



What about the boys?

Raising Men to End Violence Against Women



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Foreword

The task of becoming a 'man' is daunting and huge where failures are not acceptable and retributions are often harsh, cruel and torturous. Men and boys are not born violent but are made to be what they are – violent, intolerant and controlling as part of the entitlement and privilege indoctrination. Global evidence on attitudes toward gender equality show that in most cases men are perpetuating violent behaviors they learned as children, often by experiencing it themselves in families and schools and also by witnessing violence against their own mother.

This ECF research report does a commendable job of bringing together the wider global and also Indian discourse on men and masculinities comprehensively and succinctly and then follows up by asking a daunting question, “How can every young man and boy in India be given the opportunity to reflect on and practice gender equitable behaviour?” The report makes an attempt to answer this question through elite interviews of practitioners. Interviews clearly bring out the challenges of working at scale on a complex issue of altering and challenging masculinity norms particularly in a deeply entrenched patriarchal society like India and underscore the need to work with schools as an institution. Most however recognized that family is the most critical institution as the 'Fountainhead of Patriarchy' but inaccessible to meaningful transformative interventions for a variety of reasons articulated in the report. I think time has come to reach out to families directly and through community and other male specific platforms like sports, occupational categories, and male dominated governance and community structures in addition to what is recommended in the report using schools. We must find ways to 'enter' into the families to reflect on and reinforce the advantages of equality and power sharing through 'out of the box', 'creative', 'engaging' and often discomfiting ways. Community based practitioners must push their boundaries and be prepared to confront challenges within the communities and families as inequities are enacted and played out on day to day basis.

Evidence suggest that programs that include explicit and deliberate discussions of manhood and masculinities and make clear efforts to transform associated norms through reflections, critical thinking and constructive confrontations are more effective than programs that merely acknowledge them or mention violence prevention and gender equality. Men and boys need to be viewed as partners and not as obstacles and should be made to see what they stand to gain in the process of change that emphasizes equality, non-violence, respect, intimacy and acceptance of diversified forms of masculinities going beyond simple power analysis.

I wish ECF very well in their endeavor to take this movement forward including their forthcoming campaign, 'Man Up India'. I look forward to learning on what it does to create wider dissonance by way of offering solutions to the complex and unjust gender and masculinity norms.



Ravi K Verma
Regional Director, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW); New Delhi

Note from the CEO

Dear Friend,

After the fatal rape in Delhi in December 2012, I am in the same breath, heartened and distressed by what I see and hear around me.

I am heartened by the sheer number and tenacity of people from all strata of society who are rising to end violence against women. I am encouraged by the increasing numbers who correctly identify the essential role that men have to play. I also welcome the men who are taking a lead in identifying and advocating theirs and other men's responsibilities. Above all, I seize on the stories of success, where men and women have together triumphantly challenged violence.

However, for every well informed and well intentioned action or debate, I fear that there are ten that are misinformed. A brief review of the articles that are sent to my inbox every day based on key words such as "India, violence, women" show trends towards approaches seeking to reduce the impact of violence or increase conviction rates. These, rather than solutions to prevent violence are discussed. Some of the most distressing arguments have revolved around mutilation, mobilising male "protectors" on the street, and handing out knives to women. If these misinformed approaches continue to be proposed by influential people and reflected in the media, then the public will continue to believe in them too.

India needs real preventative solutions if we are to tackle the problem of violence. Real solutions that can be acted on and shared. That is our mission here at Equal Community Foundation, and the subject of this report.

In this, our first piece of formal research, we seek to find solutions for India that will help tackle the root cause of violence common around the world: the attitudes and behaviours of men towards women. We ask the question, "How can we ensure every man in India has the opportunity to study and practice gender equitable behaviour?" The results will surprise you, in part because they are logical and simple. Also because, despite being so glaringly obvious, they are rarely aired in public, and even more rarely implemented.

I hope that this report will help change that, and I hope you can support our work to deliver on the recommendations within. Please turn to the last page to find out how you can help.

