

BRIEFING NOTE

EDUCATING MEN AND BOYS ABOUT MASCULINITIES IN INDIA TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



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About Integral

InteGRAL, Intersectional Gender Research Advocacy and Learning is a gender-focused research firm based in India and Indonesia with a focus on Asia. We combine our lived experiences and academic insights to help create a more gender equitable world. Established in 2020 during the global Covid-19 pandemic, we have, through our research, tried to contribute to the conversation around how a more feminist world can be shaped.

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Key findings

- Various interventions that aim to effect norm change among men and boys introduce multiple realities of gender and sexuality in an attempt to challenge the dominant cultural concept of masculinity. This concept includes male privileges and the complex power dynamic that serve as norm maintainers for discrimination and violence against other genders.
- The long-term success of norm-change initiatives indicates the need to address multi-level challenges from transforming individual behaviours and social relations, to structures. While changes in personal attitudes might form the building blocks for more gender-equitable societies, resistance in the patriarchal structure of authorities could hinder systemic transformation. Therefore, effective masculinity education must engage with citizen action to address VAWG at the local level
- In reframing norms, education strategies need to foster an alternative vision of masculinity that is embedded in the regional context. The findings show that this can be done in various ways, including through the use of local feminist histories, local role models and local cultural references.
- The alternative visions of masculinity identified in this research include the idea of a man who rejects violence as a norm, is self-aware, appreciates diversity in others and contributes to the family. These visions are grounded in Indian feminist struggle that challenge gendered labour, violence and the negation of physical differences.
- The key to masculinity norm change is to build on changes that are already happening through alliances with the men and boys who have strong gender-equitable attitudes. Alliances of this kind present an opportunity to reach a wider audience more rapidly. It must include efforts to assess the programme implementation, impact and follow-up to sustain long-term engagement with programme participants.

Introduction

The research project will analyse the curriculum and pedagogies of organisations in India that educate men and boys about masculinities with a focus on reducing VAWG. The research findings will be presented through this paper followed by a repository of methods that can be used by other organisations aspiring to work with men and boys in diverse educational settings. In India for several years organisations have worked with women and girls to empower them in preventing and responding to violence. In 2012, however, after the Nirbhaya case, which involved the rape of a young woman on a moving bus, the conversation turned towards the role of men and boys (Dutta and Sircar, 2013). Civil society led by feminist activists began to question societal norms that hold women and girls responsible while discussing punishments for men as perpetrators of sexual violence but do little to directly address the norms of masculinity that enable such violence (Dutta and Sircar, 2013). The Justice Verma Commission set up in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya case suggested that children's school education should address the persistent problems of gender inequality (Government of India, [GOI] 2012). Since then there has been some movement towards involving men and boys as a solution to the problem of VAWG through education and training programmes. The problem of VAWG still needs attention and a renewed focus, especially as, along with the Covid-19 pandemic, a shadow pandemic of domestic violence has raged on (Krishnakumar and Verma, 2021).

The paper starts by outlining our methodology and research approach, followed by the frameworks that underpin our analysis of alternative masculinities proposed by grassroots education organisations in India. Then, we present our findings on literature that explores the historical context of masculinity in India, as well as several key factors of gender education programmes in India. This is then used to inform our findings on data collection that considers various education strategies aiming to empower boys and young men to envision alternative forms of masculinity and thereby challenge and transform gender norms that perpetuate VAWG.

Methodology

This study used a fairly detailed literature review followed by conversations to gather ideas regarding teaching men and boys about masculinity and VAWG.

The literature review was used to gain an understanding of what masculinity means in India, its historical origins and current manifestations, the effectiveness of existing programmes for men and boys and finally, what it would mean to adopt an alternative masculinity. The literature review was conducted using certain key words like 'masculinity', 'colonialism', 'India', 'education', 'VAWG', 'gender-based violence (GBV)' and 'schooling'. India was the main location of our research, and we used only peer-researched articles for our study. In all, 10 studies were chosen to inform our research on effective educative practices.

For this study we also partnered with four organisations that run programmes for men and boys with the aim of reducing VAWG. In each of the organisations we spoke to programme designers and implementers (staff), as well as participants.

The main question that we explored was **what are some best practices in educating men and boys in changing norms around VAWG?** The response to this question will enable us to compile examples of best practice taken from available literature and interviews of participants and staff, both curricular and pedagogical, which can then be used by organisations who are interested in educational programmes on alternative masculinities. Along with the main research questions, there are three allied questions that we aim to answer.

First, we aim to understand in what ways is the education or training embedded in the local context? This question will assess some historical and sociopolitical factors that influence the development of masculinity in the region. It will help us gain a nuanced understanding of what masculinity is and how it can be addressed. The many influences on masculinity include rites of passage, the impact of larger cultures, economic factors and religion. These influences can create complex identities and different expressions of masculinity. By situating education in the local context we avoid treating masculinity as a monolith and, at the same time, answer critics who believe that gender equality is a western concept.

The second question seeks to understand how the curriculum empowers men and boys to effect norm changes in society to enable gender equality in the long term. Contrary to the view held by some that individuals can change social conditions, to bring about more lasting changes there is a need to build solidarities and movements that can influence a shift in norms (Gilbertson, 2018; Harper et al, 2020). Norms take a long time to change and need several concurrent changes in society as institutions often mimic society's prevailing norms, thereby influencing the perception of what is possible and what is not (Harper et al, 2020).

The third question aims to explore the broad themes around which the alternative masculinity is being created. Conceptually, hegemonic masculinity operates in the legitimisation of men's dominant position and subordination of women (Swain, 2006) especially in patriarchal societies. We believe this conception legitimises VAWG in the minds of male perpetrators. We want to explore how alternative constructs of masculinity can effectively question, challenge or resist the traditional definition to include a more egalitarian concept of manhood and one that is not linked with violence.

Research approach and design

This research used a qualitative approach and a feminist lens as, in principle, we aimed to generate evidence that can help redress the power imbalance between people of different genders. Despite the plurality and intersectionality of gender that can be explored from a feminist perspective, feminist research itself can be defined as grounded in women's experience, and how it feels to live in unjust gendered relationships (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). The experience of unjust gendered relationships as an epistemological background connects various gender-related injustices with significant political and ethical implications for women and other gender minorities. As this research shows, addressing layers of gender-based violence through the organisation's pedagogy is also grounded in the way women are perceived and treated in society. Thus, the pedagogies have created spaces to examine discriminatory gender norms and to reflect on negative forms of masculinities among the beneficiaries, as we will discuss in the findings.

In this research, a feminist qualitative method was used to build knowledge using the experiences of participants and learning from academic sources. Although repeated continuous interactions were not possible with the research participants, ongoing exchanges were built into the data collection processes. The interview and FGDs that were used, were conducted in such a way that evidence was gathered through conversation, questions, clarifications and corrections. All FGDs took place in person while some interviews were conducted on the phone.

Analysis of the pedagogical model is grounded in feminist pedagogy which emphasises the epistemological validity of personal experience, often connected to challenging the dominant notion of authority (Crabtree, et al, 2009). The exploration of pedagogical models will look at the components of the curriculum which interrogate essentialist ideas underlying the nature of gender identity (ibid) and thus illuminate fluid construction of masculinity and femininity. We will highlight how practices of inclusivity, reflexivity and liberatory learning could provide opportunities for participants to link their personal experiences to norms present in the political, economic, social and cultural domains. In doing so, we interviewed programme implementers and participants to assess the positive potential of education practices embedded in curricular and pedagogical practices to accelerate norm changes across internal, interpersonal, institutional and societal levels (Marcus, 2018).

Sample

Interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were used in order to collect data from organisational staff and participants. The details of the four organisations are as follows:

Organisation	Programme Description	Overall aim of the organisation
Organisation 1 (O1), Mumbai, India	Masculinity programme for boys who are 12-14 years of age, enrolled in low income private and Government schools.	To provide a leadership programme for adolescent girls and boys with a focus on gender.
Organisation 2 (O2), Mumbai, India	Primarily works with adolescent girls to improve their education and skills. They conduct a programme with male police officers and young men from colleges to create awareness around VAWG. Can be categorised as a Dalit feminist organisation*.	To develop young marginalised girls' life outcomes through support with education.

Organisation 3 (03), Pune, India	Works to promote the rights of inhabitants in cantonment areas of Pune. Along with advocacy for the change in laws of cantonments, they work with men in the area, encouraging them to join the small savings scheme programmes and to enrol their children in private schools, according to the Government's Right to Education Act 2009, which allocates seats to economically weaker sections. Can be categorised as a Dalit feminist organisation*.	To advocate for the abolition of cantonment areas and support civilians living in those areas.
Organisation 4 (04), Delhi, India	Works with people of diverse gender expressions, through multiple programmes in different states of India. The programmes that this research was interested in were a comprehensive sexuality education programme for 9-12 year old children and a 'train the trainer' model with a section addressing violence and masculinities.	To empower youth to understand their rights.

