## Recommendations for the Prevention of Violence against Women in Bangladesh

The results of the study *Men’s Attitudes and Practices regarding Gender and Violence against Women in Bangladesh* reconfirm that the prevalence of violence against women and girls is very high in Bangladesh. While there is no single quick fix to this complicated and widespread problem, violence can be reduced. The following recommendations are based specifically on the findings of this study.

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| Change socio-cultural norms regarding gender attitudes and masculinities that condone gender inequality and violence | Men with gender equitable attitudes are significantly less likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence. Therefore, positively changing gender-related attitudes actually matters for the prevention of VAWG. | ▪ Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing boy’s and men’s attitudes that condone gender inequality and violence  
▪ Change social and cultural norms that condone gender inequality and violence through comprehensive media awareness campaigns |
| Address ideologies of male sexual entitlement | Dominant notions of masculinity in Bangladesh are linked to toughness, honour, sexual prowess and dominance, which promote violence against women and girls. | ▪ Promote new notions of masculinity associated with non-violence, respect and equality |
| Promote gender and social equality | Many men do not use violence and show more equitable gender attitudes. | ▪ Work with men who do not perpetrate VAWG as allies in prevention interventions |
| | Sexual violence (SV) is rooted in ideologies of male sexual entitlement - more than 75% of men who had raped were motivated by sexual entitlement. One third of men who sexually abused women were taking out their anger or punishing them, and two thirds were doing it for ‘fun’. A large proportion of men believe that ‘women cannot refuse sex with their husbands’, that ‘men need sex more than women do’ and that ‘women who have been raped are in part to blame’. | ▪ Develop and implement school-based programmes that work with young boys and girls to promote healthy, equitable intimate relationships where sex is always consensual  
▪ Develop, pass and implement legislation that criminalises marital rape |
| | The strong link between gender inequitable attitudes and perpetration of VAWG shows that violence is rooted in gender inequality and unequal power relations between men and women and between certain groups of men. | ▪ Promote women’s empowerment (e.g., microfinance and gender-equality training such as the Stepping Stones and SASSI packages)  
▪ Implement more gender equitable policies (e.g., paternity leave to promote men’s care-giving roles, women’s access to health care, property, education, political participation and representation) |
<p>| | Men who have completed secondary level education or higher have more gender equitable attitudes and are significantly less likely to perpetrate IPV. | ▪ Promote attainment of secondary level education of boys, alongside education of girls |</p>
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<td>Promote gender and social equality</td>
<td>Dowry demand in marriage increases the likelihood of partner violence three times in the rural area.</td>
<td>Ensure a comprehensive policy response that includes implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act and addresses underlying socio-economic reasons for its continued use.</td>
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<td>Men with high work-related stress are twice as likely to perpetrate partner violence in the urban area.</td>
<td>▪ Develop and implement policies and programmes that address men's unemployment, underemployment and work-related stress.</td>
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<td>End Impunity for Violence against Women</td>
<td>The majority of men who committed SV do not experience consequences such as guilt or worry about possible repercussions. Less than 10% of men who have raped faced any legal consequences for their actions.</td>
<td>▪ Achieve proper implementation of domestic violence act. ▪ Implement legal and criminal justice systems to prevent further violence, facilitate recovery and ensure access to justice (e.g., specialized police units, restraining orders and multi-agency sexual violence response teams). ▪ Promote non-violent social norms by sending strong messages that VAWG will not be tolerated. ▪ Work with government to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), including removing reservations to Article 16.</td>
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<td>End Violence Against Children</td>
<td>Physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children was found to be common and is associated with perpetration of violence against women later in life. It is not only physical and sexual violence that needs to be addressed - men's experience of emotional abuse during childhood increased the likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence twice in both the sites.</td>
<td>▪ Implement child protection laws and end corporal punishment in the home. ▪ Work with government to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to prevent child maltreatment. ▪ Implement school-based training to help children recognize and avoid potentially sexually abusive situations. ▪ Implement parent education programmes to prevent child maltreatment. ▪ Implement bullying prevention programmes.</td>
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<td>Specifically target at-risk groups</td>
<td>Nearly half of all men who reported using sexual violence first forced a woman into sex when they were children (i.e., aged less than 19).</td>
<td>▪ Target primary prevention efforts at younger age groups, particularly boys (e.g., through school-based programmes to prevent violence in early relationships).</td>
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<td>Men who had transactional sex were two times more likely in the urban area, and three times more likely in the rural area, to perpetrate intimate partner violence.</td>
<td>▪ Work specifically with groups who engage in transactional sex to change attitudes and behaviors around sexual entitlement.</td>
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<td>Men who experience abuse as children are significantly more likely to perpetrate violence against women later in life.</td>
<td>▪ Develop and implement interventions for children and adolescents subjected to child maltreatment and/or exposed to intimate partner violence.</td>
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Men’s Peretration of Violence against Female Intimate Partners in Bangladesh

