee woman gives an absolutely different answer to the above-mentioned question: *“Do you know what I would like? I*

would like that new workplaces were opened, so we could work” (Aparan, female, 50-year-old, married).

As we have already mentioned, the only place in rural communities, where a woman can go alone, is her neighbor’s home – for drinking coffee; whereas in provincial and urban communities and especially in the city of Kapan it is customary to visit colleagues and friends at home or to go with them to some places. *“Basically, I go only to my colleagues’ and friends’ homes” (Kapan, female, 32-year-old, single).* It is interesting to note that in rural communities we have not come across situations of having a friend or visiting a friend at home.

The situation with organization of leisure in Kentron community is different. Here, on one hand areas and forms for organization of leisure are numerous, on the other hand, their division is not distinctly emphasized, based on gender. All of this also promotes frequent changes in preferences of leisure organization. *“Yes, I go alone, because it is not such an interesting place to take someone with me. I mostly interact with my friends, and in the past, I would mostly go there with girls from my class; now, to tell the truth, my preferences changed, now it is more attractive for me to spend time with my pals from the painting club, even when going to some places, for example to Paris etc., I have the same company” (Kentron, female, 58-year-old, divorced).*

Areas for leisure organization are also different, depending on the type of settlement. In provincial communities the areas for leisure organization are mainly houses of relatives and neighbors, that is visits to relatives and neighbors at home. Preferences in Kentron community are different: leisure is organized in cafés, pubs, clubs, gaming-houses and private houses. *“Visiting homes is very rare. Do you know how we visit homes? Let me bring an example: our director, who is four years younger than me, has recently bought a small house in Dzoraghbyur village, a very small one, its size is for one person only, and she really lives alone. When she is there, we gather together with girls, without men. But very often*

we also gather in restaurants, cafés etc.” (Kentron, female, 58-year-old, divorced). “Or we go to clubs or bowling, I don’t know, such places” (Kentron, male, 21-year-old, single).

How are reception, treating and seeing-off of a guest arranged in Armenian families? What is the extent of participation of HH women and what limitations do they encounter? The survey results show that the issue is conditioned not only by sexes of members of the given family, but also by the guest’s sex. When the guest is a woman, then the women of the family are involved in her reception, treating and seeing-off. In such cases HH men try not to be close to the guest, so that she feels free and unconstrained. Moreover, in some cases they (men) are being isolated from the guest by women of the family, as, for example, was the case in Vardenis during one of our observations. When the housewife welcomed us, and saw us to the guest room, the son was there, but as we entered the guest room, he immediately moved to the small dining-room: the son did so, as her mother had offered him to, because she thought that he doesn’t need to sit with women. Even when the housewife was in the kitchen making coffee and cutting fruits, and the guest was alone in the guest room, neither the son joined her, nor his mother offered the son to join; instead, she told her grandchildren to talk with the guest until she would come. When during the dinner time the daughter-in-law and her father-in-law returned home, the latter greeted the guest and joined his son. The daughter-in-law started dinner preparation, together with her mother-in-law. Even though in the course of dinner-preparation, the guest was alone, neither the master of the house nor his son joined the guest; moreover, when the women laid the table, they went out, in order to leave women alone.

In Davtashen village we also observed a similar situation. After supper, men of the family moved away in order to leave the guest with the women. However, when a new guest entered their home – it was the house master’s nephew (brother’s son), the men again came to the table and started to help themselves so he (the new guest) could also help himself.

When the guest of the family is a man, it is customary that he is met by men, treated by women and seen off by men. Especially young daughters-in-law do not interfere in meeting and seeing off of male guests: *“When someone comes, I am the housewife, I come out to welcome and ask the person in. I would like to say that our daughter-in-law is a restrained person, she wouldn’t do anything, she would just call me: ‘mom, someone has come.’ For example, when friends of my son come, she comes and tells: ‘mom, someone calls, see, who is there.’ She does not come out, does not communicate”* (Drakhtik, female, 56-year-old, married). *“It is clear that I am the person to meet guests, but the serving is done by my wife”* (Drakhtik, male, 31-year-old, married).

Then, we would like to address the issue of internet and television, as means for leisure and sources for acquiring knowledge at the same time. Especially, it is important for us to reflect on the second one, in order to understand, to what extent these means, when necessary, could be considered, as ways for changing perceptions.

Use of internet, especially social networks, is considered as an option for leisure organization. At first glance it seems there are no problems here, as the internet availability has increased. However, the problem is in the ability of using it. Women interviewees either don’t have time to use the internet, or it is not much welcomed by family members. As it was mentioned by one of women interviewees, she uses internet mainly via phone, because her mother-in-law does not like seeing her at the computer: *“She does not like me sitting at the computer, she becomes angry with me. However clean all over the place is, when she sees me sitting (at the computer), her heart stops”* (Drakhtik, female, 33-year-old, married). We will also bring an example of a situation described by a woman interviewee, who communicates with her relatives virtually via her husband: *“For example, if I need to text to someone, I tell him and he (she means the husband) texts, and we communicate that way, that’s all”* (Drakhtik, female, 40-year-old, married). However, we need to note that

this situation was not indicated by this woman as a negative phenomenon or as a complaint.

Despite the fact that today it is widely spoken about the great opportunity of acquiring knowledge via the internet and its availability, this opportunity is hardly realized in rural communities. In such conditions, the internet is not used as a source or means for acquiring knowledge. It mainly serves for using social networks and watching replays of TV soap operas. Therefore, it is not so correct to consider the internet, as a means for obtaining information and acquiring knowledge in rural communities. Unlike rural communities, usage of the internet in urban settings is quite different. Besides using it as a means for leisure, it is widely used as a means for acquiring knowledge, including using it as a source for reading professional literature, listening to the news etc. *“[I read] Professional literature, I communicate with friends via the Facebook, naturally, [listen to] the news, [read] aphorisms etc.” (Kapan, female, 32-year-old, single). “I read materials related to my profession” (Qanaqer-Zeityn, female, 20-year-old, single).*

The same can be said about television. TV soap operas, TV programs “Mother’s cooking is extraordinary”, “What to cook today” etc. are the most popular TV programs in rural communities. Whereas preferences of interviewees residing in Kentron community are entirely different: *“I like watching good movies, I like political talk shows, Russian ones, as the Armenian squareness [awkwardness] absolutely gets on my nerves, and I have never wanted to move out from here [my country], I have always been a patriot, but from time to time I am really disappointed seeing the “wits” of our elected people, their intellectual level, etc. I watch their pre-election debates with great pleasure, because when someone talks, you see that he/she is an educated person, he/she has high intellectual level, and is capable” (Kentron, female, 58-year-old, divorced). “For example, we like watching the program “The investigation was conducted with Leonid Kanevsky” very much” (Kentron, female, 27-year-old, married).*

Thus.