Sample table

Organisation	Staff/ Tool	Programme participants/ Tool	Total Interviews	Total FGDs
01	2/ individual interviews with one female and one male staff member	3/ boys/individual interviews, by telephone	5	0
02	2/ focus group discussions 2/ focus group discussions all female staff	5/ men/focus group discussions, in person	0	3
03	4/ focused group discussions two females and two males	4/ men/individual Interviews, in person	4	4
04	2/ individual interviews with one female and one male staff member	3 men/individual interviews, by telephone	5	0

All of these organisations were chosen through purposive and snowball sampling¹. Organisations, O1 and O4, are well known in the area of masculinity education in India and were well suited to this research. O2 and O3 were chosen on the recommendation of a colleague who was part of the same network where O2 and O3 were members. All four organisations are explicitly feminist, and O1 and O4 are led by men. O2 and O3 are led by women, and are Dalit feminist organisations, as their feminism is influenced by the intersecting identities of being Dalit and women. Women who belong to lower castes are doubly disadvantaged due to their gender as well as their lower caste status. Often known as Dalit-Bahujan, these castes comprise of non-Brahmanical castes, that together form a majority of people, who are treated as subordinate in the caste order. Therefore, the struggle of Dalit-Bahujan women is different from that of upper-caste feminists as they resist the additional subordination of their caste position (see Paik, 2021; Rege, 2018). O2 and O3 in our research identify as Dalit feminist organisations².

All staff members were interviewed and some participants took part in FGDs while others participated in interviews depending on their availability. As there were several restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic in India, some interviews were conducted by telephone while others were done in person. Staff members were interviewed individually as we needed as many diverse perspectives as possible regarding the experiences of designing and delivering the curriculum. In the case of O2 and O3, the staff took part in FGDs instead of interviews, as these allowed each staff members to support each other where difficulties with Marathi and Hindi was an issue. FGDs were conducted to allow boys and men to speak on sensitive topics with relative ease (Wilkinson, 1998) as a camaraderie developed between the participants allowing for a more honest and free exchange of information. Given also that the research focuses on masculinity as constructed through relationships and prevalent norms, FGDs allow an insight into what is considered acceptable.

Following the interview, the audio/video recordings were translated and transcribed and curriculums were analysed. We identified patterns and themes within the data to capture important information in relation to the research questions. Although all interviews, FGDs and curriculum documents have influenced the findings, only the most relevant excerpts have been presented in the analysis.

In order to safeguard the participants of the research, several ethical principles were followed. Prior to the interview, all participants were given ample information on the study in the language that they preferred. We refrained from probing into sensitive questions regarding the nature of violence, as we did not want to create an atmosphere where violence could be discussed casually. All research participants provided written or verbal consent to being recorded prior to taking part in the research. All data is stored safely to be accessed only by the researchers. All identifying details are masked. The organisations and participants were provided an honorarium to compensate for their time.

¹ i.e. we purposely sought out organisations that work with men and boys to reduce VAWG and we also asked selected organisations to introduce us to their colleagues in the field.

² The organisations follow the teachings of Dalit-Bahujan icons, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, Jotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule.

Conceptual frameworks

Visions of masculinity and alternative masculinity

Connell in (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) argued that masculinity refers to the multiple positions of men in the gender order characterized largely by dominance and control over women and embedded and normalised through interaction with boys and men. Various evidence-based prevention programmes found that the violent behaviours are rooted in the expected practices and entitlements derived from hegemonic masculinity that ideal men are strong, tough and exert control over women and their bodies, being heterosexual and sexually dominant (Jewkes et al, 2015). The strategies offered by the study done by Jewkes et al in changing social norms is a way to alternative masculinity, that is opened through acknowledgement that multiple ways of being a man exist, and there are shifts to men's positions and experiences with no homogenous portrayal of ideal masculinity. Part of this is to have a critical analysis of men's privilege and use of power and work this both with women and men.

Envisioning alternative masculinity requires a thorough understanding of what masculinity represents in most societies, how it contributes to gender inequality and gender-based violence, and what has been done to challenge and transform it. Since gender norms and social norms are found at the societal level through laws, conventions and institutions, then internalised and enacted by people, it implies that approaches to norm change must take into account both tangible and intangible institutions and structures (Harper et al, 2020).

A study by Chakraborty et al (2020) shows that in order for a transformation to be achieved, visions of alternative masculinities must be rooted in a deep understanding of social context. Thus, a closer look at men's lived realities and material conditions is required, rather than relying heavily on changing attitudes and behaviours (ibid.). This vision pushes for a contextual and relational approach to engaging men that enables a critique of patriarchal structures and hegemonic masculinities while also aligning with women's anti-violence struggle. To explore the vision for alternative masculinities in this research, we will use Bhog et al (2012) framework that identified five feminist struggles through history: (i) the negation of difference and diversity in bodies, (ii) the identities of nation and state, (iii) gendered labour, (iv) the tussle between tradition and modernity (v) nature and violence. We will use this framework to understand better to what extent the alternative masculinity introduced in education is addressing these five contextual feminist conflicts, especially, for example, the dichotomy of public and private spaces as occupied by working men and women, respectively. Chakraborty et al (2020) show through their study that men are hesitant to intervene in domestic violence or 'personal' fights, as these are deemed to occur in private spaces.

Visions for alternative masculinity in education space and structures

Since masculinities comprise an overarching set of attributes, behaviour and ideology, an alternative masculinity requires transformation through multiple changes across the social ecology, including at the internal, interpersonal, institutional and societal level (Jewkes et al, 2015). Embedding visions for alternative masculinity in education needs to go beyond engaging men and boys in existing gender equality education programmes. It needs to use educational settings to engage people of all genders in promoting gender equality in and out of schools. Harper et al (2020) emphasise that addressing structural and material conditions such as poverty and inequality would not bring hoped-for returns

without focusing on gender norms. For example, providing greater incentives for girls and boys to attend school would only work if they feel that the education is of good quality, improves their lives, and if gender-based violence within schools is addressed.

We will be using the ALIGN Norms Change Framework (2020) to see how norms have changed over time. Using large data sets, as well as interview data from Nepal and Uganda, the framework identifies how current norms change. There are various forces of changes which are influenced by 'norm maintainers', 'systemic barriers' and 'patriarchal brakes'. Norm maintainers are ways in which societies and cultures encourage adherence to norms, such as rewards for following a norm and punishments for deviating from norms. Systemic barriers are those factors in a person's life that do not allow norms to change. For example, poverty and lack of access to resources do not allow people to change the way things are done. The patriarchal brakes are invisible and institutionalised and therefore largely unquestioned and difficult to change. They include the supposed superiority of males, and a range of historical factors that maintain this superiority, some of which may even be enshrined in law. All of these factors are further complicated by intersecting inequalities that ensure people's lives remain unchanged and unfold according to norms. This framework will help us find in what ways masculinity education can hasten norm change.

Findings

Literature review

In this section we describe the historical and socio-political development of masculinity in India, linking our analysis to the relevant contextual factors that influence different expressions of masculinity along with the associated structural and institutional inequalities. Then, we explore several key forces of norm change in the existing education programmes in India to examine the gap in the effective strategy and practices of four organisations involved in the study.

Masculinity in India

The study of masculinity has attracted both practical and conceptual debates (Connell, 2005). The concept of masculinity is criticised for imposing a false sex-gender dichotomy and ignoring the issues of power and domination underlying gendered power relations among men themselves. Connell (2005) further argued that the interplay between body and social processes has been one of the central themes of masculinity research and, therefore, masculinities should not be limited to a single pattern of dominance of men over women, but may differ according to gender relations in particular social settings.

It is important then for this study to establish an approach to gender and masculinity based on contemporary knowledge which has explored gender and power relations in local, regional and global settings. At the local level, the various models of 'manliness or boyness' are organised in hierarchical forms based on the power dynamics existing in the everyday interaction of families, organisations and local communities (Connell in Swain, 2006). At the regional level, hegemonic masculinity is represented through the production of exemplars of masculinity (e.g. professional sports stars) and symbols that exerts dominance against which many boys measure themselves or must conform to (ibid). This level shapes a collective sense of masculinity and thus becomes the cultural framework of daily habits and interactions (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). On the last point, regional and local constructions of hegemonic masculinity are shaped by the articulation of gender systems with global processes constructed in the arenas of world politics, transnational business, media, global market relations, migration and ethnic/ cultural conflict. (ibid).