Previous research based on male and female reports shows high levels of male violence perpetrated against female intimate partners. This study — *Men’s Attitudes and Practices regarding Gender and Violence against Women in Bangladesh* — is the first study of men entirely devoted to understanding male attitudes and practices regarding gender and violence against women in one urban and one rural area of Bangladesh. Data were collected through a survey conducted in 2011 of 1254 men in an urban site and 1146 men in a rural site representing those areas.

The study was conducted by icddr,b as part of ‘The Change Project: Understanding gender, masculinities and power to prevent gender-based violence’, coordinated by Partners for Prevention: Working to Prevent Gender-based Violence, a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV regional programme for Asia and the Pacific. The study was funded by UNFPA.

Key findings

*Level of male-perpetrated violence against female intimate partners:*

- About 52 percent of men in both urban and rural sites reported ever physically assaulting female intimate partners.
- Overall 52 percent of urban and 46 percent of rural men reported ever emotionally abusing their female intimate partners.
- About 10 percent of urban and 15 percent of rural men reported ever forcing their intimate partners into sex.
- The majority of sexual violence against women occurs within marriage.

*Risk and protective factors associated with violence perpetration:*

- Men with secondary and higher education are half as likely to perpetrate physical/sexual violence against an intimate partner. Even some secondary education has a similar effect in the rural area.
- Men with high work-related stress were twice as likely to perpetrate partner violence in the urban area.
- Dowry demand in marriage increased the likelihood of violence three times in the rural area.
- Men with gender inequitable attitudes were significantly more likely to perpetrate physical violence against female intimate partners.
- Men with gender inequitable attitudes regarding sex were significantly more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against women.
- Rural men who experienced sexual violence during childhood were two times more likely to abuse their intimate partners.

* Some findings in this section are the result of additional analysis following the publication of the report *Men’s Attitudes and Practices regarding Gender and Violence against Women in Bangladesh.*
Men's experience of emotional abuse during childhood increased the likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence twice in both the sites.

Men who had transactional sex were two times more likely in the urban area, and three times more likely in the rural area, to perpetrate intimate partner violence.

Ideas for action - Preventing violence against women in Bangladesh

Promote gender and social equality, including through policy development and implementation:

- Promote attainment of secondary level education of boys, alongside education of girls.
- Develop and implement policies and programmes that address men's work-related stress.
- Improve implementation of domestic violence laws.
- Ensure implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act and address underlying socio-economic reasons for its continued use.
- Develop, pass and implement legislation that criminalizes marital rape.

Change socio-cultural norms and develop gender equitable attitudes amongst boys and men:

- Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing boys and men's gender attitudes that condone gender inequality and violence (e.g., gender-equality training such as the Stepping Stones and SASAI packages).
- Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing men's gender inequitable attitudes regarding sex, and in particular challenge the norm of male sexual entitlement.
- Reach out to men who do not perpetrate violence against women as allies in interventions against violence.

Prevent and intervene in child maltreatment:

- Implement school-based training to help children recognize and avoid potentially sexually abusive situations.
- Address violence against children within and outside home to break the cycle of violence.
- Develop and implement school-based programmes that work with young boys and girls to promote healthy, equitable intimate relationships where sex is always consensual.
Men's Attitudes on Gender Equality in Bangladesh

Even-increasing evidence shows that gender-inequitable and violence-condoning attitudes of men are associated with perpetration of violence against women, leading to multiple adverse outcomes for women, children, families, communities and societies. This finding highlights the importance of measuring and understanding men's attitudes in different cultural contexts. This study – Men's Attitudes and Practices regarding Gender and Violence against Women in Bangladesh – is the first study of men entirely devoted to understanding men's attitudes and practices regarding gender and violence against women in one urban and one rural area of Bangladesh. Data were collected through a survey conducted in 2011 of 1254 men in an urban site and 1146 men in a rural site representing those areas.

