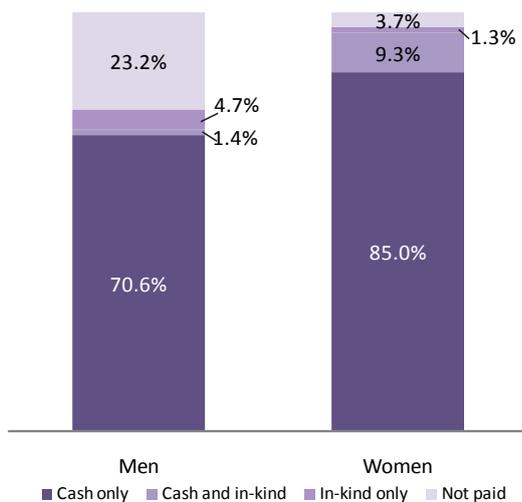




Employment often acts as a source of empowerment for both men and women. This is particularly important for women's empowerment as employment gives women some control over their income.

Fewer women than men (57% of currently married women compared with 93.3% of currently married men) were employed in the 12 months prior to the Tuvalu 2007 DHS. Most people who worked were paid in cash.

Type of earnings of currently married respondents
Age 15-49 employed in the past 12 months

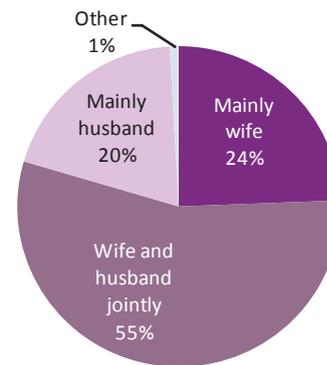


About three in ten married women who had their own cash earnings decide by themselves how their earnings should be spent. Half of the married women surveyed indicated that they make the decision jointly with their partner.

Younger women were more independent than older women in making their own decision on how to spend their earnings. Women who live in Funafuti were also more likely than women who live in the outer islands to make their own decision on how to spend their income (36% and 29% respectively), whereas joint decisions were more frequent in the outer islands.

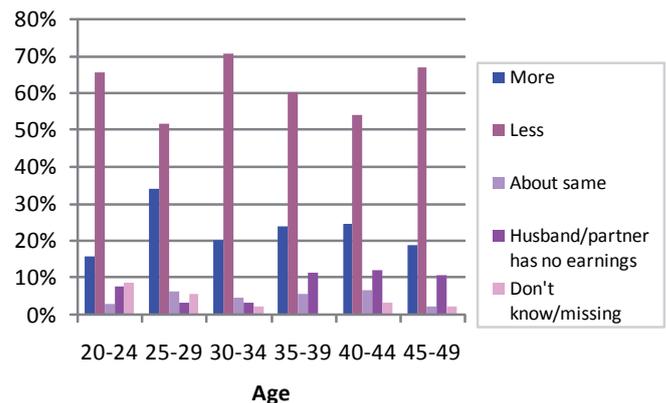
Women appear to have a significant amount of control over how their own and their husband's incomes are spent. More than half of the married women surveyed reported that the wife and the husband make joint decisions concerning how the husband's earnings are spent. One in five said that their husband determines how his earnings should be spent.

Person with control over husband's earnings
Currently married women aged 15-49



More than half of all working married women reported earning less than their husband or partner. This finding was consistent across all the age groups. Slightly more than one in five women, however, (24%) reported that their income was more than their husband or partner's.

Women's earnings compared with their husbands



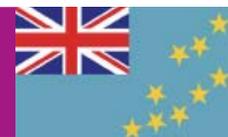
Participation in household decision-making

Women were asked about their participation (i.e., having the final say either jointly or solely) in decisions on both major and minor household purchases, their own health care and visits to her family or relatives.

Currently married women in Tuvalu tend not to make household decisions alone. Less than a quarter of the women surveyed indicated that they would make a decision on a major household purchase by themselves, more than one in four considered that this decision would be made jointly by them and their husband.

Almost four in ten married women independently decide on their own healthcare, with close to half making this type of decision jointly with their husband and the remaining 16% of women reported that their husband makes decisions on their healthcare.