By shifting the focus from individual-level gender differences to 'patterns of socially constructed gender relations' in the global society, masculinity studies are rooted in the socio-historical domain. The geopolitical process of conquest and colonisation explains the formation of early masculinity in India through the exercise of power as a two-way process of contestation and collaboration between the colonisers and the colonised. This allowed the establishment of their hegemony using the internal hierarchies of political economy and the structures of gender, class, and castes, which have mutated and persisted into modern times. The emergence of masculine Hinduism is a result of the Indian middle-class identification with colonial interests and racist attitudes which contrasted British 'manliness' with 'effeminate' Bengalis framed as non-violent, subservient, superstitious and uncultured, together with the exclusivist policy of the colonial regime (ibid). This resulted in an ideal notion of manhood, combining moral, physical and spiritual strength represented by the elite upper caste that demanded equality with the British (ibid). The ideal nationalist continues to be represented in contemporary Indian society as the revival of former glory and thus is a key element in India's post-colonial reform and the restructuring of its society (ibid).

This focus on the colonial construction of masculinity provides new ways of understanding the relation between imperial ideas and the distribution of masculine attributes within Indian society.

The creation of nationalist ideologies is rooted in the patriarchal societal system woven around the desired qualities of masculinity taken from upper/ruling class, powerful and physically strong males (Kushawa, 2014). This nation-building project is encoded in the logic of Hindu high-caste patriarchal elites that remove representation of women from nationhood narratives. Masculine Hinduism imposes norms that limit women's freedom and prescribe their roles as heroic mother, chaste wife or celibate, masculinised warrior (Banarjee, 2005). These norms influence how men relate to women while simultaneously influencing gender relations.

The nation-building project placed a premium on masculinity that has been successfully entrenched, not only in the patriotic discourse, but also in the ideology of the ideal man in contemporary Indian society. The images of idealised 'strong men' are widely exhibited through male protagonist representation in popular Hindi cinema. Chattopadhyay (2011) suggested that popular cinema in India has provided rich cultural texts for understanding the legitimisation of ideological and political hegemony in the post-colonial Indian public sphere. The narratives of popular Hindi cinema and television, therefore, reflect gender ideologies that have long asserted masculine dominance over women in Indian society. The imperial formation of masculinity can also fashion the political ideology of nation, race, class and gender in modern India. This is reflected in Narendra Modi's right-wing populist governance with its imagery of an authentic Hindu nation in India. Modi's 'manly' leadership style embodies the masculine public persona characterised as efficient, dynamic, potent and capable of overcoming all opposition through sheer force of personality to strike hard at external enemies (such as Pakistan and China) and internal threats ('Muslim terrorists', most obviously) (Srivastava, 2015). Modi-style masculinity promotes older versions of Indian masculinist discourse which speak to the elites as the dominant and domineering figures (ibid).

Various studies have explored how these colonial constructions of masculinity impose themselves on everyday lives and affect the very foundations of Indian society. The powerful construct of Hindu masculinity fosters a culture of male privilege and virility. In the family domain, gendered practices start at an early age in which the structure of children's everyday lives are simultaneously generational and gendered (Mukherjee, 2020). Boys frequently cited the role of social gender norms inside the home, such as helping out in household duties, while social and popular media continue to reinforce the internalisation of heteronormative masculinity that legitimises the domination of women and others (ibid). Male privilege in this sense is often associated with self-entitlement and violence, i.e. domestic violence, perpetual fear of homosexuals, etc. (ibid). A historical approach to the construction of masculinity has enabled a wider exploration of power and gender through various axes of domination and subordination. It has revealed not only the patriarchal politics of nationalism but also colonial masculinity encoded in the gender system and in the entire landscape of social relations in India.

Mapping strategic approach to masculinities education programmes in India

Several organisations in India have aimed to work with men to improve the lives of women. Their work has included efforts to reduce VAWG, increase the use of contraception, involve men in childcare and nutrition, and reduce sex determination. Although most programmes, both governmental and NGO-led, have intervened directly with women, there is now a shift to engaging with men to reduce gender-based violence and VAWG (Casey et al, 2010). Globally, several programmes exist that consider men and boys as equal partners in reducing VAWG. Factors, such as the design, type and length of programmes, and engagement with feminist histories and women's movements, have contributed to their success (Flood, 2011).

The key measures of a programme's success are if the changes in men's behaviours are sustained in the long term following its completion. Defining these parameters required a multi-level approach

where gender norms are seen as part of a more structured and systemic environment. This does not, however, undermine the multiple and particular achievements of various grassroots organisations in addressing VAWG through gender transformative discourses within their communities. The long-term effects of these efforts need to be evaluated through a participatory design which works for the communities themselves. Programmes in India that have aimed to reduce the incidents of VAWG by working with men include Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA), Do Kadam Barabari Ke Ore, Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW), Gender Equity Movements in Schools (GEMS), Coaching Boys into Men, and Men Against Rape and Discrimination (MARD). These programmes have focused on reduction of intimate partner violence, rapes, sexual assault and other forms of domestic violence. Multiple factors can contribute to an effective intervention in diverse settings with diverse male participants. Some of these programmes are reviewed in this section.

Transforming social relations and structures

Gender-transformative programmes are those that fundamentally change the power relations between people of all genders to make them more equitable. Geeta Rao Gupta first introduced the term 'gender-transformative' while describing programmes and interventions in health that aim to redistribute power between genders to bring about equitable health outcomes for all (Pederson et al, 2014). By extension then, gender-transformative programmes for men aimed at reducing VAWG are those that might radically change the way men see themselves in relation to women, as well as those that change the way men define their masculinity, leading to behavioural change. Some programmes have been able to address men's relations to women through their role as fathers, partners and brothers. Das and Singh (2014) viewed these programmes' long association with men and violence through their study and identified a few strategies that can address violence. In their experience, wide-ranging partnerships with feminist organisations, support to participants in the medium term in implementing changed behaviours and sustained engagement with programme participants all contribute to programme success (ibid).

Das and Singh (2014) encountered some problems while facilitating participants' engagement with feminist ideas and the harms of patriarchy, because the debate resulted in a 'hierarchy of oppressions', as the men felt themselves to be equal victims of the patriarchy, thereby diluting the awareness of their privileges as men in patriarchal societies. Therefore, discussions with men around VAWG that adequately engage with feminist movements and groups tend to bring about an understanding of structures that sustain subordination of other genders to a greater degree as they engage more effectively with the notion of patriarchy (IDS, 2008). The understanding of structures that disproportionately affect women can lead men to taking on more activism and building solidarities with peers. This can not only result in more long-lasting changes but also help create a supportive peer group that can help them navigate the resistance that they will face while changing traditional gendered behaviours (Casey et al, 2016; Das and Singh, 2014; Flood, 2011; Gilbertson, 2018). Jewkes et al (2014) similarly showed that programmes that aimed simply to change men's attitudes and behaviours were not successful in the long term, while those that addressed social relations, structures and norms underpinning unequal gender relations fared better in bringing about lasting behaviour change.

Addressing multi-level challenges: individual, organisational and community

From the aforementioned literature we acknowledge that various programmes are in place that aim to transform how men and boys view themselves and what kind of men they would like to be. These include programmes presented as sexuality education with components showing the difference between sex and gender. These programmes then deconstructed masculinities and the role of violence in those definitions. Social norms and cultural expectations play an important role in men's choice of being violent as an expression of their masculinity. Fulu et al (2014) noted this in their

multi-country research where intimate partner violence was closely related to gender socialisation. Similarly, Das and Singh (2014) identified that culture and histories, militarisation and colonisation, all contribute to individual conceptions of what it means to be a man. These definitions when interacting with other identities such as caste, class, religion or socioeconomic status, can result in contests to gain superiority within the gender hierarchy of that society. Although in some cases contests for superiority can result from men themselves, in others these behaviours are introduced to boys at a formative age through violent rites of passage (Connell, 1985) or ritualised sexual violence in schools and universities or through peer groups that affirm violent-supportive thoughts (Flood and Pease, 2008). Whitaker et al (2006) have, therefore, suggested that violence prevention programmes delivered in schools seem to be effective in changing men's attitudes towards violence. However, other research has shown that enriched pedagogic practices, such as more comprehensive learning methods, different programme design ideologies, follow-up engagement and clear invitations inviting men and boys to programmes, all contribute to men changing their behaviours (Casey et al, 2016; Chakraborty et al, 2020; Flood, 2011). State histories and education, for example, dictate what is expected of men which are then upheld by families, media and other social relations. According to the available research, effective programmes are ones that interrogate definitions of masculinity, who men want to be and how they want to treat others.

