



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

Regarding the type of work undertaken by men and women, the 2013 Vanuatu DHS survey showed no differences, with near equal proportions of men and women undertaking paid and unpaid work, and work for cash and in-kind, and for in-kind remuneration only (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Type of earnings of currently married respondents aged 15-49 employed in the past 12 months



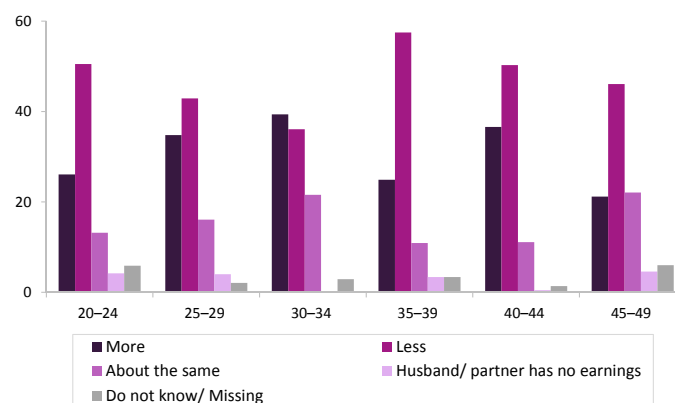
Regarding decision-making on how their respective incomes are spent, Table 1 shows that most married women (50%) and men (61%) refer to joint decision-making. One in four women (26%) report they are the principal decision-maker on how their own income is spent, whereas one in five claims her husband makes that decision. With a near equal proportion of men reporting they make the decision on how their own income is spent (23%), only one in ten (12%) refers to his wife as making that decision. Women and men tend to be largely in agreement on how men's salary is spent, except perhaps for a marginally larger proportion of women (29%) than men (23%) crediting men with making these decisions.

Table 1: Decision-making about women's and men's income (%)

| WOMEN's INCOME | | MEN's INCOME | | MEN's INCOME | |
|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|
| WOMEN reporting | | WOMEN reporting | | MEN reporting | |
| Wife | 26.2 | Wife | 12.1 | Wife | 12.1 |
| Joint | 50.3 | Joint | 57.3 | Joint | 61.2 |
| Husband | 21.1 | Husband | 29.3 | Husband | 23 |
| Missing | 2.4 | Missing | 1.3 | Missing | 3.7 |

Women earn less than their husbands or partners in most age groups except in the 30-34 years age group. The proportion of women who earn less than their husbands or partners is significantly lower in three age groups: 20-24, 35-39 and 45-49 years (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Women's earnings compared with those of their husbands or partners



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 their family or relatives (Table 2).

Table 2: Participation in household decision-making

| Questions asked of men and women about key decision-making issues | WOMEN reporting | | | MEN reporting | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Mainly wife | Joint wife/husband | Mainly husband | Mainly wife | Joint wife/husband | Mainly husband |
| Major Household purchases | 13.6 | 58.7 | 26.2 | 4.9 | 75.8 | 19.2 |
| Purchases of daily household needs | 17.8 | 57.9 | 22.8 | 25.1 | 64.4 | 9.3 |
| Visits to wife's family or relatives | 13.6 | 63.2 | 21.8 | 5.3 | 80.6 | 13 |

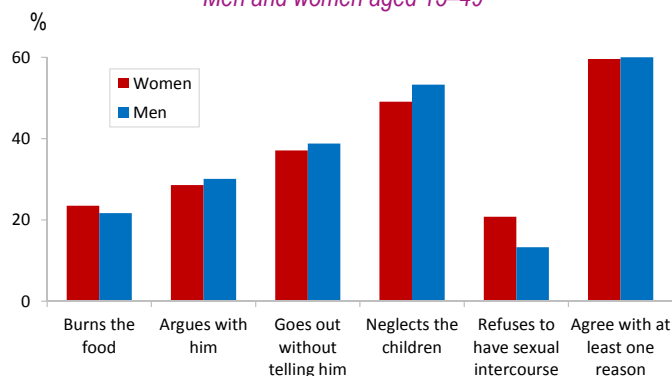
In Vanuatu, the majority of men and women tend to make household decisions together across the three standard DHS household scenarios. Having said this, some interesting contrasts do emerge; a greater proportion of men than women make reference to joint decisions across all three scenarios, and both male and female respondents report more men than women making more decisions by themselves, except in the purchase of daily household needs.