- **Areas for organization of leisure in target communities, especially in rural areas, are divided according to sexes, moreover, they are basically considered as “men’s” zones.** In rural communities, these are the areas where men gather for talking or playing a game: chess, backgammon, cards. **There are no leisure areas intended for women in rural areas, these are only house areas, where women gather for drinking coffee.** Besides, women do not take steps to change the stereotype of considering the community areas as purely men’s areas.
- In urban areas the situation is slightly different. Here there are leisure areas, where entrance of women is free – both accompanied by men and alone. These mainly include cafés and parks. As it was mentioned by our women interviewees, they also visit these leisure areas whenever they travel to Yerevan for some business.
- Actually, as it is the case with work and decision-making, the principle of “indoor” and “outdoor” also is applied during organization of leisure. Outdoor public areas are freely used by men, that is they are men-specific, whereas the only area where women can freely organize their leisure is inside the house area (indoors).
- As we have already mentioned, women have a limited role in community decision-making and public discussions. Especially in provincial communities, discussions of political and community-related issues take place basically during gatherings organized for (and not only) leisure purpose. Actually, since women cannot organize their leisure in public places and cannot freely enter the places that are considered as men’s zones, they cannot participate in public decision-making and discussions, either.

2.4 CHILDREN UPBRINGING

The perception of the term “upbringing” is quite different among different survey participants. Under this term, the interviewees mainly see issues,

related to education, scolding of children, or teaching of some physical activities. The interviewees' responses show that during the upbringing process, the universal human values and the child upbringing, not dependent on the latter's sex, are either not given a proper attention or are completely ignored. To the question, referring to the extent of the parental involvement in the children's upbringing or the level of involvement of the given parent, the interviewees would immediately respond that both parents are equally engaged in the process. However, more detailed observations show that the picture is quite different in reality.

As in case of decision-making, regarding the education issues, the fathers get engaged in the upbringing process only in cases when there is a need to reprimand children or rebuke them. In such cases the mothers are the ones to engage the fathers in the process: *"The fathers intervene only in cases when the children misbehave"* (Vardenis, fem., 62 year-old, widow). *"If there is an issue related to the boy, whether he has misbehaved in the village, or has been rude to his parent, the father is definitely engaged in it. If there is something which I disapprove of in them, I complain to their father, and he gets involved in their upbringing"* (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married).

The basis of all issues presented in the previous sections can be found in the methods of children upbringing. Still from an early age, the attributes that are "characteristic to a woman" and "important for a woman" are instilled in girls, while attributes "characteristic to men" are instilled in boys. The following approach is accepted: if the child is a girl, then the mothers are mostly involved in her upbringing, while in case of boys, the fathers are primarily involved in his upbringing: *"Of course, in my opinion, it is like that; the father's upbringing is more essential. No matter how much I'll be involved in upbringing, in the end, the father's involvement in upbringing of boys will be needed even more"* (Vardenis, fem., 28-year-old, married). *"For example, recently, a few boys from our community tried to make him [my son] smoke; his father learned about*

it and reprimanded him. He told him 'do not smoke, it is not good'. He explained to him in a quiet manner, and he understood" (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married).

The parents explain the differences in the upbringing methods, conditioned by the sex of the child, by tradition: *"Well, most probably, the mother will always be blamed for the daughter's mistakes, it is the right approach, it is part of our tradition, and it is the way it should be. It is my opinion. But boys are boys [boy's case is different], and the father should be involved in their upbringing" (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married).*

The differences of parents' involvement in upbringing are so apparent that already at the age of sexual maturity, the girls are shy or afraid to talk about their problems with their fathers: *"When guys approach her, she is afraid to tell her father, she is embarrassed. Recently, I told her 'don't be shy, you are a girl, it is a natural thing, and your father is neither a beast nor a monster'. I tell her, 'Let your father know that some guys are interested in marrying you, and let your father talk to these guys, so that they do not dare to mistreat you'" (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married).*

Even though it is primarily the mothers who are involved in upbringing of girls, fathers also engage in the process especially when it comes to issues that may damage their reputation, including the choice of the profession: *"She wants to choose the military sphere, but her father doesn't allow her, he says 'it is not your place' (Drakhtik, fem., 33-year-old, married).*

The methods of children upbringing change, depending on the family structure. In families consisting of three and four generations the child's parents, grandmothers, grandfathers, the latter's parents, uncles and their wives, etc. participate in this issue. In such families the mothers' upbringing is of secondary importance, since the older generation takes the lead in the child upbringing. During the involved observation, carried out in the village of Kamo, the interviewee told that when living

with the family of her father-in-law's brother (at that time, the father-in-law's mother was also living with them), they've had endless fights/conflicts, with regard to the issues of children upbringing: the older generation considered that the child's mother was using wrong methods of upbringing, since the latter had higher education and tried to raise her children with methods that were not accepted in the rural environment. The issue had become quite serious, and the spouses had endless quarrels, due to which the husband had even beat the wife.