Furthermore, Casey et al (2012) have found that men seeking to move away from violent norms face the problem of locally constructed cultures that sustain violent forms of masculinity. They suggest the need to provide resources for the evaluation of men's engagement efforts in a more localised manner, through a holistic view of the challenges experienced by the organisations at individual, organisational and community levels. We will elaborate on how this works in practice in the analysis part. In general, this approach enables the research to achieve a better understanding of the organisations that we are learning from, including three prevalent hegemonic masculinities that serve as barriers to men's participation as identified by Casey et al (ibid., 246). These are the entrenched male privilege in community structures, a lack of legitimisation of community recognition and allocation of resources to these efforts. Examples of the allocation of resources are shared knowledge (information and insights regarding ethical and practical benefits of addressing VAWG for communities) and its infrastructure that enables men's participation in anti-violence (such as peer group, the supporting reference system to address VAWG at a local level which includes shelter, legal assistance, community health provision and the police).

Lastly, although studies above have mentioned that effective programmes need to engage with feminist movements, there has to be a greater understanding of contextual feminist movements. Ather Zia (webinar on gender and militarisation, 4 January 2022) suggests emphatically that contextualising feminist histories and movements is key, as struggles are context specific. Although several feminist theories and accounts are applicable across borders, situating struggles in the local context is important in effecting behaviour change.

Analysis

The following section consists of the findings from data collection. Keeping in mind the strategic approach to masculinity education in India, we turn to explore examples of best practice, discussing to what extent the four organisations under study have addressed multi-level challenges to transform social relations and unequal structures with the aim of addressing VAWG.

In what ways is the education or training embedded in a national or regional context?

It is imperative that any programme that aims to bring about gender equality in India is embedded in the local context. Frequently, any attempt to introduce gender equality in India, is resisted as a

western concept (Akshat Singhal, personal communication, October 2019). This is often a result of women's subordination being embedded in religion and other customs. In addition, those who are gender non-binary or gender non-conforming, with varied sexual orientations, are invisibilised from history, as they do not meet the criteria of an ideal citizen, typically a male with the dominant identity (Mayer, 2000; Panjabi et al, 2009). Therefore, any programme that seeks to reframe masculinity in India, has to demonstrate how feminism is rooted in Indian culture and tradition and is part of its history. It is also essential that the education is grounded in local contexts, because a locally embedded education allows one to practise newly acquired skills, and learn from how this new behaviour or attitude is received by society. This contextualisation also allows for organisations to plant some ready changes that children can emulate instantly. Finally, localising the curriculum addresses the fact that women are not a homogenous group. Every group of women is different and, therefore, their needs are also different. The challenges faced by women belonging to one identity might be different from those whose identities are different, e.g. Dalit women. Similarly, masculinities are different. These differences in gender relations arise due to the fact that masculinities and femininities are relational and embedded in a particular context. Therefore, a curriculum that considers these localised gender relations, can address more effectively the inequalities that might be unique to the specific circumstance. Take for example, the concept of boys helping out with household chores, which was a programme initiated by O1 during the Covid-19 pandemic and by O3 prior to it. This initiative, exhorted boys and young men to help out with household chores as a mark of a reformed masculinity. Deepali Vandana, (personal communication, 14 December 2021), who is an activist at the intersection of caste and gender, reflects, what this masculinity might mean for a poor Dalit-Bahujan male child who regularly helps out with household chores as well as odd jobs outside the house to support the family income. These 'teachings' are redundant, as the child is already helping out at home. However, the programme might need to address other more relevant issues for this child. What might masculinity, then, mean in this context? Therefore, contextualising programmes is imperative if they are to be effective and to understand where change can be catalysed to prevent VAWG.

However, of the four organisations, who partnered with us for this study, two of them, O2 and O3, do not have the resources to carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of their programmes. In the case of O1, an end of year external evaluation shows that boys who were part of the programme, began to accept that they need to change themselves and their attitudes, that they observe how society subordinates women and objectifies them, and that they would intervene in the event of violence by seeking the help of authorities. The evaluation of the programmes of O4 have shown the effectiveness of the programmes, such that the learnings from these have been used to contribute to national-level programmes on masculinity. For example, one of their programmes has been presented and shared to the Technical Resource Agency working with the Government of India to implement the National Adolescent Health Programme in May 2019. It was an intervention programme and pedagogy that speaks to the intersectional experiences of young men and boys built upon a collective feminist definition of masculinities by challenging gender discriminatory norms and gender-based violence through formal education programmes (ref. annual reports available on partner organisation's website).

In our study of the four programmes, we found that all were embedded in the regional context, drawing from feminist movements, involving local or regional role models, and using examples, such as stories, experiences, films or other cultural references from television and cinema, in particular the Bollywood culture. Several references were made to culture and society, especially Bollywood, by both staff members and participants to allude to its influence on masculinity. Staff members also mentioned using examples from the media to explain behaviours that might be portrayed as romantic but in fact border on various forms of violence. The staff member of O1 states:

After Covid-19 we noticed that adolescent boys were hooked on social media, YouTube, Tiktok. The content that is there

is not very feminist, all these adds on to how they see men, women, and other genders. Any superhit songs, if you listen to the lyrics or watch the choreography, the way it's represented propagates violence [...] from passive violence to normalising instances where it is outrightly put out through movie dialogues or even people who are role models for them.

Alongside the internet and transregional characteristics of the entertainment industries, organisations acknowledge the embedded cultural and structural challenges in their local context, but also its potential for changes. An example is expressed by a member of staff from O2:

It starts from their upbringing. Even mother's play a role influencing masculinity like investing more in a boy's education over a girl, and how these decisions will benefit the parents. [...] With male domination, if you're taught that violence is a way to show your masculinity then you'll only know that. [...] We realised during a session conducted with the police, that they themselves aren't aware of how to implement certain laws. The women constables who face harassment aren't able to speak out about it. At that time we realised that awareness should be generated even among people who are meant to protect us.

An important vision of O4 is to portray the diversity of gender identities and therefore present alternatives to heterosexuality. Heterosexism is resisted by feminist movements on the grounds of a contest of identities that matter and those that don't. In India especially, heterosexual reproductive relationships are deemed more valuable than others due to the nation-building project (Mayer, 2000) with those who cannot contribute to producing 'sons of the soil' deemed inferior. The secondary status of women and gender non-conforming people often sanctions violence against them while simultaneously validating men's violent masculinity. Therefore, creating awareness of a diversity of gender identities and expressions allows boys and young men to assess the legitimacy of others and resist violence against them. Another important aspect covered by O4 is the idea of violence in sexual and romantic relations. One of their staff members noted the following:

Young men do not understand the idea of consent. Facing rejection or hearing a no from someone they like is difficult for them. Even during sex, hearing a no is something they have to accept and respect. They aren't aware that verbal abuse is a form of abuse. They absorb the violence that they see in their families and accept it and imitate it. Even in a

relationship, one of the behaviours that they emote is to be protective of their partners. And that they have to be macho about it. But towards the end of the sessions they did have this realisation that their behaviours are wrong. Stalking a girl is something that is very difficult for them to accept as wrong because it's not what they see in movies.

Therefore, although families and media reflect the local norms that enable VAWG of various kinds, programmes like the one provided by O4 help make changes in these norms through helping young men take these 'natural' behaviours and question them.

Another way in which the programme is contextualised for participants is through a service-learning component, which is offered by O1. At the end of the programme, boys undertake a project in groups, on any topic that resonates with them while still addressing some of the issues that were covered in the course. This service-learning component, enables boys to recognise how some of the challenges discussed in the programme exist in their communities, simultaneously empowering them to become change-makers in their contexts. Through these projects, it is possible that boys are mentally prepared to resist becoming bystanders in the event that they witness violence. In the past, students on this programme have addressed problems such as bullying, teasing, corporal punishment in schools and the moral policing of women in the community. These projects have created some lasting impressions on participants of the programme, as stated by one:

There was a lot of beating of children by our teachers in schools. We did a project on why it is bad and why it should not continue. In my school, now, corporal punishment has reduced. [How do you know that corporal punishment has reduced, as you have finished your schooling]. All my juniors who are still studying in school tell me that it has reduced.