Yours sincerely,



Will Muir
CEO, Equal Community Foundation



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Executive Summary

Gender-based violence and discrimination is a society-wide problem, which requires a society-wide solution. In 2011, India ranked the worst G20 country to be a woman. National statistics show an 873% increase in rape cases from 1971 to 2011. To tackle rife inequalities, men and women have to be involved in preventive and curative efforts.

Men must be given an opportunity to reflect on and reconstruct attitudes around gender. It is now universally acknowledged both in theory and practise that this can help reduce incidences of discrimination and violence.

However, efforts in India and worldwide have generally been small scale. Initiatives in India are largely targeted at schools and low income communities. These have been resource intensive, using professionally trained staff to deliver specially designed programs. Involvement of state agencies in these efforts has been minimal.

This report considers how to scale efforts in India. The question asked by the research was “How can every young man and boy in India be given the opportunity to reflect on and practise gender equitable behaviour?” Answers to this question were derived from interviews with 14 professionals in this field. There was consensus that boys need to be raised to develop and adopt gender sensitive attitudes and behaviours from a young age. The report highlights the following three actors central to facilitating this process at a large scale.

“How can every young man and boy in India be given the opportunity to reflect on and practise gender equitable behaviour?”

Parents, teachers and media professionals are the three actors central to facilitating the process of engaging men at a large scale.

Parents

Parents are key influencers of their child's attitudes and behaviour. Children learn by watching and participating in interactions with their parents and other family members. There are difficulties in engaging with parents as a group primarily due to the lack of access. The interface between schools and parents could be a solution in some cases, providing an opportunity to reach out with messages about gender.

Teachers

Schools are crucial sites where children learn, develop and spend most of their time, making teachers key agents of intervention. Our research recommends that gender be made part of school education, through the main school curriculum. However, this approach is not free from obstacles including a lack of state support, hostile attitudes of parents and resistance from actors across the education system. Teachers need proper training and continued support in delivery of issues on gender. The entire school system needs to reflect these values, so that they are continually reinforced by school staff and management.

Media professionals

The media can support or contradict families and schools in shaping attitudes and behaviours among children. Mainstream media content often promotes insensitive and stereotypical attitudes. Media professionals need to take efforts to ensure content is non-discriminatory and promotes examples of equitable behaviour. Organisations working in this field must collaborate with media professionals in order to create positive content.

These recommendations are an idealised vision of the future. There are significant disparities between them and the state of current initiatives. Leaders are needed to champion the cause and promote meaningful, sustainable change. This is a long term process and state support is crucial to achieving scale. Without focussed, resourced, nation-wide, preventative measures, India's women face a long struggle ahead.

Introduction

The state of women in India

The recent claim that India is the world's worst country to be a woman by G20 experts (TrustLaw, 2011), does not seem so extreme when we examine current statistics. India ranked 105th in 2012 and 113th in 2011 on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index, which measures economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment of women worldwide (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi, 2012). National statistics show an 873% increase in rape from 1971 to 2011, with 2,487 and 24,206 reported cases respectively (National Crime Records Bureau, 2012). The percentage of "Crimes Against Women" as a particular form of crime, including kidnapping, molestation and sexual assault, under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL), has also increased from 8.8% in 2007 to 9.4% in 2011 of total crimes committed under the IPC (National Crime Records Bureau, 2012)). These clearly demonstrate how pervasive gender inequalities are in India.

Gender equality

Gender equality can be defined as the state in society in which men and women are given equal opportunities, obligations and rights in all areas of life (Chowdhury and Patnaik, 2010). Equality between men and women is a correlative concept, similar to rights and duties, where one is incomplete without the other. In order to tackle gender inequalities, individuals of both genders must act as supplementary and complementary forces to each other. As a result, masculinity and male attitudes should be examined as part of gender issues as well (Chowdhury and Patnaik, 2010). In short, the very definition of gender equality points to the need for both men and women to be involved in gender transformative processes.