Since the events and developments take place faster in the capital city and these need to be adapted to, not based on gender, but rather based on the created situation, the methods of children upbringing are also different. In the Kentron community of Yerevan, the differences in children upbringing based on their gender are milder: *“If, as a mother, I should teach my daughter to be more economical and well-organized, or similar things, instead, I can teach her how to save money, for example. You know what, if we think that the father should teach some men-specific values to the son and mother, on her turn, should teach some values to the daughters, however nowadays I cannot, it is some kind of a theory. It is just a theory that if the son knows how to tack, it is the father who has taught him, but in our family now Anna (Anna is the daughter) is the one who tacks, if needed. And I know that today among the modern guys there are many who cannot do any kind of household works. When Anna was a little girl and there was a period when shoemakers' houses were closed, she was repairing our shoes, she was cutting a rubber and tacking it on the shoe heel (Kentron Community, fem. 58-year-old, divorced).*

The role of girls is hardly ever perceived as anything else, but being a good mother in the family and having children. A girl should be humble, a good mother, a good daughter-in-law in the future, to keep the honour of her father's family, bring up good children. *“I wish she could become a good daughter-in-law, a good mother and a beloved wife” (Drakhtik, fem. 40-year-old, married).* *“She should become a good wife, a good*

mother of the family and children” (Vardenis, m., 52-year-old, married). “I wish them to find an intelligent family, and be smart” (Vardenis, fem., 62-year-old, widow).

Unlike girls, the role of boys is given more importance to: they are perceived as the family pillar, the one to “keep the fireplace going”, successor, smart, a person whose presence should make you proud: *“The baby boy is the pillar of your house on which you can rely, traditionally he is the one who will ‘keep lighting the fireplace of your house’, as elderly say. That makes you proud, and the fathers feel happy with that” (Drakhtik, fem., 40-year-old, married). “As a successor of the family. The important thing is that the fireplace (meaning the one who lights the fireplace) of your house exists, for me this is the most important thing” (Vardenis, m., 52-year-old; married). “As someone having a good reputation, and most importantly smart” (Vardenis, fem. 62-year-old, widow).*

During the involved observations in the village of Kamo, we again noticed differences in upbringing methods, as well as in opinions of the interviewees, conditioned by the gender of the child. When talking about the baby boy, the grandfather was boasting that he is listening to military songs, he was telling that the child would grow to be a strong man, while at the same time was blaming the granddaughter for throwing the coat on the sofa.

It should be mentioned that there are contradictions between the perceptions and performed actions in upbringing of children. When conducting in-depth interviews, the interviewees were mentioning that the family members are equally involved in the upbringing of children, during the involved observations, we have witnessed another situation. In Vardenis town during the involved observations when the children’s mother was not at home, the grandmother was teaching them what was allowed to do and what was not. The situation changed when the mother came home, the grandmother immediately handed the issue over to the mother.

We have witnessed the same situation in Aparan. During the observations the father was busy with renovation works all day long, while the mother was taking care of children: for example, the father got angry with his son, for the latter not to perform renovation works, while “dressed up” for going out, and then he warned him not to go to school with dusty cloths. He then made a comment to her daughter to dress up properly when attending piano classes, after the kids came back from school, he inquired how the studies had passed and after the piano class, he inquired her daughter how she had played piano that time. Despite all of this, the mother told us that all family members were involved in the upbringing of the children.

The other controversial situation which we encountered, was the contrast between the methods of child’s upbringing, based on the gender of the child. During one of the involved observations, the family members mentioned that in their family there are no differences in the methods of children upbringing, based on the gender of children. However, after a while when the target family was preparing the dinner for the guest, the mother and grandmother involved the daughter in these works, while the son was sent to his father, with the explanation that he is a man and he has nothing to do with them. This means that by telling “no-difference”, they meant the caring for children, and not the issues, related to upbringing (*Vardenis*).

Thus:

- There is a noticeable difference in children upbringing, based on their gender. **The mother is mainly engaged in the upbringing of daughters, furthermore, the mother needs to bring up her daughter in a way that the latter keeps the honour of both her mother and her family, and, most importantly, that of the men in the family. From a very young age, ladylike manners and duties, intended for women, should be instilled in a girl.** The fathers do not take part in this issue with an

exception of several issues related to the education.

- Fathers do participate in upbringing of their sons, though, with some reservations. They are involved especially in times when the sons do not obey their mother, also when the issue is related to the men-related values. With regard to education, fathers participate mainly when the child is attending a sports club.
- Upbringing of children is complicated especially in three-generation or four-generation families, when representatives of several generations participate in the process. In this case each of them are led by their own “truths” and imaginations, and the model of the child’s upbringing is becoming unclear. These situations are problematic, especially in cases when the youngest generation (the child’s mother and father) have higher education and strongly differ in their perceptions and methods of upbringing.
- The men-women work division in the decision-making starts from an early age. Through keeping the boys away from works, perceived as being women-specific, their participation is promoted only in men-specific works.

3. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As already mentioned, the issues and statements about women-men inequality and differences serve as targeted topics for different surveys, which makes us suppose that it is a problematic theme in the current society.

Restrictions towards women have been applied in the Armenian society still centuries ago. The strictness towards women has been manifested still from young age, from teenage years and has become even stricter at the age of marriage. In the course of years, traditions have continuously been formulated, through which control over women have been applied both by family members and the society. As our survey results showed, these are being applied also in our days, being displayed in a series of spheres and relationships, resulting in restrictions of speech and decision-making at home, and prohibitions for participation in community issues, restrictions of opportunities to go out, lack of possibility for personal time management, etc. outside the home.

A series of events and circumstances have contributed to formation of women's status in our society, including historical-political events, circumstances related to settlements (in mountaneous and lowland areas), different interrelations with neighboring nations, traditions and habits formed in different areas, etc.

Today, as a result of gender inequality between the women's and men's statuses, we have serious issues, such as gender-based violence and prenatal sex-selection through abortion (sex-selective abortion).