Thus, it is possible that engaging in a community-level project, which enables students to address violence of any kind, helps instil in them the confidence that one can initiate change even when one might feel powerless. Small changes, such as these, could catalyse changes at the interpersonal level, thus gradually changing what might be acceptable. An additional observation was that in programmes addressing VAWG or masculinities men and boys are given a vocabulary to verbalise what they would have regarded as taboo. We saw that boys who were part of the O1 programme were able to address topics of violence generally considered private. Similarly, men who were part of O3, had to put their learning into action, when they needed to support their daughters' admission in private schools. We observed that fathers were able to speak of care and respect for their daughters, a vocabulary that might not have been readily accessible to them, were it not for the programme. Such programmes, through various components, helped demonstrate to men and boys, what a new form of masculinity might mean in their circumstances.

Role models are also used to contextualise the programme. O3, is highly influenced by Dalit identity and Dalit feminist struggles. Hence, Bahujan icons Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar³, Jotirao Phule⁴ and Savitribai Phule⁵ were role models who were constantly invoked. In O3, while working with adult men to enable them to contribute to their families through being part of a savings scheme or by enrolling children in schools, Dr Ambedkar's example was frequently cited with participants. Dr Ambedkar's devotion to his wife is evident as both made speeches together. At the same time, they were both part of demonstrations in asserting their identity. Invoking these examples and role models helped provide an easy reference for men who are part of the organisation. O3 works closely with men (and women) who belong to lower social sections of society and might benefit from simplified discourse on reducing VAWG.

Organisations like O1 bring in male role models to speak to boys about what it might mean to adopt a different masculinity. However, through our interactions with the participants from O4's programme, it was observed that the programme staff also came to be seen as role models for boys and men. In some cases, participants mentioned that programme staff themselves, with their rejection of traditional gender norms and expectations, as examples for participants to follow. One noted:

[Programme staff's name] is so different from others. When I see them, I feel like I can also be like them. I feel like there are so many others like them and they are good people

Programme staff and participants often share the same contexts as they might belong to the same region or have similar cultural backgrounds. This makes it easier for men and boys to be inspired and to see what they are learning take shape as reality. Although we understand the value of involving male role models for young men and boys to emulate, we are left with the question of what this might mean for women who run these programmes. Men often learn to become men through the psychological process of identification with their fathers or other male peers (Connell, 2005), which is also evident in these programmes. However, it is possible that the same ideas might reinforce gender norms of women playing a subordinate role to men, by them not being role models themselves, but by extolling certain men as role models. It could also sustain the norm of women taking on more community and justice work, while men might be considered role models despite them not doing much actively to advance the cause of feminism (Kahane, 1998 in Digby, 1998).

How does the curriculum empower men and boys to enable norm changes in society that effect gender equality in the long term?

The educational programmes across the four organisations in the study largely focus on the individual's attitude and their capability to promote norm change. Awareness-raising among individuals is rooted in the aspiration to transform personal thought into social action. As such, the educational strategies are predicated on the ideas about empowering individuals to command social action within a larger structure of society. These educational strategies are manifested in the curriculum – which explicitly acknowledges the historical perspectives and force of sexism and

3 Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar (1895-1956) was a social reformer and politician. The Indian Constitution was drafted under his leadership. Dr Ambedkar, being from one of the lowest castes, started the Dalit rights movement and campaigned for the abolition of the caste system..

4 Jotirao Phule (1827-90) was a social reformer in India. He devoted his life to the upliftment of women and those of the lowest castes. He believed that women should be educated and that their struggles should be united with those of the lower castes.

5 Savitribai Phule (1831-97) was an educationist. She is a pioneer of the Indian feminist movement and started a school for girls at a time when it was not allowed.

heterosexism in Indian society – and are grounded in the feminist principles of bringing lived experience and diverse voices into pedagogical practices.

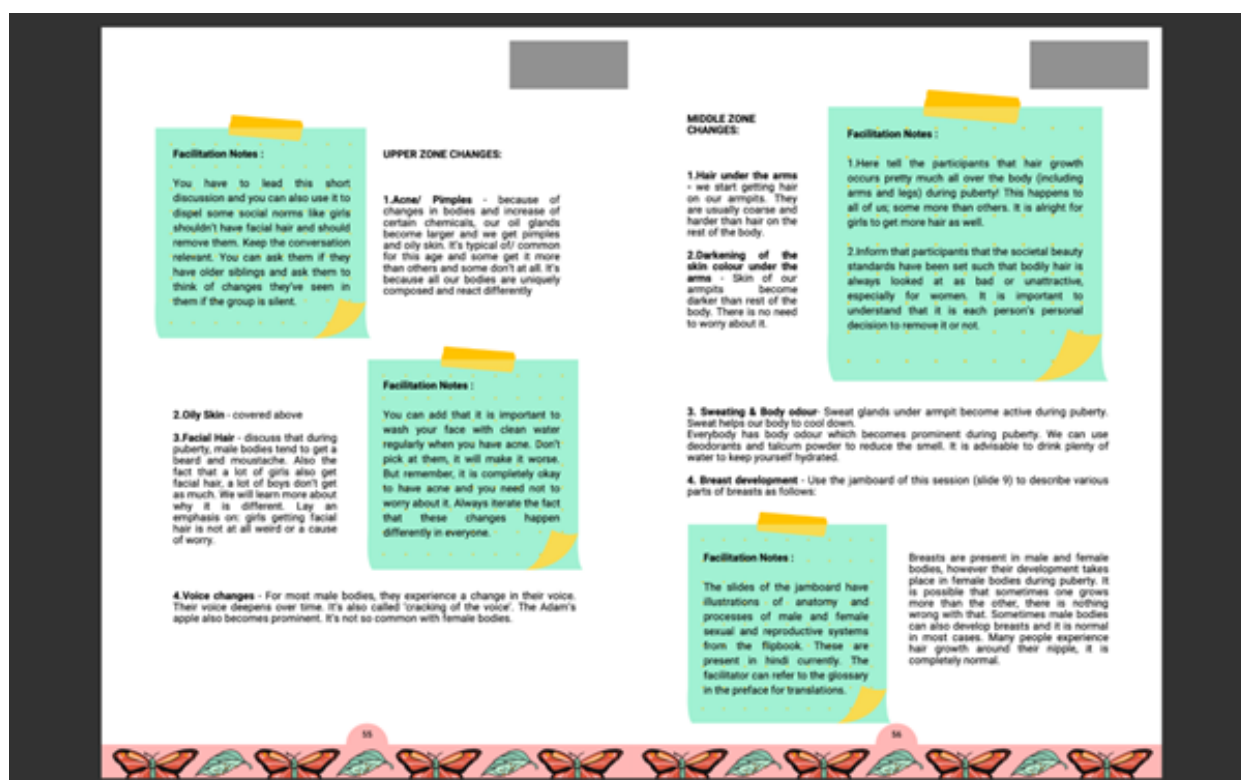
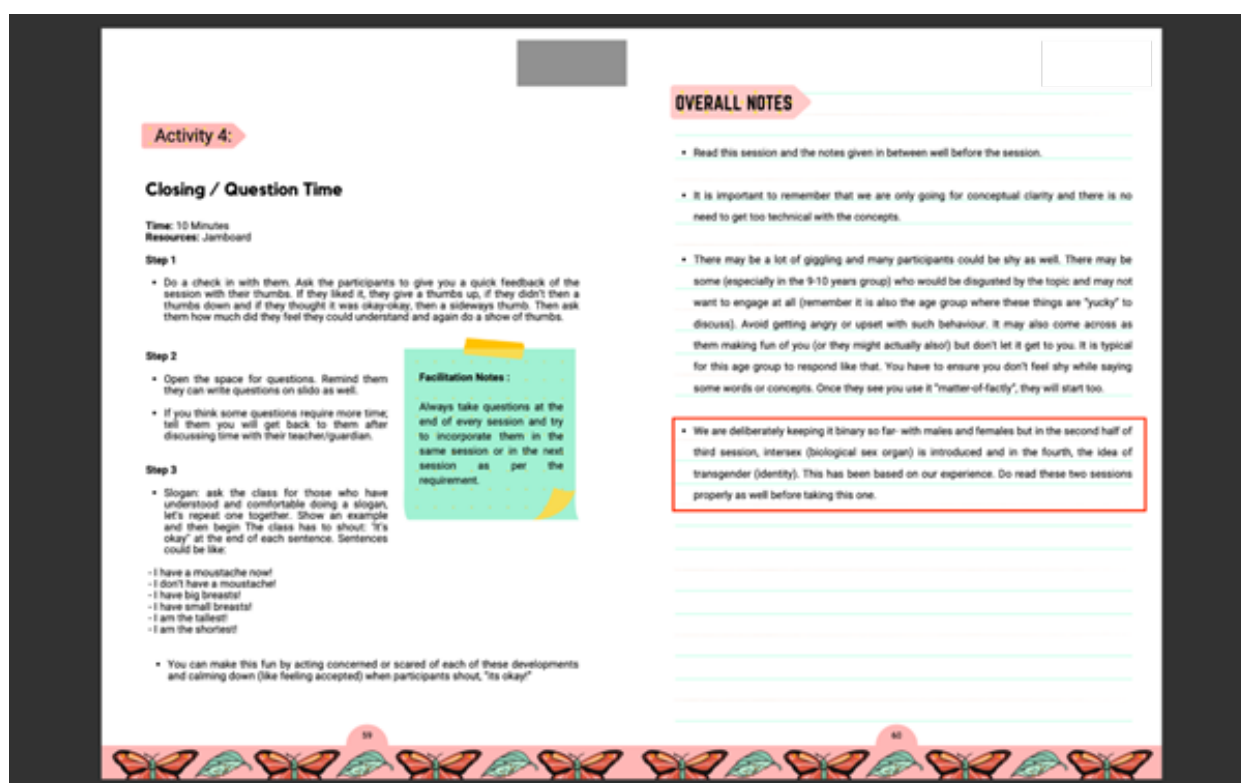
The first aspect of educational strategies which focus on changing norms is the exposure to gender-focused curricula. Similar to other education programmes described in literature review, this has come largely through sexuality education and discussion of gender issues and masculinity. Knowledge related to bodily and emotional processes became the entry point to deconstruct the discriminatory nature of heteronormative ideologies. O4 takes an integrated approach to a broad range of topics related to body function and its changing process, mental health and sexuality, as well as the misconception and social norms surrounding those topics.