Attitudes towards violence against women

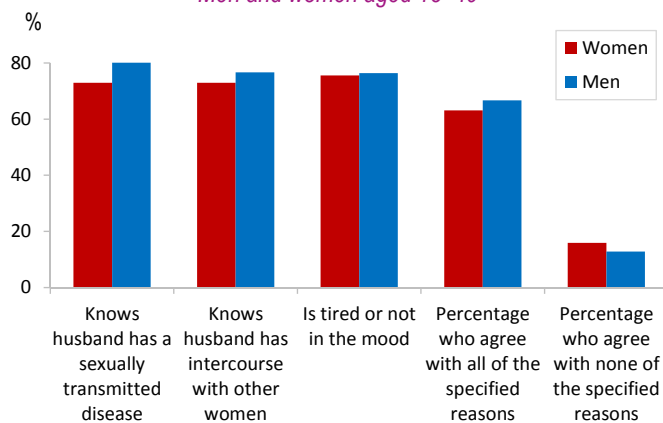
Regarding both male and female attitudes towards violence against women, a worrying picture emerges from the survey, indicating that the majority of women (59.6%) and men (60.2%) aged 15–49 years think that wife beating is justified in certain circumstances (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Justification of violence against women
Men and women aged 15–49



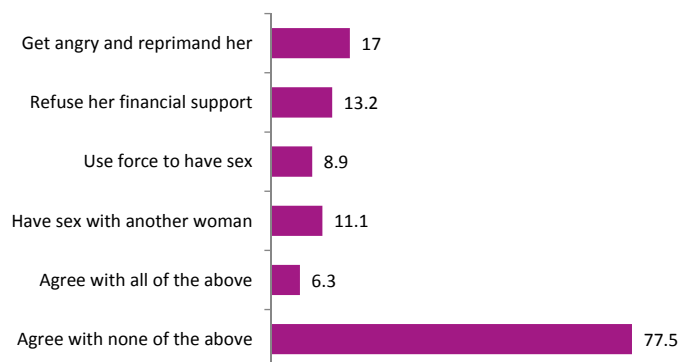
Referring to standard DHS survey scenarios, the majority of ni-Vanuatu men and women accept the fact that women are justified in refusing to have sex with their husbands or partners. Women who currently are or have been married or divorced, and /or have children, with higher education and are employed, are most likely to accept that a woman can refuse sex with her husband (Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Attitude toward women's right to refuse sex with her husband,
Men and women aged 15–49



Responding to a final DHS scenario, of what men might consider appropriate responses to wives refusing to have sex with their husbands, the vast majority of men did not agree with the sentiment of the four scenarios. One in ten men, however, thought 'refusing her financial support' (13%) or 'having sex with another women' (11%) were acceptable responses (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Men's attitude towards a husband's right to certain behaviour when his wife refuses sex



Policy note

With most men and women reporting they make household decisions together, a greater proportion of males than females made reference to joint decision-making across three standard DHS scenarios, whereas more women credit their husbands rather than themselves with main decision-making.

The vast majority of women and men aged 15–49 years think that wife-beating is justified in certain circumstances, pointing to a high level of community acceptance of this behaviour. Given the severe impact on women's health, overall well-being, and empowerment, as well as sending the wrong message to young boys and girls, these findings should be of great concern to the government and communities at large.

*For more detailed information on women's empowerment, see chapter 15 in the 2013 Vanuatu DHS report.