As you know, such a structure of gender-based relationships is characteristic to almost all patriarchal societies. So, when or in what circumstances were such relationships established? One of our experts, Nicole Margaryan, gives his response and interpretation on this matter:

“The things happened to be this way: it is very well-studied, given the example of the Jewish Kibbutzim. When the Israeli state was reunited, the youth returned home primarily as a result of propaganda. When they came, the majority of them were young, and the boys and girls were involved in the same works; there was no division of labor, girls were driving tractors, the boys were involved in cleaning the dormitories and preparing dinner. Later, when they were getting married, and were planning to have children, the women were not able to get involved in the outdoor works anymore, so they were isolated and started to carry out some activities at home. And the men didn’t mind managing all the outdoor work themselves. This process took place in front of our eyes, starting the 60-ies (they came to live in that area in 1946-1948). The next generation already had to deal with the reality in which it was preferable for women to carry out certain types of work and for men some other types of work. So, the division of labor took place just like this, without any deliberate action on behalf of any of the sides and in agreement with each other. It is convenient that the outdoor work is carried out by men and the indoor work is carried out by women. Besides, boys can work outside for all 30 days, while women cannot, because of the menstruation period” (Education sphere expert, N. Margaryan, Yerevan State University).

In all patriarchal societies men have always dominated women. However, in the West certain events took place, and as a result of those, the situation changed. New values appeared and revaluation of certain phenomena took place. The changes implemented within the education system mostly contributed to this all. Yet, our post-soviet environments still practice the thinking of the Soviet model.

Thus:

- The fact that the society has its clear notions about the woman-man relationships is quite obvious. Consequently, the society also decides the women’s involvement level in discussions

of political and public issues. **Thus, women are left out of the communication taking place in public/social life during which values, ideas and situations, important to the society, are being formed or transformed.** Also, as noticed among the survey participants, they share the widespread opinion about this phenomenon, according to which **social life is built by men: they are the ones to master the rules for shaping and transforming it, while women fail to do so.** We can mention that prohibition or being against the women's participation in public life are conditioned by the circumstance that they do not want to handover their "authority" to women. However, the issue here is wider. As our survey materials showed, women, being the bearers of that same culture, which ascribes them only a limited role in the society, do not strive for making progress in that issue, either. **In fact, men participate in public discussions, make decisions, while women are obeyed to them.**

- It is a natural phenomenon to give preference to a man's opinion, because **our society is patriarchal and lives with laws of interactions between men.** Even if women do participate in decision-making, this will refer only to "minor" decisions. Business and other large-scale trade spheres are in the men's domain, where women cannot participate. Even during a man's absence, the woman cannot participate in making "men's" decisions: in such situations this function is carried out by another male representative of the community or by a relative.
- The level of women's participation in decision-making does not grow to become equal to that of the man, even if she earns money. Even if the woman is employed and earns money to take care of family needs equal to the man, still the function of a decision-maker primarily belongs to the man.
- **The daily works are clearly divided between woman and man.** Men's work is considered to be any activity that has to do with the outside world and is connected to business, large-scale

agricultural activities, etc. Women's household tasks include food preparation, laying the table, cleaning the house, ironing, laundry, etc, i.e. all indoor works. In everyday life, the involvement of men in activities that are envisaged for women, is not encouraged; moreover, it is considered to be shameful. Some exceptional cases, though, are encountered in families that consist of one or two generations, reside in urban environments and have family members with higher education.

- **It doesn't even occur to a woman to engage her husband in activities implemented by her, for example,** doing the laundry or ironing. In most of the cases the women do not perceive or acknowledge that whatever happens to them or in their environment is manifestation of inequality. Moreover, since we encounter such situations very often, we do not view them as important and they already become a common fact to us.
- There is also a status difference in terms of activity implementation. **The woman (the housewife) carrying out household work has a lower reputation (status), than the man who makes money and is considered to be the one who earns the living of his family.** This means that the work accomplished by women is considered to be less important, compared to the activities, carried out by men. With certain exceptions, this is also true for cases when, besides her other activities, the woman is also involved in earning money.
- The reflections on the issue are not the same among interviewees with different levels of education. We should surely make a note of the fact that perceptions of some interviewees differ from those that we have as an overall picture, which allows us to conclude that the higher education (cultural capital) enables a person to have a wider view on the phenomena, compared to the cases when the knowledge is acquired only mechanically and not consciously. Nonetheless, the traditional roots of the phenomenon are so deep and rock-hard that acquisition of cultural capital does not always lead to changes in the situation.

- Within the frames of our survey, we encountered situations arising from conflicts between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. At first sight, it seems that the cause for such situations can be found in the conflict of generations. However, it is not the only reason. Still a few centuries ago, as the ethnographic materials show, the woman's status gradually changes, as she appears in the group of older women (older than the middle-aged women) when the woman starts to participate in family decision-making. This means that starting from that age, the woman joins the men's "army" and can participate in decisions that are typically made by men.
- **The woman with the status of a mother-in-law starts to protect the man's authority and doesn't allow her daughter-in-law to distort the hierarchy that exists in the family.** Ethnographer A. Tadevosyan also provides his interpretation about the phenomenon: *"Here we have a clear struggle between the poles of the man and the woman and it doesn't matter who at the given moment occupies the pole, whether in physiological terms, it is a man or a woman. That is to say that here we deal with the issues of individualism and group mentality. Because if a person is an individual, he/she has its own viewpoint when assessing the phenomena. And if the person is not an individual, then his/her mentality is subjected to the "truths" that have been presented to him/her. When the woman's status changes, as in the above-mentioned case with mothers-in-law, given the fact that the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law have their own different "truths" on issues, the latter smoothly takes on the new "truth", without even realizing what happened to her".* **In other words, the woman in the status of a mother-in-law, continues to maintain their family model which is male-centered and where the man is in power.**
- **Starting from the age of 8-9, the children experience gender-based role division:** girls are involved in implementation

of household works, envisaged for women, while boys get involved in those, envisaged for men. In other words, starting from that age, children adopt the norms, formed and dictated by the society, which show what is suitable for a man and what is suitable for a woman. The parents and society provide children with knowledge about their gender-related duties, advantages and limitations. Starting from the phase of upbringing, **the girls encounter a greater number of limitations and stricter ways of upbringing.** These limitations are observed in the choice of the 'preferred' clothing, the manners of sitting and speaking, behavioral rules, participation in household responsibilities, etc. Through such an approach, the public prepares the girls to their social role in the future.

