

What Impact do Interventions with Men and Boys have on the prevention of Gender Based Violence?

A Synthesis of Experiences from India

Highlights

The study reviewed the 'state of the art' of work with men and boys for violence prevention and promoting gender equality among communities in India. It also explored how community-based organisations monitored their work and learnt from it.

Background of the organisations

- The study included 68 organisations from 15 states in India. The study included an online survey (66 organisations) as well as in-depth interviews (16 organisations)
- A majority of these organisations worked on GBV prevention or Gender Equality for more than ten years.
- The different issues that these organisations worked on included GBV prevention at the family level and in public spaces, women's empowerment, early marriage prevention, adolescent health rights SRHR, declining sex ratio, providing support to violence survivors and income generation. Most organisations worked with women or girls and with men or boys at the same time.
- More organisations worked among rural communities (56) than among low-income urban neighbourhoods (35). 30 organisations work exclusively in rural areas and 9 organisations work exclusively in urban slums. 26 organisations worked in both rural and urban areas.

Range of Changes observed when working with Men and Boys

<p><i>Changes in Men and Boys</i></p> <p>Men and boys are helping in domestic chores. Mindset changing regarding domestic work is women's work They speak more respectfully. There is a reduction in use of abusive language. Boys and Men encourage their sisters or daughters' education Boys have developed a sense of identity Boys performing better in examinations Boys are more disciplined</p>	<p><i>Changes the family and in relationships</i></p> <p>Family level violence and discrimination reduced. There are fewer quarrels at home Children feel more comfortable with their fathers. Fathers are more affectionate towards their children. Openness and affection between spouses have increased. Improved relationship between sisters and brothers Changes in gender discriminatory norms around girls' education, early marriage, and son preference</p>
<p><i>Changes in women and girls</i></p> <p>Girls' education is being encouraged Women and girls have greater mobility. More women going out for earning a livelihood Women and girls are more assertive Women and girls feel supported. Girls feel greater freedom in wearing what they want (eg. jeans or trousers)</p>	<p><i>Changes in the community and in public systems</i></p> <p>Gender discriminatory social norms and VAW in public has reduced Public system response to VAW has improved Gender equality related programmes were being implemented better Women were being encouraged to participate in panchayat elections</p>

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

- Most of the organisations did not have any formal monitoring and learning system. Their learning methods were mostly based on observations and stories. Practitioners used their deep understanding of the local context to devise appropriate interventions, adapt and innovate and to learn about change.

Pushback and Challenges faced by organisations in doing this work:

- 13 out of 66 organisations reported that they faced great resistance from the men in the community.
- Organisations felt working with men was more difficult compared to working with women
- Men were not keen to discuss issue of violence in the early phase of the interventions

- Drop-out rates were high, membership of groups unstable especially in the early phases
- There was a need to meet when men were available. This would often be at night especially in urban areas
- Upper caste, more well to do, and older men were difficult to approach and engage
- Often there was a risk of tokenism from men. Men also needed a lot of encouragement and validation to remain engaged. Even when there were changes, in many situations the ultimate power rested with men.
- Older men and dominant caste-class people show resistance towards any change.
- This process of change among men is a long-term process. Projects are often too short to achieve lasting change.

A Few Words About the Study

Objectives and Methods

Focus of the study: Indian Organisations working at the Community Level

1. To identify interventions with Men and Boys that have been effective in preventing gender-based violence
2. What kind of data and learning systems that have been used to understand effectiveness of the interventions?
 - Identify 'successful' approaches and interventions
 - Identify policy possibilities
 - Identify learning mechanisms

Methods : Two Stage process:

- On-line survey to reach out to as many organisations as possible (66 Organisations)
- In-depth interviews with selected organisations (also reviewed organizational documents and reports)-16 organisations

Limitations

- Based on practitioners' perceptions
- Covid related limitations, needed to change original design

Advisory Group: The study was supported by an Advisory Group comprising of evaluation and domain experts

The study was conducted between October 2020 and November 2021.

Types of Organisations that were included

- Community Development including those working on women's empowerment through Self Help Groups
- Community Development work with explicit focus on women's rights issues.
- Women's rights/ Feminist organisations
- VAW crisis support services
- Child rights/Adolescent Health and Rights/Young People
- Child rights and community development

There were organisations that had more than one area of focus in their work.

