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Lessons learned and best practices in providing gender-sensitive social protection to members of ethnic minorities in developing countries

Expert group meeting on promoting inclusion through social protection
Report on the World Social Situation 2017

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Why take a gender approach?

- Women continue to face challenges in accessing their rights
- Women and men experience poverty and inequality differently
- Gender is not just another inequality – understanding the intersection between gender and ethnicity (and disability, age etc.) is vital
- Social protection programmes are not gender-neutral: there are differences in women's inclusion in social protection, and differences in outcomes



Gender and ethnicity: Poverty and exclusion

Women belonging to ethnic minorities and indigenous groups face multiple forms of discrimination based on identity and gender

- High rates of poverty - Low levels of employment, but high levels of informal work
- Low levels of education, literacy and access to basic services
- Exclusion from political and social participation
- High levels of social vulnerability and risk



Key barriers to accessing social protection

- Lack of entitlement
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Gender bias within programmes
 - “Breadwinner model”
 - Portability of schemes
 - Health risks
 - Challenges to participation
 - Low (and interrupted) contributory capacity
 - Limited awareness
 - Geography
 - Administrative procedures
 - Socio-cultural barriers
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Providing gender-sensitive social protection to members of ethnic minorities

Positive progress in:

- Targeted approaches supporting girls' education (e.g. cash transfers in Cambodia)
- Strengthening livelihoods opportunities through quotas or targeted interventions (PWPs in India, food and training in Bangladesh, Viet Nam) (including provision of childcare)
- Strengthening / expanding social participation (along social-group lines)

Less progress in:

- Supporting inclusion in local political or community processes
 - Addressing socio-cultural vulnerabilities
 - Tackling the *drivers* of exclusion
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Providing gender-sensitive social protection to members of ethnic minorities

Opportunities for social protection to contribute to empowerment and inclusion

1. Ensure social protection programmes are appropriately designed and implemented to meet context-specific needs
2. Linkages with other services and programmes to reduce the multiple dimensions of exclusion and poverty (e.g. participation, services, GBV, engaging men, awareness raising on rights and social relations)
3. Strengthen government capacity to reach ethnic minorities and deliver social protection programmes effectively (e.g. language barriers, training)
4. Encourage participation of women from ethnic minorities in programme governance and design
5. Create opportunities for women's leadership roles and collective action
6. M&E which captures and analyses gender and exclusion



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Case study: Social protection and social inclusion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

- Though the population density is low, the CHT region is land-scarce in terms of availability of land for cultivation
- The domination of the Bengali population over the indigenous population is a key driving force of poverty and exclusion
- Lack of administrative power, lack of infrastructure, lack of government services and absence of community capacity contribute to situate of exclusion and poverty
- Women face intensified and different experiences of exclusion and discrimination: high levels of poverty, changing economic roles pushing them into informal work and migration, heightened mobility constraints and vulnerability to violence, and limited political representation





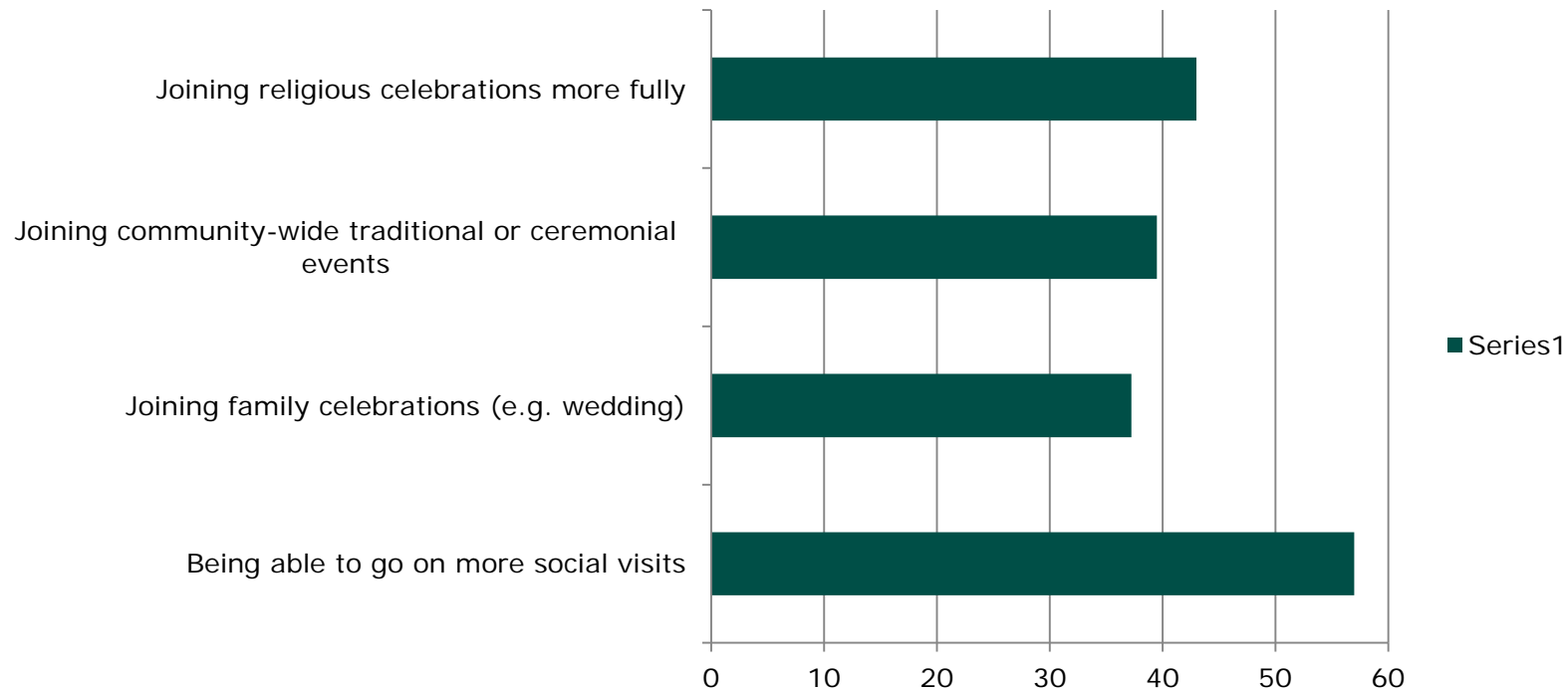
Case study: Social protection and social inclusion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