- As to the upbringing, only mothers are involved in it, since men are mainly considered to be the ones to earn the living for the family, while the women are the implementers of housewife responsibilities. In some cases, the father's participation in the child upbringing becomes impossible, since he is absent from home for years due to working abroad.
- The gender-based division also serves as the basis of notions about children's roles in future. **The girls' future is mainly connected to their role of being a good mother, a good daughter-in-law, a good wife and a woman who ensures the high reputation of her paternal family. In other words, the woman's role is not considered from the point of view of her being a personality. Meanwhile, the boys are represented as bearers of individual qualities, as well as the ones to ensure the family continuance.**
- **The HH decisions are considered to be made on their own, automatically,** including the one, related to the division of works between women and men. All of it is considered to be determined from the beginning, and its implementors do not see their participatory role in its formation and/or transformation.

- In terms of changing the perceptions on the studied phenomenon, the education system can serve as the most important means. Nonetheless, as the survey results show, the current education system reinforces the notions of the woman's secondary role in the woman-man relationships, instead of transforming them. This fact is reflected both in the school books and in the perceptions of the pedagogical staff. The issue is also connected to the fact that the school books are developed by the generation of people who have received education during the Soviet times. And in their insights, these people have the stereotype that the Soviet-era education has been the best. The expert A. Tadevosyan sees the solution of the issue in the education system, bringing examples of the West that have already been successful in these terms: *“Because there, in the West, the teachers also have changed, their approach has changed, their behavioral practices towards the sexes have changed. There, in the West, it is not a must for the boys to be involved only in activities “suitable to boys” and for the girls to be involved only in activities “suitable to girls”. If they are cleaning the classroom, it is not necessary for the girls to sweep the floor and for the boys to take nails and hammer to fix something. Or in case if the teacher orders the boy to sweep the floor, the boy’s mom and dad do not come to school next day to have a “conversation” with the teacher, complaining that he/she should not break the boy’s spirit, giving him a feminine task. I know such a case; [as you know], the child’s fingertips are connected to its brain development and there is a certain educational complex (means in Yerevan) where children attend a knitting class. One of the boys’ fathers had come to school to ensure that his son is not forced to attend that class, because it is not typical to boys. He was given an explanation that, in terms of child development, it is of biological and physiological importance and has a positive effect on child’s thinking and brain development. However, the father’s greatest concern was for his*

son to become a man, and, hence, was not involved in things “suitable to women” or in preparation of handmade items. The purpose of the class in terms of child development didn’t matter to him. In the end, the parents made the child leave that school. Another incident that preceded their decision was that the teacher had instructed their son to sweep the floor, while according to their notions, the boys should arrange the tables, while the girls should sweep the floor.” (A. Tadevosyan, Education sphere expert, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences, RoA).

- Another expert of ours, H. Gevorgyan, also reflects on the issue of apparent boy-girl inequality in today’s education system: “I am terrified of our education, of our teachers, and of the lecturers’ mentality. Definitely, it is a very important function, but when the pedagogue of the education system talks and uses the word “negro” in his/her speech, or when he/she makes a remark to the boy that he should cut his hair, or should not come to school with long hair, or when a parent is asked to come to school to discuss that matter (this is about a case in one of the schools of Yerevan Kentron community).....It is considered normal for the boys to misbehave, but the girls are being criticized for such a behavior. Only the girls should clean the classroom. If this is the mentality of the pedagogues who educate children, what kind of change do we want to achieve? The pedagogues lack the elementary knowledge about the phases of crisis for children and about the period of their sexual maturity” (*H. Gevorgyan, NGO expert, involved in women’s rights, Women’s Support Center*).
- Today we have private educational complexes, where instead of distinctiveness, based on gender, the universal human values come to serve as the basis for education. In such schools, boys and girls play football together, they clean the classroom together in an equal manner, unlike the way it used to be in Soviet-era, where the boys had to arrange the seats and the girls

had to sweep the floor. At first glance, it seems that the children studying in such educational institutions can serve as the driving force for transforming the differences or the inequalities that exist between women and men in our society. However, in reality we have a different picture. In our cultural environment such stereotypes are so deep-rooted that people having a different kind of mentality are either prohibited to enter the society or are forced to leave it to join other cultural environments. *“This is a very severe type of conflict, because these people are the bearers of more civilized values, considering the individualistic approach that they have and the realization of their creativity and personality that they see in the basis of this approach, while the other part of the society is only interested in what is acceptable to the group or the crowd. In my observations this conflict is rather painful, and these children feel depressed from this sort of things”* (Education sphere expert, A. Tadevosyan, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the RoA). The inequality of woman-man relationships in the sphere of education is manifested also in the choice of professions: *“It also depends on the faculty; here again, you may observe differences. For example, the history department of the history faculty is more patriarchal than the departments of fine arts and culture. The same can be observed in the law faculty, where the science of law is considered to be “suitable to men”. Telling about the historical events is also considered to be “suitable to men”: “History is about the truth; how can a girl tell about the truth, especially about the nation’s truth? A girl can be engaged in fine arts, instead”* (A. Tadevosyan, Education sphere expert, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the RoA). The woman’s secondary role in the education system is also apparent in the field of science where the preference is given to boys: *“For example, in case of many professions the old approaches prevail, according to which*

a girl should not be considered for a post-graduate education opportunity, as she'll get married and she'll be 'lost' in that sense” (A. Tadevosyan, Education sphere expert, Insititute of Archeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the RoA):