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Men's Role

Efforts to involve men in issues of gender equality worldwide largely focus on prevention of men's violence against women (VAW). VAW is a symptomatic manifestation of the historical inequalities between men and women (UN.,2010). It is considered a grave form of gender inequality that hampers the ability of women to enjoy the same rights and freedoms available to men , preventing peace and development in society (UN.,2010). Factors that influence male violence against women include male privilege, male entitlement and stereotypical gender roles, along with poverty and drug use (Jewkes, 2002). It is now universally acknowledged, both in theory and practise, that if initiatives provide men with an opportunity to deconstruct gender roles and reconstruct them to adopt gender equitable behaviour, thereby dealing with some of the root causes of VAW, they can help bring a change in the status quo (Flood, 2011).

Report outline

This paper considers how to scale such efforts in India by asking our central research question: How can every young man and boy in India be given the opportunity to reflect on and practice gender equitable behaviour? We question who are the key actors in this process, and the rationale for and barriers to their involvement. This is achieved through semi-structured interviews with practitioners working with men, health experts and educationists with a strong gender focus to their work. We then compare results with literature on theory and current initiatives, and make recommendations for the future.

Masculinity

Research that focuses on working with men and boys requires a clear understanding of masculinity, as stereotypical masculine ideals contribute significantly to gender inequalities. Masculinity, like femininity is a social construct. Men are socialised from birth to live up to a stereotype of manhood (Kwapong,2009). Hegemonic masculinity is the normative but not normal model of masculinity, which embodies the most socially acceptable way of being a man. All other masculinities are constructed with reference to it, creating an internal pecking order in which all men have their place (Connell,1995, p.77-79; Connell and Messerschmidt,2005; Salisbury and Jackson,1996, p.7). Ideologically it endorses patriarchal structures and the global subordination of women at the hands of men. In India, a 'real' man is often constructed as one who takes risks, commands respect and is able to prove his masculinity. Violent and aggressive behaviour towards women and men who are considered further down the pecking order of masculinity is a central part of this (Verma and Mahendra,2004). Further, dominant forms of masculinity may be damaging to individual men's well being, by requiring them to work in unsafe environments, suppress emotions, legitimise acts of violence at the hands of other men and adopt unsafe health practises (UNESCO,2004). When the conditions of patriarchy change, masculinity too changes. Hegemonic masculinity is therefore not a set pattern but mobile, changing with the social situation and norms. It is this flexibility that offers an opportunity for intervention, allowing adoption of alternatives to the current hegemonic form through processes including reflection and role modelling.

Barriers to involving men

Even with this understanding, there remain significant challenges to involving men in gender equality efforts. Firstly, men may feel that gender equality initiatives take power out of their hands and give it to women. Further, the pitfalls of conventional masculinity to men may not be understood by them. As a result, individual men may not value gender equality efforts, and may even be antagonistic towards them (Kwapong,2009, p.164). The lack of well respected male leaders and role models in this sector is also responsible for deterring men from being involved in organised activities, as they consider it a field of low material value and poor career advancement (Kwapong,2009,p.165-166). Additionally, women often construct the 'gender space' as their sphere of work and women's organisations rarely support or encourage male involvement in their work (Kwapong, 2009, p.164-165). These and other factors may account for the lack of widespread and large scale initiatives, despite the increasing theoretical and practical understanding of this issue.

Progress made

Although these obstacles are significant, men and boys are now being engaged in gender work as a distinctive group, in a variety of contexts and through different types of interventions worldwide. Initiatives in individual countries include Sonke Gender Justice and Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and training (ADAPT) in South Africa, Centre for Popular Communications and Education (CANTERA)in Nicaragua, Salud Y Genero in Mexico, Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW) in Trinidad and Tobago, The Men's Association Against Violence (AMKV) in Timor Leste and Program H in Brazil (Silberschmidt, 2011, p.106-111; Welsh, 2011, p.211; Kiejzer, 2004, p.37; Brown, 2004, p.120, 125; Araujo,2004, p.142-143; Barker et.al, 2004, p.150). These mainly work on a small scale with local populations, although there are exceptional cases. The White Ribbon Campaign, for example, began in Canada in 1991 and tried to create awareness around VAW by mobilising and educating young men and boys to take action in their homes, schools and communities. It has now been adopted in more than 30 countries (Kaufman,2004,p.23).