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Key findings

Study participants were asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with several gender-related statements. The survey found that:

- Despite some variations, gender inequitable attitudes are very common among men.
- Men almost universally support at least one gender inequitable statement.
- About 20-29 percent of men have highly gender inequitable attitudes.
- About 1-5 percent of men have highly gender equitable attitudes.

Men with gender equitable attitudes are significantly less likely to perpetrate physical and sexual violence against female intimate partners.

Risk and protective factors associated with men's gender equitable attitudes:

- Secondary and higher education increases the likelihood of men being more gender equitable. Even some secondary education has a similar effect in the rural area.
- Physical violence victimization of men during childhood reduces the likelihood of men having gender equitable attitudes.
- Higher socio-economic status is associated with greater gender equitable attitudes.
Ideas for action – Preventing violence against women in Bangladesh

Change socio-cultural norms and develop gender equitable attitudes amongst boys and men:
- Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing boys and men's gender attitudes that condone gender inequality and violence (e.g., gender-equality training such as the Stepping Stones or SASSI packages).
- Change social and cultural gender norms that condone gender inequality and violence through comprehensive media awareness campaigns.
- Reach out to men who do not perpetrate violence against women as allies in interventions against violence.

Prevent and intervene in child maltreatment:
- Implement child protection laws and end corporal punishment in the home.
- Implement parenting programmes that promote non-violent means of disciplining children.

Promote gender and social equality, including through policy development and implementation:
- Implement more gender equitable policies (e.g., paternity leave to promote men's care giving roles, women's access to health care, property, education, political participation and representation).
- Promote attainment of secondary and tertiary level education of boys, alongside education of girls.
Men's Perpetration of Sexual Violence against Women in Bangladesh

Previous research based on male and female reports shows high levels of within marriage male perpetrated sexual violence against women in Bangladesh. However, to date there has been no study in Bangladesh of men's perpetration of sexual violence against women regardless of partnership status. This study — Men's Attitudes and Practices regarding Gender and Violence against Women in Bangladesh — has addressed this gap in knowledge. Data were collected through a survey conducted in 2011 of 1254 men in an urban site and 1146 men in a rural site representing those areas.

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Key findings

Level and pattern of male-perpetrated sexual violence against women (partner &/or non-partner)

- About 10 percent of urban and 14 percent of rural men ever perpetrated sexual violence against women.
- Non-partner sexual violence was perpetrated by 4 percent of urban men and 3 percent of rural men.
- Gang rape was perpetrated by 1 percent of urban and 2 percent of rural men.
- About three-quarters of the perpetrators sexually abused one woman; 17-23 percent of men sexually abused 2-3 women; and 2-3 percent of men sexually abused more than 10 women.
- Most of the perpetrators of intimate partner violence victimized women many times.
- More than 40 percent of men who use sexual violence, first forced a woman into sex when they were children (i.e., aged less than 19).

Motivations for men's perpetration of sexual violence against women (partner &/or non-partner)

- About 80 percent of men who had forced a woman into sex were motivated by sexual entitlement.
- 29-35 percent of men sexually abused women for taking out their anger or for punishing them.
- About 57-67 percent of men sexually abused women just for fun.
- Gender inequitable attitudes regarding sex increased the likelihood of men's perpetration of sexual violence against women.
Men's reaction after perpetrating sexual violence against women (partner &/or non-partner)

- About 43-51 percent of the perpetrators did not have any concerns or reactions
- About 37-39 percent reported feeling guilty
- About 28-29 percent of the perpetrators in both sites were worried about being found out
- About 15-25 percent of men who had perpetrated sexual violence faced any legal consequences

Ideas for action – Preventing sexual violence against women in Bangladesh

- Develop and implement school-based programmes that work with young boys and girls to promote healthy, equitable intimate relationships where sex is always consensual. Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing boys and men’s gender attitudes that condone gender inequality and violence (e.g., gender-equality training such as the Stepping Stones and SASA! packages).
- Develop and implement interventions targeted towards changing men’s gender inequitable attitudes regarding sex, and in particular challenge the norm of male sexual entitlement.
- Adopt different approaches for different groups of perpetrators, to address variations in motivations and reactions after perpetration of sexual violence.
- Reach out to men who do not perpetrate violence against women as allies in interventions against violence.