The curriculum is designed to cover different components like bodily changes, male and female autonomy, gender, emotions, attraction, sexuality, healthy and unhealthy elements of a relationship.... “We have sessions on disability as beauty standards. And try to disintegrate and unpack what they know as ideal beauty”

One chapter around which I have seen a lot of conversations happening is gender and socialisation because those will be the spaces where they have a Eureka moment that they realise what their gender is. And they shift from the binary of not calling people only trans but they will contextualise their identities also. They might have seen other people in their communities, so now they don't assume they contextualise positions and locations of individuals.

The curriculum aims to help children and young people to gain conceptual clarity and introduce multiple realities with regards to body and sexuality in an age- appropriate manner, giving care to their evolving capacities to understand varying levels of complexities of gender. As, for example, O4 does by initially keeping the binary concept of male and female before introducing the idea of transgender and intersex variations at later stage (see Figure 1). Central to this process, the curriculum lays the foundation for boys and girls to break down the rigid notion of masculinity and femininity and to understand decisions related to gender and relationships. In the session of mapping out physical changes during puberty, it focuses on the cultural reinforcement of accepting the changes as a natural and unique personal process for everyone over achieving proficiency in the content of sexuality education itself (see Figure 1). It guides the facilitators not to get too technical with the concepts but encourages the young people to respect their own and others' bodies as a precursor to being anti-VAWG.

Figure 1: The snapshots of O4's Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum Age 9-13



The curriculum establishes a connection between theoretical and practical understanding where there is deliberate attempt to explore and critique the dominant cultural concepts of masculinity encountered in their everyday lives e.g. by discussing family interaction at home, deconstructing the stigma in occupational aspiration, questioning Bollywood heroes and superhit songs which propagate various forms of discrimination and violence, presenting conflict of identities among

boys through videos and movies. As the participants of the programme are continuously equipped with vocabulary of acceptance, love and respect, the curriculum challenges the strict adherence to ideas of sexuality and gender identity that serve as norm maintainers to prevailing sexual violence. It sensitises young men and boys to reflect on the ideas of masculinity and male privileges, on how these unfold into their daily experiences and what role they might play in various forms of domination, subordination and discrimination.

Throughout the curriculum even examples from the media which are relatable to them like stories or videos and movies which portray conflicts of boys and how they are navigating that. Or the story of someone who wants to become a mermaid, different examples of people who don't subscribe to traditional notions of masculinity and are celebrated. And that you can aspire to be something and not always do you have to die for your country. (Staff 01)

So sometimes we show Bollywood clips or give assignments like click pictures of public spaces and see how much space men occupy. We have audio stories where a person wants to open a shop, but his father insists on being a doctor in order for his younger sister to get a good marriage offer. Another story shows how a married man is being bullied for not being able to have a child. We try to show how we can get tied to this narrow definition of masculinity. (Staff 04)

In addition to the content being taught, the prevalent interaction patterns in teaching and learning are critical in understanding the practical outcomes of teaching in maintaining social orders and the complex power and identity dynamics (Crabtree, et al., 2009). Some of the best practices demonstrated by programmes in the study include the provision of liberatory pedagogical methods and, as most programmes take place in single sex spaces, young men and boys learn to be vulnerable, to reflect on their own experience and to explore issues like violence and the stereotypes that impose norms upon them. Liberatory pedagogical practices encourage reflection in considering the need to address the multiple phenomena of visible and invisible violence as a collective social reality (ibid). In 01 and 04 creating a loving and accepting atmosphere is critical to encourage young men and boys to be comfortable with the conversation related to their self and identity. In doing so, facilitators stimulate meaningful discussion through active listening to the thoughts, experience, identities and interests of young men and boys. They are asked to normalise safe tone and expression when talking about sexual organs, to open up the key topics related to norms of masculinity, to encourage the boys to identify and acknowledge violent action, and to explore several gender issues such as unpaid care work, labour and the perpetuation of masculine norms through Indian popular media. Energising activities (e.g. song, movement), arts and visual aids are part of the curriculum in an effort to encourage young men and boys to express themselves as we have seen in the programme module in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The snapshots of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Masculinity Education in O1 and O4

V. SESSION FLOW

Activity 1:

Energiser - Action Song & Recap

Time: 10 Minutes
Resources: NA

Step 1

Ask the participants to form a circle or ask everyone to stand up in their places. Tell the participants to follow you - they have to do what you're doing, and say what you're saying.

Step 2

Perform the action songs 'Aju Guja' or 'Arush Chacha' or 'Boogie Woogie'. Clap loudly together once the song is over.

Step 3

Before you begin the session, ask the participants, "shall we do a quick quiz? We'll read out some statements, and you have to answer whether you think the statement is true or false, okay?" If it is true, you raise both your hands. If it is false, you cross your hands and shake your head "no."

Facilitation Notes:

- Ensure that you are lively and comfortable with your body. The intent behind doing this action song is to make the participants open up and be comfortable with their bodies as well. However, gauge the comfort level of the participants and do not force them out of their comfort zones.
- Also if you have any other songs from your own context that are well known by the participants then you can go ahead and use those! Remember this exercise is just to energise the cohort before beginning the session.

STATEMENTS:

i) Puberty happens when you are five years old.
-False, puberty starts anytime between 9-15 years.

ii) Puberty begins and ends differently for different people; for some it can start at 9 years and for some it can start late and that's okay.
-True! Puberty is a subjective experience, and the experience can vary from one body to the next!

iii) Periods make girls impure and nobody should touch them.
-False, this is a myth. Menstruation is not impure, it is a natural bodily process, like breathing and sleeping. There is a lot of stigma and shame attached to reproduction because it is a gendered process, tied to reproduction.

iv) Periods occur approximately once a month and can last up to 2-8 days.
-True, this is the common range, although it can differ for some people. In the beginning, the menstrual cycle can take some time to adjust, and each cycle might vary. There are also conditions like PCOD/PCOS that can alter the menstrual cycle, in any case it is always good to see a doctor/gynaecologist.

v) Babies are born from the sky.
-False, babies are born from adults' bodies.

Facilitation Notes:

Take a minute to discuss each point and clarify participants' doubts/answers. Use this space to gauge understanding, attitudes. This will also help you with facilitating the sessions to come. This activity can also act as an MSE tool.