- Afterwards, when reflecting upon the legal aspect of the issue, it should be mentioned that **a discriminatory behavior towards women** is observed here, as well. **It is mostly men who work in this sphere and, bearing the authoritarian role, granted to them by the society, these men are unable to accuse others of their own kind, when it comes to discussing the family incidents:** *“The women are accused, ‘since you are untidy, your husband has left you’. This is the level of discussions taking place in the courts” (H. Gevorgyan, NGO expert, involved in women’s rights issues, Women’s Support Center).* The expert of the legislative field also voices her opinion about the issue: *“The judges lack gender sensitivity, they lack those approaches, i.e. in such situations they manifest their approaches as human beings or as members of the society, and not as judges, who should act as the law prescribes them to” (Legislative field expert, N. Piliposyan, Women’s Resource Center).* There are so many shortcomings and gaps in the legislative field that **if the woman is subjected to different types of violence (other than physical), it will not be possible to protect her in legal terms.** *“There is not any law like that. If the law, regarding the Istanbul Convention that was signed, were well-defined, it should have been among [the laws on] psychological violence and should subject [the violator] to criminal liability. However, since our law is closer to the Russian one and is not criminalized, naturally, we can only show limited assistance [to the victim]. Currently, sub-legislation acts are being developed, and what the state entities discuss...well, they don’t understand it themselves; they don’t acknowledge that beating, humiliating and persecuting a woman are crimes” (H. Gevorgyan, NGO expert, involved in women’s rights, Women’s Support Center).*

- In some cases, since both the legal field and the cultural environment show the same approaches towards the issue, the women's rights are being even more restricted in several terms. This is mostly referred to cases when the man occupies an important position. *“Especially in cases when the husband is a renowned person in the society, for example an official, holding an important position, or a criminal authority, it becomes even more difficult. We have had such cases, and truly it is even harder for those women....because they apply [to relevant bodies] for many times, but they are not taken seriously, and it turns out to be even worse for them. I am aware of many cases, when the women tried to take certain steps, but the consequences had even been worse. This is because his (means the officer's or the criminal authority's) friends work at the Police Department, while his relatives work in the court”* (N. Piliposyan, Legislative field expert, Women's Resource Center).
- The cultural environment has its impact especially on the *Guardianship and trusteeship* bodies that are led not by the legal or the moral aspect of the issue, but rather by the pressures imposed on them by the famous situation of acquaintances and relatives: *“There was a funny story, connected to a person who came from Shirak province. Because when an incident happens in the village....for example when an issue arises, connected to children.... (in this case the wife had gone away and had left the house, but wanted to take her children back with her).... It turned out that all the staff of the Guardianship body were the man's neighbors. They were from the same village, while the woman had come from another place, so even if they did empathise her as a mother, still they were unable to go against the interests of their village resident. The situation in the villages is even more complicated, given the existing network of acquaintances, relatives and in-laws, because in most of the cases it is the man who is the resident of the given village [and not the woman]”* (N. Piliposyan, Legislative field expert, Women's Resource Center).

- **In fact, there are great gaps in the legal field, related to women's rights issues. The woman cannot voice her issues, resulting from the existing culture, with the purpose of solving them in any legal aspect, since the judicial and legal field also operate, according to 'men's' laws [laws, suitable to men].**
- The inequalities or the differences between women and men, presented in the scope of this survey make the very basis for carrying out the prenatal sex-selection through abortion where preference is given to the baby boys⁷.

As mentioned before, the studied phenomenon has quite a solid and ingrained basis, and for making changes in this sphere, a number of difficulties should be met, since the same perceptions about the phenomenon are simultaneously shaped, based on two factors: knowledge, acquired mechanically in the family or the community and the capital knowledge, acquired purposefully. This means that it is impossible to transform the society in this sense, without changing its perceptions towards the phenomenon. There is no doubt that the same methods that formulate the perceptions about men-women relationships can be equally effective in making these changes. The talk here is about the educational institutions, mass media and other means of transferring information (commercials, different events, etc.).

Nonetheless, **we suggest** the following, as possible options of changing the current situation:

- **Make changes in the education system**, including review of school books, training of pedagogues, and ensuring gender proportionality in the pedagogical staff. The education system should be viewed as one of the most powerful means to change the society perceptions, since as we have witnessed, it was through

⁷ Please find details about the prenatal sex-selection through abortions (sex-selective abortions) in the Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia//Demographic data and analysis, 2013, <https://goo.gl/HPbyu6>

the education system that the Soviet government changed the people's stereotypes. To sound more convincing, let us bring an example: *"In the 60-ies, the men could beat a woman near the Moscow theatre [right in the center of Yerevan] just for wearing trousers, because in their mind this girl in the trousers left the impression of being an immoral woman, and could serve as an example of immorality for their sisters. They have beaten that girl, considering that they are the owners of the Moscow theater. But in the 80-ies, if something like that happened, it would be considered as a manifestation of incredible ignorance, backwardness and barbarism. This means that in the course of 20 years, the system of the higher education institutions, and the system of education, in general, made the society change significantly. Even in the West, which nowadays seems to be the most developed, during a marathon race of 1967-68, the participant men beat a participant woman. I think this happened in the States. They didn't even warn her to leave the marathon, but beat her with involvement of four men. But today, that same society will consider it to be a barbarism, if it witnesses such a thing. Hence, the education system is of a primary importance"* (A. Tadevosyan, Education sphere expert, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences, RoA).

- Enhance the knowledge of pedagogues teaching at the higher educational institutions on value formation, transformation and the concept of gender.
- **Reconsider the content of the school books.** The review of school books show that they contain disproportionate representation of gender roles, and even, superiority of men's roles over that of the women's. It is not mere images and texts that are presented in the books, but rather professional and social roles and attributes. The pupil mechanically perceives and absorbs the hidden messages of the images and the texts, conveyed to him/her through the textbooks on a daily basis.