- Improved livelihood opportunities
 - Increased income during programme participation
 - Reduced dependence on wage labour
- Improved food security
 - Limited impact on diversity of diet
 - But positive impact in:
 - Quantity of food consumed



Case study: Social protection and social inclusion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

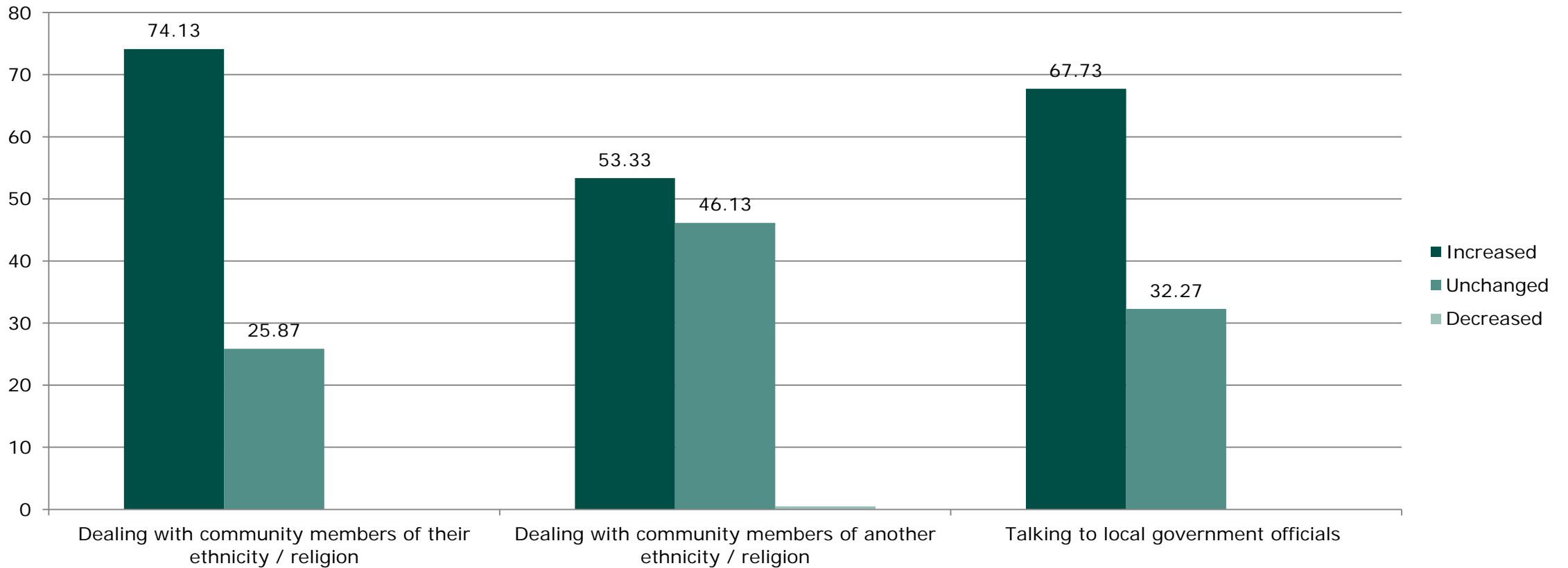
Positive perceptions on participation in social activities





Case study: Social protection and social inclusion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Changes in confidence levels interacting with community members (%)





Case study: Social protection and social inclusion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Mixed effects on state-society relations

- No effects on participation or voice in community decision-making forums or appealing to the government
 - VGD beneficiaries report problems in the delivery of programme benefits
- More positive effects are found in beneficiary perceptions of the central government
 - Beneficiaries are more likely to agree with the statement that the central government has reasonable understanding of their situation (VGD 15%)
 - Beneficiary households are more likely to think that the central government has attempted to address their needs in the past years (VGD 46%)