Collaborative efforts

Men's organisations acknowledge and are acting on the need to collaborate to increase participation, improve research and strengthen advocacy efforts, all within a life cycle and human rights approach. (Barker et.al.,2011, p.183; Welsh,2011,p.216-217; MenEngage,2008). The Forum to Engage Men (FEM), for example, is a diverse group of organisations and individuals in India. Members share ideas and learning, as well as place discussions of male involvement in gender issues in the public domain (CHSJ, 2012). Regional networks, such as the South Asian Network to Address Masculinities (SANAM), have also been established. SANAM provides academics, activists, and N.G.Os throughout South Asia a platform to collaborate on gender issues (Engagingmen,2012). At an international level, an alliance of non-governmental organisations called MenEngage, aims to use a non-discriminatory attitude and work as allies with women's



organisations to promote the well being of men, women and children (MenEngage,2008). These activities show that although this approach may not be mainstream, it has managed to gain traction among practitioners leading to the creation of national, regional and international forums.

Indian Initiatives

Organisations working with men around gender equalities and masculinities have been operational in India over the last few decades (mava,2010). These span the country, from EKTA, in Southern India, to the Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) in Delhi, and Men's Action to Stop Violence against Women (MASVAW) in Uttar Pradesh. They range from those working at the grassroots, like SWATI to campaigns and research activities by international organisations such as Oxfam's We Can campaign and ICRW's Asia Office (CHSJ,2012; EKTA,2013; MASVAW,2012; SWATI,2012; We Can,2012; ICRW,2012). The demographic targeted by most efforts is young men, defined by the Ministry of Youth Affairs as 13-35 years (Department of Youth Affairs,2013) using tools such as mass media and curricula in spaces including educational institutions and communities.

It has predominantly been NGOs who have created and administered initiatives in schools and communities. These tend to use trained external facilitators to deliver a curriculum that gives gender sensitive messages to adolescent men. They also provide a chance to reflect on related issues. Yaari Dosti, for example, is an adaptation of Program H: Working with Young Men Series, originally developed by Instituto Promundo, ECOS (Brazil), Instituto PAPAI (Brazil) and Salud y Genero (Mexico), that was implemented by CORO, the Population Council and other partners targeting 15-24 year old boys in urban slum communities to address gender norms (Population Council,2006). Campaigns such as MASVAW's efforts in Uttar Pradesh have engaged youth in schools, colleges and universities to speak out against gender based violence (MASVAW, 2012). Parivartan, an ICRW initiative, reached young athletes in both school and community settings, by working with youth role models such as sports coaches (Das et al.,2012). To scale efforts, programs have often been developed into toolkits for use by others.

Another approach of NGOs has been the innovative use of mainstream and social media applications to create awareness and action on gender issues in youth and wider society. The Bell Bajao (Ring the Bell) media campaign aims to create public awareness, and asks bystanders to prevent violence against women. There have also been campaigns in colleges, such as the mustbol campaign, that utilise social media to encourage youth to examine their attitudes towards gender. (Bell Bajao, 2012; mustbol, 2012). These are often part of broader campaign efforts, which may include community engagement, as in the case of Bell Bajao.

The absence of state acceptance and support for this approach is notable. In December 2012, the Indian Government announced that a scheme similar to the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme For Empowerment of Adolescent Girls will be launched for adolescent boys. Its reported aim is to change their attitudes towards women (Press Trust of India, 2012). This was in reaction to the Delhi rape case in December 2012 that sparked national and international outrage. However, no further information on this scheme, including content, time-frame and delivery mechanism is available at the time of writing. What is clear is that non-profit organisations have so far been front-runners in this area.

In addition to the lack of state support, there are further impediments to this work in India. Masculinity is barely discussed in the public domain. This is evident from the content of mainstream media. In the Delhi rape case, for example, few articles considered the role of stereotypical masculine behaviour as a factor influencing these crimes, an example being the article by Kiran Bedi (Bedi, 2012) Kiran Bedi, for example argues for harsher punishment of perpetrators, rather than analysing the root of the problem. Furthermore, on examination of available information, there appears to be little coordinated and large scale action among organisations working in this field. Although some do publish accounts of their activities, documentation is largely in toolkit form and formal analysis is lacking. Whilst there is increasing activity in this field, there is still much work to be done to establish this as a well-known field in India, supported by rigorous research and public interest.