Activity 2

Murti Kalakar: Introduction to Hormones

Time: 10 Minutes
Resources: NA

		communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills		
4	Violence	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore what is violence and navigate own experiences around violence <p>Output:</p> <p>Boys identify violence around them and recognise that it is not normal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energiser What happens with Aman Smaller group discussion Check out 	
5	Empathy	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build empathy for others in the context of violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energiser Empathy clothe-line activity Project Group formation Check out 	
6	Notions of masculinity	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify notions of masculinity that are expected of boys to follow <p>Output:</p> <p>Boys identify norms of masculinity, gender stereotypes and the sources that influence them (including the media)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in Movie screening Check out 	video
7	Sex vs Gender	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To learn that sex is biological and distinct from gender <p>Output:</p> <p>Boys identify norms of masculinity, gender stereotypes and the sources that influence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in & recap Genderbread diagram activity Project discussion 	
8	Gender stereotypes	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To learn what are gender stereotypes To identify some of the sources that influence in socialisation of gender stereotypes <p>Output:</p> <p>Boys identify norms of masculinity, gender stereotypes and the sources that influence them (including the media)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in Messages I receive Project discussion Check out 	
9	Labour	<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To learn that labour is gendered To enable participants to recognise UCW as work <p>Output:</p> <p>Boys identify norms of masculinity, gender stereotypes and the sources that influence them (including the media)</p> <p>Boys start recognising unpaid care work as work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energiser riddle UCW, Monu aur ghar ke kaam Check out Project discussion 	Audio story
10	Project completion	Project Completion		
11	Closing session	Project presentation & Role model interaction		

This balances a critical approach and experiential learning, sustaining the engagement of participants in the topic discussed. Furthermore, a non-threatening classroom atmosphere provides a safe space for them to learn about various expressions of emotion without fearing the stigma attached to their social identities. The curriculum also emphasises the importance of facilitators being sensitive in the discussion, which may lead participants to share experiences of violence – either as perpetrator or victim – and address the issues privately when the participants are not comfortable (see Figure 3). Lastly, empowering pedagogical practices also encompass introducing young men and boys to

the idea of mental health and of seeking external help for emotional well-being. The curriculum and pedagogical practices appear to facilitate intellectual inquiries on gender discourse that help young men and boys build the capacity to become more empathetic to diverse life experiences and better locate themselves in society.

Figure 3: The snapshots of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in 04



As stated earlier, transformative changes should take place beyond individual attitudes and behaviours to include changes at the structural and institutional level. As a result of the intervention, increased interest, awareness of gender discrimination and self-confidence to challenge inequitable norms become the building blocks for the participants to connect with the issue of violence in the family and wider community. The participants reported that they are able to openly engage with individuals of other genders and anyone they come across in their community, such as gay and bisexual friends, with respect and in a non-judgemental way. When the boys in O4 are among their families and community, they speak out and share the knowledge they have learnt to stop their peers and family members from resorting to violence against women.

Earlier I didn't know anything about gender or even about people's bodies. I have learnt not to discriminate against anyone based on their gender and am able to speak openly with family and friends about issues.... I don't judge any more. I accept and respect everyone who I come across. I can be friends with everyone and not only men. And talk to everyone. And even offer solutions. (Participant O4)

Just like how we are trying to eliminate discrimination and divide in other aspect in society, This is also something that should be worked on as well, eradicating injustice among gay people. (Participant O2)

Personal attitudes that can translate into structural efforts, however, are inconclusive, which is possibly because adolescents often lack the power to make structural changes. In O4 participants aspire to see more representation of women and people from Dalit castes in public life, such as in parliament and local civil bodies, yet changes in practice were not evident. Meanwhile, male adolescents in O1 started to engage with trans activism in their community. They have come out of the 'making fun of them' phase to wanting to support their trans neighbours and share spaces with them. Key changes to personal attitudes are attributed to creative learning materials and the commitment of facilitators in demonstrating participants' ability to shift gender norms. Changes to systems, on the other hand, are not easily achieved without including direct objectives to address institutionalised practices. Efforts to eradicate systemic barriers remain abstract issues and are more likely to arise when the organisations use strategies to engage in community-based projects, as, for example, O2 does in advocating for gender sensitivity in law practice in cases of gender-based violence.

Sometimes when we come up with projects where it involves a trans person who wants to organise a lecture for the junior students so that they get to hear about their experiences and open up. Schools don't allow for this because maybe they are conservative . So students feel conflicted and wonder why this happens..... We have this urgency that things are really messed up, it is also a process and it starts by asking

questions and exploring. These are questions maybe they can't ask in their households. So having this community is very important, sticking with each other, asking questions, engaging with peers these are the kinds of things they can do and put effort into it. (Staff 01)

My understanding of this is that when we talk about systems and structures is that it's external in some of these participants, it takes a lot of effort for even us to recognise that this is a part of a systematic problem and this is something that is structurally devised and it is happening because of certain patriarchal structure. (Staff 01)

There was a video that showed that some people don't have hands or legs and you shouldn't say anything about people's bodies. HIV Aids information on it which made me understand so many things better. Through the card system, specific information could be gained and understood better. (Participant 04)

Even though there are books that explain these things, the message doesn't reach everyone. Teachers explain this to kids so the things that get skipped is what we are trying to cover in this program. This does have a positive impact on them. (Participant 04)

Referring to the social ecology of internal, interpersonal, institutional and societal factors (Jewkes et al, 2015), the educational programmes of the four organisations have demonstrated the potential of facilitating change at the personal and intrapersonal level underpinned by the empowerment of men and boys through improved knowledge, self-confidence, communication skills and positive attitudes. While this could serve as the building blocks of norm change at societal level (Marcus, 2018), it may be constrained without an explicit objective of the programmes to address institutional transformation. The societal-wide change is subtle as explained previously, and there is no automatic link connecting individual empowerment with systemic transformation. Furthermore, resistance to engaging with issues of gender and masculinity, as reported by 02, exists among authorities and this could prove detrimental in creating a gap between change in educational settings and the systemic level. This finding points to the need for the programmes to turn their attention, even at a small scale, to supporting social, political, economic and legal environments by highlighting and challenging the unseen laws, codes of conduct and imposed moralities maintained by the patriarchal structures of authorities (Harper et al, 2020). While exposure to new knowledge and skills may transform the life of individuals and help to build more gender-equitable societies, masculinity education needs to redefine its strategies for more active citizen action in broader political spaces.

When we were seeking permission to conduct the police programme, they implied there is no need for such a programme because they have knowledge about it. At the end of the session they realised that knowledge on how to implement was much needed. They needed to be aware that not everything that they are doing is right and they need to be informed about it. (Staff 02)

What are the broad themes around which alternative masculinity is being created?

As this research aims to identify how programmes working with men and boys are bringing about changes to reduce VAWG, it is necessary to interrogate what types of masculinities they aim to foster. One organisation clearly highlights the feminist methodology in their approach. O4 expressly drew from the global and Indian feminist movements as follows:

Whatever we teach has its roots in feminism. We do not use binary language. We focus on inclusive identities. [The case studies] are not heteronormative in structure. We emphasize that attraction can happen between anyone and not just a man and woman.

We talk about intersectionality. In that way the curriculum does succeed in delivering the message that there is a lot of diversity within an identity.

Therefore, O4 interrogated gender binaries and focused on multiple intersecting identities as they appear in society. All of the organisations shared this value in their programmes. From our interviews and conversations with staff members and participants three themes emerged within the kind of masculinities the organisations aim at fostering. These were (i) the rejection of violence (ii) involvement with the family (iii) the embracing of diversity. In this section, we look at each of these themes in turn.

(i) Rejection of everyday violence

One of the most important themes that alternative masculinity aims to foster is a rejection of violence which takes place on a regular basis. This was observed in O1 through efforts to reduce violence in schools, in O2 by increasing awareness and sensitivity among boys and also the local police force, in O3 by addressing the role of men and boys in nurturing the family and in O4 by challenging stereotypes to reduce VAWG. The types of violence differed according to the stakeholders that the organisations worked with.

From our own experience, what we have seen is violence is normalised for [the boys]. They don't recognise violence

when it is happening. Some of the masculine behaviour which they see is toxic and leads to violence, but they are not able to recognise it. Bullying is a fun activity for them. We are also seeing that boys are victims of violence. Boys who don't fit in, don't walk or talk in a certain way, are facing violence. Boys who do not ascribe to the ideals of masculinity are bullied. (Staff 01)

In romantic relationships the oppressed gender identified people exist in a space where there is a lot of ambiguity - is it love, romance, violence? There is so much gaslighting in that narrative. (Staff 04)

Another form of violence would be using certain words for certain gender and sexuality. They aren't aware that verbal abuse is a form of abuse. Even mental and emotional forms of violence are something that they need to be made aware of. (Staff 04)

I go to the houses where I know that the man hits his wife and I ask him why he has to resort to violence. First, they used to get angry with me, but now they are able to understand what I am trying to say. (Staff 02)

From the excerpts presented above, there is a range of violence, including that which occurs within groups of boys and between men and women. This can be the everyday violence of verbal slurs, intimate partner violence, emotional or verbal abuse or even, as mentioned elsewhere in this paper, stalking. The bullying of boys who do not fit into the dominant form of masculinity can be seen as an initiation into violent masculinity ideals. Through various experiences and learning modes, participants are introduced to different kinds of violence in order to recognise them as such and to reject them. There appears to be a continuum of violence (Moser, 2004) that makes violence a norm. Therefore, as men are navigating their lives, they face numerous instances of violence, which permeate their everyday experiences. O2, which specifically works with people from some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Mumbai, shows how the lives of those who are the most marginalised are continuously affected by political, economic and social violence, which, in turn, sanctions violence in private settings. It is, therefore, imperative that violence of any form is addressed with men.

