New study reveals that men with negative attitudes towards women are more likely to use violence

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Dhaka, Bangladesh - Dhaka, Bangladesh - A new study has found that men who have negative attitudes towards women are more likely to use violence, affecting not only the women for whom they have violated but also the children in their lives, families and the community at large. The survey - conducted by icddr,b, with UNFPA and Partners for Prevention - is the first study ever conducted in Bangladesh that targets understanding men’s attitudes and practices regarding gender and violence against women.

The survey found that men almost universally support at least one gender inequitable statement, and about 20-29 percent of men support several gender inequitable statements. The survey further found that men with gender inequitable attitudes are significantly more likely to perpetrate physical and sexual violence against female intimate partners.

“These findings suggest that positively changing gender-related attitudes is a key factor for preventing violence against women,” said Dr. Ruchira Tabassum Naved from icddr,b. Mr. Arthur Erken, UNFPA added, “We need to nurture more gender equitable young men – through our individual actions, through positive male role models, through effective policies and education programmes and we need to do this from a young age, and we need to start now.”

Please see below some of the survey’s results, which highlight the gender inequality prevalent in Bangladesh:

• Over 60 percent of men were of the opinion that at times a woman deserves to be beaten.
• Half of the urban men (50 percent) and the majority of the rural men (65 percent) believe a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.
• About 78 percent of urban men and 92 percent of rural men believed that a woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.

These findings only tell part of the story. In addition to the association between men’s attitudes and perpetration of violence against female intimate partners, other key findings include:

• About 52 percent of men in both urban and rural sites reported ever physically assaulting female intimate partners.
• About 80 percent of men who had forced a woman into sex were motivated by sexual entitlement.
• Less than 10 percent of men who had perpetrated sexual violence feared any legal consequences.
• Men’s experience of emotional abuse during childhood increased the likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence twice in both the sites, and rural men who experienced sexual violence during childhood are two times more likely to abuse their intimate partners.
“The study also revealed that men who have been abused as a child are two times more likely to be violent against women later on in life,” said Dr. Naved. She further said, “We need to break this cycle of violence, we need to ensure that all our children have the chance to live in a peaceful home and the chance to grow into confident, happy, positive and peaceful adults with a very real opportunity to contribute to the social, economic and cultural fabric of their home and their country.”

For more information, contact:

Ruchira Tabassum Naved, PhD
Scientist, icddr,b
E-mail: ruchira@icddrb.org

Caroline Liou
Communications Specialist, Partners for Prevention: Working to Prevent Gender-based Violence
UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women & UNV Regional Joint Programme for Asia and the Pacific
Tel: +66 2 304 9100 ext 5016 or +66 86 067 3228
E-mail: caroline.liou@one.un.org