- **Implement a well-developed policy through mass media.** To raise people's awareness on family relationships, woman-man equality, universal human values, value systems of societies in other countries, etc, through advertisements, programs and films.
- Through an appropriate education program provide the woman with an opportunity to acquire economic independence.
- Implement projects through which it will be possible to simultaneously **engage all family members**. Otherwise, as the results of numerous projects show, if the changes occur only in the perceptions or the knowledge of the woman, this circumstance, on its turn, creates new issues and new conflicts with other family members.
- Engage parents in application of such methods of child upbringing that do not contain any stereotypical differences between boys and girls. Simultaneously, through these methods, **enhance fathers' participation in children's upbringing**, ensuring parents' equal participation in this process.
- **"Woman's empowerment"**⁸: One of our experts, H. Gevorgyan, sees the elimination of discriminative behavior towards a woman through the latter's "empowerment". *"Without doubt, through empowerment of women. If we do not empower women, we will not find a way to overcome the issue. We can talk about the laws, about the legislative changes and about woman-man equality as much as we want ... It's already a few years that the law on women's and men's equality is in force, but this reality came to prove that nothing changed in our lives. The only way to overcome domestic violence is through empowerment of the victim. If we do not empower the women, if we do not change their mentality, if we do not empower them economically, we will not register any changes... We should not empower them only*

⁸ The term belongs to H. Gevorgyan, an NGO expert, involved in women's rights, Women's Support Center

in economic terms. The woman living in this patriarchal system, does not have the right to make a decision, she does not have any autonomy. We use such a term [to describe the reality] “acquired” or “accustomed helplessness” ... The women are taught that they are helpless and that they cannot survive on their own. And we say to them ‘you can make a decision, you can be independent’. We gradually bring them to the awareness that they do not deserve living in the circumstances in which they find themselves, and that they deserve living a normal and dignified life” (H. Gevorgyan, NGO expert, involved in women’s rights, Women’s Support Center).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 EVERYDAY LIFE

Since this survey refers to manifestations of gender inequality in everyday life, let us first of all reflect a little bit on how the everyday life is shaped, in general. Also, for a more comprehensive understanding of the causes for deep-seated perceptions on the discussed issue and of the existing knowledge on gender inequality in the society, let us reflect on how the knowledge is formed in everyday life, in general.

The social wealth of knowledge makes an important part of the knowledge application in everyday life. According to everyday life theoreticians, reflecting on the social wealth of knowledge during the study will help “position” an individual in the society and have a corresponding attitude towards him/her. It distinguishes the reality according to the recognizability degree: the information on the sections of everyday life that we deal with frequently is provided with all its details, while the information on “remote” sections of everyday life is more general and unclear: “For example, my knowledge about my personal specialty and the world around it, is rather specific, profound, and complete, while my knowledge about other people’s professional world is rather superficial. The social wealth of the knowledge provides typological systems that help distinguish by typology not only other people, but also any kind of event or experience, both of social or natural type”. According to these authors, the knowledge system transfers to the next generation. During socialization they perceive it as the objective truth⁹. We’ll observe the same also in our survey material, in the next parts of this work.

And how does each of us interpret the social world, which is common to all of us, in which we live and act as a human being, among other human beings, a world which each of us perceives as a field for our actions and

⁹ See more details in: Бергер П., Лукман Т., Социальное конструирование реальности. Трактат по социологии знания. М.: Изд. «Медиум», 1995, 323 с.

orientations and which is organized around our individuality in its special way? It should also be taken into account that this social world is considered to be a field for actions for other human beings, organized from their own point of view. A. Schutz interprets the issue in the following way: "That world is given to us first and foremost, as something that is already organized/created. We were born and have grown up in that organized world. Through education and upbringing, through all types of experiences, we acquire some knowledge about that world and its institutions. We are interested in the objects of that world, since they play a decisive role in our orientation, they either contribute to or prevent us from implementing our own projects, they build those elements, which we will either accept or change; *to put it in a nutshell, since these objects hold some kind of meaning to us*¹⁰. The perception that our world is already organized/created, represents one of the important factors, reinforcing the rigid notions that exist about the women's role in our environment and that are barely subjected to any changes to date.

The social world in which the human being was born and where he/she will find his/her orientation, is perceived by him/her as a firmly intertwined social relationship, as a system of signs and symbols, which have their specific structure of meanings, as an institutionalized form of social organizations, as a system of status and reputation, etc. The meaning of those elements in the social world, as well as their wide variety and structure are perceived by those living in that world as something that is granted to them. As a result, the social world perception forms the habits of the group "we", that are considered to be good and right ways for treating human beings and things. They are considered to be developed on their own, since they are time-tested and, being socially approved, do not require any explanations¹¹.

¹⁰ See more details in: Шютц А., Смысловая структура повседневного мира: очерки по феноменологической социологии. М.: Институт Фонда «Общественное мнение», 2003, 336 с.

¹¹ See more details in: Шютц А., Смысловая структура повседневного мира: очерки по феноменологической социологии. М.: Институт Фонда «Общественное мнение», 2003, 336 с.

Hence, the human being/person is not usually overwhelmed by the questions, regarding the knowledge formation issue in everyday life, as to, for example, what is actual to him and what he knows, unless he faces a certain issue himself/herself. The human being considers that his/her reality and knowledge are shaped on their own, automatically. As we'll see when summarizing the survey results, the same refers to the knowledge about the works done and the decisions made by women. For example, the survey participants had difficulty answering to the question, as to when or by whom the decision on the principle of dividing works between women and men had been made. One of the reasons is that they take it for granted, as something that does not depend on them, and it was the first time that have been given such a question.

4.2 APPLIED METHODS

4.2.1 Individual in-depth interviews

Qualitative research is a process that targets the interpretation of the social life, providing the opportunity to study the phenomenon in its natural environment and, based on the opinions of key informants, to identify and analyse the overall complex picture of the social phenomenon. During in-depth (qualitative) researches, the focus is on the social activities of human beings and on the connotations that lay in the core of those activities. The target for such researches is the person and his/her practical activity in a specific social situation. The in-depth interview method supposes a multifaceted and profound study of the person's social world¹².

The priority reason for conducting in-depth interviews within the frames of this survey is that the structured interview provides with an opportunity to receive answers to the questions “how much”, “how many”, “to what extent”, while the qualitative interview answers to the questions “why”,

¹² See more details in Qualitative social surveys, Yerevan, “Yerevan State University Publishing House”, G. Tadevosyan, 2006, 374 pages

“how”, “for what reason”. Through a qualitative interview it is possible to analyze the phenomenon significance, identify/reveal its cause-effect relationships. Besides, the advantage of the qualitative (in-depth) method is that it enables to study the issue in all its diversity and depth.

The in-depth interviews that have made the basis of our work have been conducted through a semi-structured interview, the essence of which is the following: in such an interview a list of main, open-ended questions is envisaged, and the interview takes place in a certain logical sequence, conditioned both by the questionnaire and the interview process. The advantage of this method is that the usage of a questionnaire ensures the data to be multifaceted, and the data collection becomes somewhat structured.