For a person who is rich maybe he can afford to get involved but for someone like me - a middle class person I

have to think about it, least I get stuck in something where I am not able to use power to get out. (Participant 02)

Participants believe that social status affords them the choice of getting involved and stopping some form of violence, as they are afraid that opposing violence without any privilege can get them 'stuck' unnecessarily in matters not concerning them. Being perceived as being of less worth also reduces inhibition to violence (Moser, 2004). Powerlessness arising out of lack of privilege or social standing, can affect an individual's perception of what they can do to intervene in the case of VAWG. There seems to be then, a continuum of powerlessness, which dictates the norms of what is acceptable or not when it comes to bystander intervention. On the other hand, everyday violence for girls continues throughout their lifetimes,

These girls would face dominating fathers growing up and now face dominating husbands. So it becomes important to continue supporting them. (Staff 02)

Therefore, programmes like the ones we researched work at the individual level to create a strong rejection of violence, which may or may not reduce the everyday violence that people face at the structural level. However, participants in programmes that aim to expand influence and bring about community-level changes, through a service-learning project for example, are convinced that collective change is possible through small individual actions. It is possible that these projects could gradually empower boys and men to intervene.

(ii) Contributing to the family

Another theme that emerges as part of a reformed masculinity is one of greater involvement with and contribution to the family.

After becoming part of the organisation, I realised that I should leave my friends who are influencing me negatively... after which my business has changed. I have been able to get more work. I realised if women can do it, why can't men. (Participant 03)

I want to educate my daughter. I have not studied, but I want my daughter to study. I want both my daughters to study well and the organisation has helped me get the papers in order for her admission. (Participant 03)

Work with men consisted of helping them to breach the private and public binary (Bhog et al, 2012) and to involve them more actively in family matters. The programme enables men to challenge the notion of labour and violence at home and its intrinsic relation with domination. The most concerning issue

that the organisations work to change is the normalisation of VAWG. Aside from direct physical and verbal harm, normalisation of violence is commonly practised through institutional, cultural and economic structure. Domestic violence often occurs when women are deemed to have failed to perform the labour or unpaid care work expected of them.

As the participant of O3 states, the fact that women have been saving money (referring to the savings scheme instituted by O3) has inspired him to save money too. Women have always negotiated their place in public spaces as workers and have had to handle household responsibilities themselves. Organisations that aim to reform the norms of masculinity are enabling men to take a larger role in private spaces. However, there has to be greater support for men who are adopting non-traditional behaviours (Casey et al, 2016; Das and Singh, 2014; Flood, 2011; Gilbertson, 2018), provided, for example, through regular engagement with the saving scheme meetings which take place every month at O3.

(iii) Increased awareness around masculinity and other gender identities

For the four organisations, changes begin with self-reflection and identifying issues that participants can relate to in their daily lives. We found that two of the four organisations do not explicitly design an alternative masculinity programme through a systematic curriculum specifically to transform masculinity. But the broad themes gravitate around personal identities, and in acknowledging, redefining and navigating the boundaries of bodies, sexuality and behaviour within social interactions. The programmes aim to create a safe space to educate both girls and boys, and women and men about non-violent behaviour. At the same time, although there is no explicit pedagogy in alternative masculinity, by creating and educating them about non-violent behaviour, they are opening the horizon to better ways of masculinity.

I try to get them to understand their core identity of who and how they can be, it is their choice, and there are alternative options. What are the problematic aspects of toxic masculinity we don't want them to venture to. Violence [...] getting the idea that there is not only one way of being a man is the central premise of it. (Staff O1)

As observed in section (ii) the programmes of O4 create a critical approach and transformative view on women's and men's bodies. The organisations work to challenge stereotypes of sexuality and hegemonic masculinities as one of the causes of VAWG, by working on awareness of women's rights, their mental health and physical care. O4 carried out workshops for children and adolescents from 9-12 years old, while discussion about sexual harassment, rape and consent are part of O1's work.

Given the complex and sensitive nature of the issue, in some cases the organisations work with an evolving curriculum as they engage with participants' everyday lives. This might involve a finance saving scheme or help in supporting the education of their daughters (O3), or increase awareness and sensitivity among police officers (O2) with alternative masculinity embedded in each of these initiatives.

Finally, the programmes create conversations around the binary notions of traditional gender norms and modernity. This is seen through the creation of an empowering narrative of women's

earnings and how men could start saving their earnings, just like women do (O3), or by providing babysitting services to women, so that they can attend workshops that are conducted for them (O2) or by increasing the understanding that sex and gender lie on a continuum. In our conversations with participants from O1 and O4, it was clear that participants felt that this new inclusive outlook was a result of their education.

I don't judge any more, I accept and respect everyone who I come across. I can be friends with everyone and not only men. And talk to everyone. (Participant O4)

I have also stopped saying females... because people can be anything they want and shouldn't be judged about that. I don't judge them by their names anymore. (Participant O4)

Embedding the practice of alternative masculinity requires the ability to build trust with the men in their communities, a process that can take years. Organisations were seen breaking down project activities into daily interventions that men could slowly start to engage with by attending and listening to the topic of women's rights. In O3 we saw that when men trust the organisation and feel that they are treated with respect, they would start listening to the discussion and be open about violent behaviour that they inflicted upon women and others. It is at such times that organisations can take the opportunity to address violence, not just at an individual or personal level, but also work its way to the broader societal level.

Conclusion

This research endeavoured to study the effectiveness of a selection of masculinity education programmes in changing the norms that underpin VAWG in India. The research questions that we were trying to answer are (i) in what ways is the programme contextualised for the region or local conditions, (ii) how does the programme empower men and boys to effect norm changes in the long run (iii) what is the alternative masculinity that the programmes are trying to shape. In order to answer these questions, we examined four programmes that conduct training for men and boys in alternative masculinities. We used a feminist approach and had in-depth conversations to find the tenets of what makes these programmes effective. Through interviews and FGDs with staff members and participants, we were able to gain an insight into the curriculum followed in these programmes and the effects that they have on men and boys. We found that contextualising the programme could take several forms. Some programmes made frequent references to local culture, while others used service-learning projects, and others used role models that could be readily referenced by the participants. The curriculum of some organisations that directly intervened in changing masculinity norms showed that these could be addressed through a comprehensive sexuality curriculum, for example, which enables participants to address violence that is linked with gendered relations.

Finally, the ideal masculinity that the programmes are trying to shape is one in which men reject violence, contribute to their families and have an increased understanding of the diversity of others. Although some of these questions did help in identifying what is effective in working with men and boys, there were others that remained unanswered, such as the role of women's labour in addressing the challenges of a highly unequal society and how to ensure that men who are role models to others follow the ideals that support norm change. Questions also remain regarding the real structural changes that men and boys can effect, through these programmes. Further studies could pay particular attention to schools and how the curriculum and expectations arounds the treatment of women and girls could help shift gender norms.

Recommendations

This research has helped to delineate what works in teaching men and boys to address VAWG, and has raised questions regarding what might still need our attention with respect to long-term norm change. As raised consciousness does not automatically lead to social change, masculinity education needs to develop educational techniques that specifically promote feminist activism. This can be done by incorporating social-change assignments or projects designed to translate the newly acquired knowledge and soft skills of boys and young men into social action aimed at reducing gender-based violence. Social-change assignments or projects, such as those involving community outreach, campaigns, advocacy and mobilisation, need to extend the concerns about masculinity norm changes - e.g. more involved fatherhood, keeping physical violence out of relationships and parenting, equitable views of girls and boys - to their male peers and to different parts of the population.

In the longer term ongoing, highly structured and well-financed initiatives are critical to scale up norm change. This can be done by facilitating collaborative learning spaces and partnerships beyond affiliated institutions. Community activists, public figures and government are all critical in the structural and cultural transformation of gender norms. Future research in this area could consider changing masculinity norms in India in the context of a nationalist and hypermasculine discourse around subordination and dominance today. Some participants in the research alluded to the highly 'toxic' male figures in politics and cricket who they considered role models. This provides an insight into the culture of violence that consequently affects women and others of marginalised gender identities. The complications of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated increase in GBV, could also have shifted the norms on what is acceptable, which needs to be studied. Masculinity education is imperative as it enables young boys and men to choose the kind of people they wish to be. As the examples in this research show, when provided a choice, men and boys are choosing to be different.

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