Fig 1: Distribution of organisations according to constituencies for their work

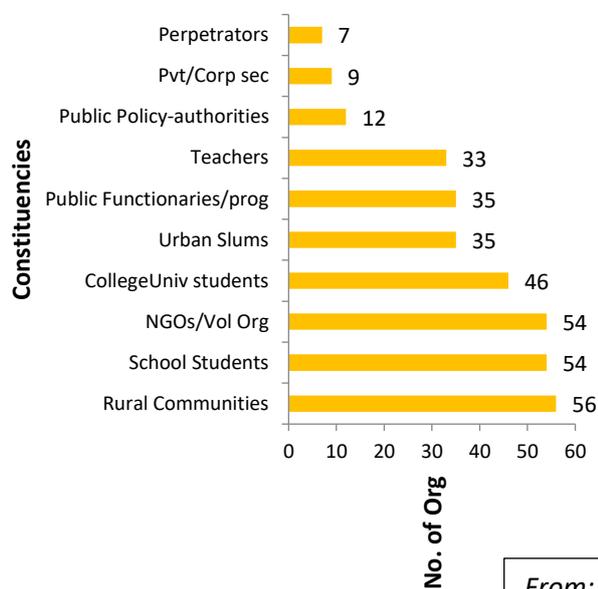
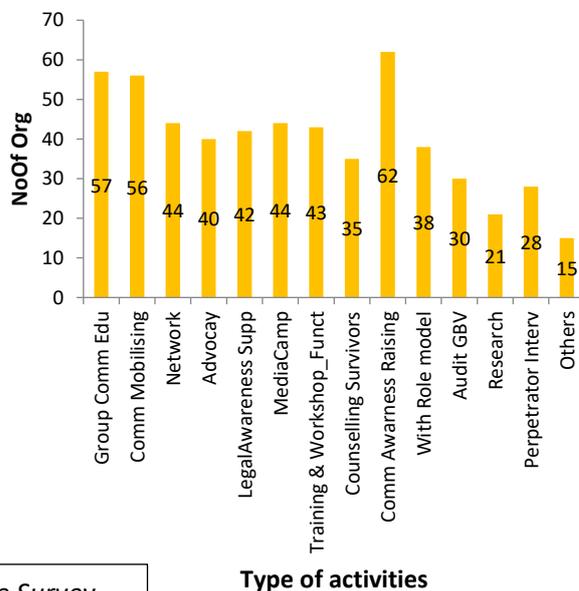


Fig 2. Distribution of organisations according to activities that engaged men/boys



From: Online Survey

Strategies used to reach out and engage Men and Boys

Community mobilization and conducting campaigns – using popular media

Formation of groups or collectives of men and boys

Capacity building – often using a core curriculum. Topics - masculinity, violence, consent, sexuality. Issue of power - central to the curriculum.

Understanding gender within a frame that included caste and class (intersectional approach).

Developing empathy for the situation of women and girls and an understanding of equality through their curricula

Allyship for collaborating with women and girls in finding solutions.

Leadership development.

Engagement with local public systems and functionaries

Keeping connected with the men and boys beyond the project period through alumni groups,

. Why is change taking place among men and boys and in gender relationships

Approaches

- Capacity building approach included critical reflection on existing social situation.
- Understanding of masculinity helped men and boys develop a better understanding of themselves and become less stressed to prove themselves.
- Peer learning groups among men and boys created solidarity and impetus for change
- There was a strong motivation from the implementing organisations and their functionaries who also acted as role models.