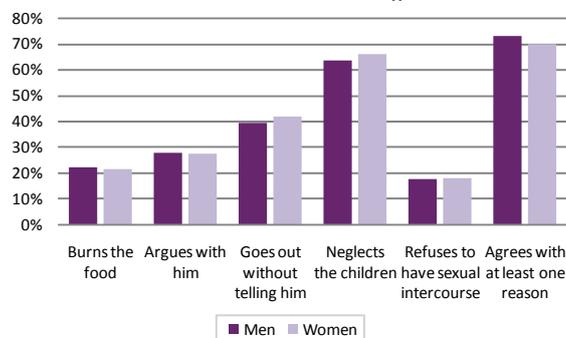
The survey results indicate that the husband is most likely to make a decision on his own concerning family visits to his wife's family or relatives, however, when men were asked questions about who should have the greater say in a range of decisions, nearly 90% of men considered that a wife and husband should have equal say when deciding how many children to have.

Attitudes towards violence against women

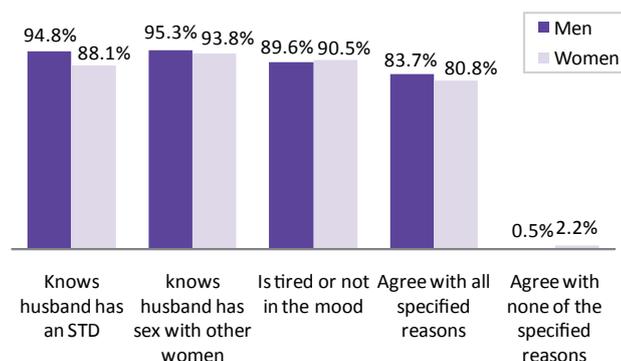
The majority of people surveyed considered that wife beating is justified in certain circumstances. Most men (64%) and women (66%) considered that neglecting the children justifies violence against women. There is very little difference between how men and women responded to these questions, which indicates a general acceptance of violence as a normal part of relationships. This is not surprising because traditional norms teach women to accept, tolerate and even rationalize battery.

Young men aged 15-19 were more likely to justify partner violence than older men aged 45-49. Twenty three per cent of 15-19 years olds considered that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him, compared with 15% of men aged 45-49.

Justification of violence against women
Men and women age 15-49



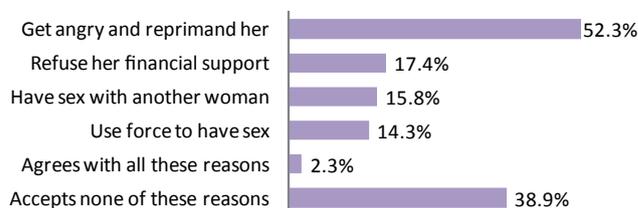
Attitudes towards woman's right to refuse sex with her husband
Men and women age 15-49



The survey results suggest that there is a high degree of sexual autonomy in Tuvalu. Almost all women surveyed agreed that a woman can refuse to have sex with her husband for all the reasons specified in the survey. Men showed an even greater respect for women's sexual autonomy than the women did, and less than 1% considered that women were not justified in refusing sex for any of the specified reasons.

Despite these encouraging findings, more than half the men surveyed stated that if a woman refuses to have sex with her husband, he has the right to get angry and reprimand her. Only 39% of men categorically rejected any form of physical or emotional control over his wife if she refuses him sex.

Men's attitude towards a husband's right to certain behaviour when his wife refuses sex



Policy note:

The DHS revealed substantial gender differentials in Tuvalu labour market economic activities, both regards employment and remuneration. Far fewer women (57%) were employed than men (90%), with women's overall earnings well below that of their husbands in most cases. Income parity is highest amongst younger income earners (25-34), most of who work in the public sector.

No major gender differentials were reported by the DHS regards decision-making across the standard DHS categories.

Respondents' attitudes towards violence against women is of some concern, with the majority of men and women considering wife beating justified under certain circumstances; resorting to such violence as a response to maternal neglect of children is justified in the eyes of 73% of men and 66% of women. Such a widespread acceptance of beating as a means of conflict resolution amongst men and women also manifests itself amongst younger Tuvaluans, with one in four young men (15-19) condoning such behaviour as an acceptable response to wives refusing sexual intercourse with their husbands. Schools and churches, as well as youth NGOs play an important role addressing this issue amongst the younger generation, before they become sexually active, to contribute towards creating an environment of attaining meaningful gender equality.

*For more detailed information on women's empowerment see chapter 13 of the Tuvalu 2007 DHS survey report