During our survey, the in-depth interviews have been conducted through face-to-face meetings with the interviewees, without the presence of any third party. Only in some exceptional cases, based on the survey purpose, another family member has also been involved.

Individual in-depth interviews have been conducted in the WVA program areas, as well as in the city of Kapan of the Syunik Province and in the Kentron community of Yerevan. Kapan community and Kentron community of Yerevan have served as control groups and the reason for their involvement has been the acquisition of comparative-analytical material, since the WVA target areas are mostly renowned for maintenance of traditions and, hence, the acceptance of the innovative ideas in the cultural environment is slow, in those areas. The involvement of control group communities is explained by the following: 1) the survey materials allow us to note that the Kapan city population is marked by its non-stereotypical perceptions about the phenomena, similar to a few of other provincial residencies, 2) introduction of innovations and making changes at the level of perceptions are characteristic to the population of the capital, especially among “non-suburban” population.

Given the thematic characteristics of our survey, we have conducted the in-depth interviews in ten residences of WVA program areas (among both urban and rural population) and in two control group residences. In each residential area four in-depth interviews have been conducted.

The interviewees of the in-depth interviews have been selected, based on a few principles. These include the following:

1. *Based on family structure*, including:
 - 1.1 Families consisting of one generation
 - 1.2 Families consisting of two generations
 - 1.3 Families consisting of three generations
 - 1.4 Families consisting of four generations
2. *Based on the sexes of the children in the family*, including:
 - 2.1 Only male
 - 2.2 Only female
 - 2.3 Both male and female
3. *Based on the family status*, including
 - 3.1 Unmarried young girls (18-30 years of age)
 - 3.2 Married young women (up to 35-year-old), who have a mother-in-law
 - 3.3 Married young women (up to 35-year-old), who are the only adult woman at home (no other adult women, like mother-in-law, sisters-in-law live in the family)
 - 3.4 Married women of 36-49 years of age
 - 3.5 Married middle-aged (50-69 years of age) women, who have the status of a mother-in-law
 - 3.6 Married middle-aged (50-69 years of age) women, who simultaneously have the statuses of a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law
 - 3.7 Married middle-aged (50-69 years of age) women, who have a mother-in-law, but don't have a daughter-in-law

- 3.8 Married women, older than the middle-aged ones (70-year-old, or older), who reside with one or two daughters-in-law of different generations
- 3.9 Unmarried men (up to the age of 35)
- 3.10 Married young men (up to the age of 40)
- 3.11 Married middle-aged men (up to the age of 63).

4.2.2 Involved observations

An involved observation provides the researcher with an opportunity to better visualize the research context that makes the perception of the reality complete. Through observation, the researcher can receive information that may not be present in the oral descriptions, provided by the interviewees. The observation allows to identify such phenomena that may not be noticed at first glance and may escape the researcher's attention. The data received through observation make the picture complete, with regard to both the subject-matter and the environment surrounding it.

The observation method has a series of peculiarities that make it unique and sometimes exceptional when studying social phenomena. During observation, the information is received through an active interaction with those who are observed. That interaction enables the researcher to enter the daily life of the research participants and examine things from that point of view. This method requires long-term involvement of the researcher in the field, which also contributes to a full understanding of the phenomenon.

Even though, this method is the most complicated and the most difficult in terms of implementation, still, we have applied it in our survey for the following reasons:

1. Based on our experience in the sphere, we can witness that gender-based violence sometimes is of "intermediary" nature, i.e it is conditioned by social-cultural non-*immediate* factors. Its identification may be incomplete and/or distorted, if only interviews are conducted. Meanwhile, during involved observations,

it is possible to identify factors related to the research that at first glance may seem not to be primary, but in fact, are the most important factors for problem formation.

2. Another advantage of this method is that during the involved observation the link between the researcher and the research participant is not noticeably highlighted, and the research becomes less formal, thus allowing to comprehend almost all circumstances that generate the problem.
3. According to our preliminary presumptions, the research participants may evaluate and interpret the phenomena not pursuant to the reality, but rather pursuant to their notions/wishes. Meanwhile, the involved observation will allow us to minimize and in some cases even eliminate the risks of information distortion.

Within the frames of this survey, the involved observations have been implemented in twelve target communities: one observation per community. The observer has spent one full day in each of the targeted families, being present in situations, relevant to the studied issues, to the extent possible.

The targeted families for the implementation of involved observations have been selected based on a few principles. These include the following:

1. *Based on family structure*, including:
 - 1.1 Families consisting of one generation
 - 1.2 Families consisting of two generations
 - 1.3 Families consisting of three generations
 - 1.4 Families consisting of four generations
2. *Based on the sexes of children in the family*, including:
 - 2.1 Only male
 - 2.2 Only female
 - 2.3 Both male and female

3. *Based on the education level of family members, including:*
 - 3.1 Families with higher education
 - 3.2 Families with secondary education
4. Based on social status, including:
 - 4.1 Socially protected/well-to-do families
 - 4.2 Socially vulnerable families
5. According to HH women's occupation, including:
 - 4.1 Women having occupation/working women (not related to agriculture)
 - 4.2 Women having no occupation/work

4.2.3 Expert interviews

This method has been applied within the frames of this survey, for a few reasons. Let us mention the two most important ones:

1. It provides us with an opportunity to examine the survey material in a more comprehensive way and not to be restricted by the opinions and perceptions of the survey participants on the phenomenon.
2. The professional opinions and the recommendations, regarding the survey sphere may help us and contribute to the development of methods towards solving the issue in the future.

The expert interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis, using a semi-structured questionnaire. The interviews were held with four representatives of three spheres:

1. Hasmik Gevorgyan, NGO expert, involved in women's rights, Women's Support Center,
2. Legislative field expert, Nvard Piliposyan, Women's Resource Center,
3. Education sphere experts: Arkadi Tadevosyan, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences, RoA, and Nicole Margaryan, Yerevan State University



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