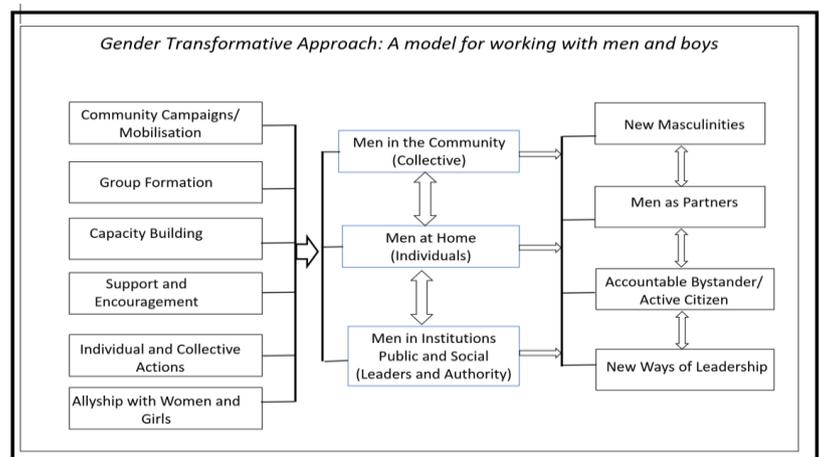
Contextual Factors

- Working with women in the same area for a long time created a conducive environment for change at home.
- Improvements in relationship at home becomes an incentive for maintaining the change.
- Working with men from marginalised communities provides opportunities to them to assume leadership roles and practice a new model of distributed leadership.
- Working with men from poor and marginalised communities was much easier than working with men who are from dominant class-caste characteristics.

Gender Transformative Change is.....

- Multi-dimensional and takes place in different aspects of people's life and relationships
- It requires both men and women to examine the root causes of inequality
- Men and boys need to change their own roles, assumptions, and expectations
- There is allyship and collaboration between women and men for women empowerment

Theory of Change : Strategies – Audiences – Outcomes



How do community-based organisations monitor their work and learn about changes?

- Learning is based on careful observation of changes in the community. It is locally embedded learning.
- Implementers ask the men and women about what change they perceive and then interpret it from their own understanding of context
- Implementers often understand change through small but significant variations in the use of language, symbols, actions. They learn from stories.
- The implementer-learners adapt new analytic tools and frameworks that they learn from the various networks of which they are members. They review their own work, adapt, and innovate to improve the quality of their work.
- Few organisations engage in research, they lack financial and technical resources.

- Even those who employ quantitative methods prefer qualitative/ ethnographic methods to learn about change

Moving Forward

Why is Work with Men and Boys Important

- Work with men and boys supplements, complements and strengthens work on women's empowerment
- Work with men and boys leads to shifts in the use of power from coercive use of power to collaborative use of power in the family, community, and public institutions.
- Working with men and boys on gender equality disrupts gender-discriminatory social norms at multiple level following the eco-social approach
- It changes the way boys and men perceive themselves and changes relationships between men
- There is a need to include 'intersectionality' or the interaction between gender and other social systems like caste, class, religion, ethnicity or sexual identity for promoting social justice.

Why is it important to understand and address masculinities?

- Masculinities are diverse. Understanding how 'masculinities' are shaped and in different contexts is important to transform gender relationship and promote equality within that social context. Masculinities are influenced by history and culture of a society.
- Facilitating change in the way men and boys think, act, and respond happens when they understand how ideas around 'being a man' affects men at a personal level. Improvement in relationships and a better sense of who 'I am' becomes an incentive to sustain these changes.
- To bring about gender equality, women also need to change their expectations from men and boys.
- Integrating a 'masculinities' perspective stimulates multi-dimensional change, moving from home to the community to public systems, influencing many aspects of life. This promotes sustainability and improves resilience in the community to address crises.

How to expand the scope of work with men and boys?

- This approach can be integrated along with work with women and girls on GBV prevention and women's empowerment as well as work related to child rights protection.
- Work with men and boys, as with work on women's empowerment needs support for longer periods of time. Long term follow-up support requires long-term funding
- This approach can be included in school and college curricula. A masculinities' informed approach can be introduced into government training programmes
- Masculinities' informed training can be included within gender equality and sexual harassment prevention related training for corporates
- A masculinities' informed approach can be adopted for male perpetrators of violence within a restorative justice framework.
- Trainers and mobilisers need to be supported to work effectively with men and boys.
- There is a need to identify role-models and influencers, and communicate the positive changes in these groups to a larger audience.

How can community-based organisations learn and improve their own practice?

- Locally grounded organisations understand the cultural context and play a crucial role in building evidence around changes among men and boys. Understanding the context can help the organizations to adapt and innovate. Local grounded organisations remain a source for long term support for the community.
- Peer learning communities or coalitions can build evidence from stories and anecdotes with appropriate support and mentoring.
- Peer learning communities can become platforms for collective and shared learning

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