Methods

Interviews were used as the tool of data collection for this study. The type of interviews carried out can be classified as elite interviews. These involve interviewing people who are leaders and experts in the field (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.147). We gained access to the elites by using a number of strategies. Firstly, we looked through a global forum that listed organisations working with men. We followed this up by conducting internet searches on organisations to identify staff relevant to our selection criteria and then contacted them. Selection depended on being a professional holding a position of Program Manager, Program Director, CEO or Founder. Potential interviewees were also asked to suggest names of other people to be considered for interview.

We approached potential interviewees for a 35-45 minute interview on Skype, at a date and time of their convenience. In the introductory email we provided a background to the organisation commissioning the research and the context of the study. Attached in the email were the consent form and an information sheet providing greater details on the purpose of the study, storage of data and duration of the interview process. We also included a prompt that requested interviewees to imagine a situation, where every young man and boy in India were to be given the opportunity to reflect on and practise gender equitable behaviour. This was followed by a discussion that aimed to answer questions about the actors that need to be involved, what they should do, where, the motivation and rationale for involvement, and when this could be achieved.

Interviews were recorded on digital recording software capable of recording Skype conversations in mp3 format. Verbatim transcription of the files was carried out by transcribers to whom training had been provided by the researchers, on the requirements of the transcription process and a background to the study. Transcribers were made to sign a confidentiality agreement. The researchers checked the quality of the transcripts prior to the analysis process.

Coding and constant comparisons across interviews were the key tools used in this study to analyse interview transcript data. Coding techniques were drawn from grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Each transcript was first coded line by line using an open coding approach, and emergent themes were examined for broader conceptual categories. Constant comparison was carried out to refine themes emerging from the data. The line by line open coding and emergent themes were cross checked by both authors, thereby acting as a check on the validity and trustworthiness of data.

The study has been limited by logistical constraints such as the researchers' capacity to conduct interviews only on computer-based Skype software, the short time frame in which interviews were to be conducted, and the ability to conduct interviews only in English. This eliminated those without access to these technologies and language skills. The number of professionals in this niche area is also small. From the 26 people contacted, 14 agreed to interview. 14 interviews appeared to be the point of saturation of data, as insights and themes from the interviews began to become repetitive. Interviewees also began to suggest persons for the interview who had already been considered in our sampling process.

Results

The following results are organized into four sections based on key themes that emerged from the data. The first outlines the general approach that interviewees felt should underpin work with boys and young men. The subsequent three sections discuss spaces considered essential in developing and changing attitudes and behaviours: domestic, education and media. Here we describe why these spaces are thought to be critical, what needs to happen in them, barriers to progress, and possible solutions to some of these challenges.

General principles

Interviewees frequently stressed the need for work to be based on particular guiding principles and values. Some even vocalised them as a prerequisite to all work in this area. Boys need a safe environment where they feel secure to voice concerns, share feelings and challenge their behaviour. This requires non-judgemental support from a person, who can act as a positive role model for the boys. Support from peers is also critical. Activity-based programs are often used to engage boys, where ideas of gender and sexuality are communicated subtly, and boys are given the intellectual framework to question norms. Due to the intersectionality of gender, caste and class issues, some interviewees suggested that more fundamental concepts, including respect, power, empathy and responsibility should be included. The work that is done by the actors we discuss shortly has to be underpinned by these guidelines.

Realism required

Interviewees also stressed that anyone working with men needs to be aware of the limitations of this approach. Even a sustained, formal intervention cannot guarantee a measurable change in attitudes and behaviour. Only a small percentage of men in a program may be willing to go through the difficult reflection and transformation process. Those who do, may change in different ways and this change may not be linear. Interviewees also highlighted that funders often wrongly expect quick and significant progress, which makes them reluctant to support these initiatives. They called for realistic expectations of what such work can achieve, whilst not detracting from its intrinsic value.

Parents

Interviewees identified primary care givers, normally parents, as key actors that influence a boy's gender attitudes and behaviours, the construction of which begins at birth. In the Indian context, families are a central and pervasive influence in many aspects of an individual's life. In their early years, children spend most of their time in the home environment. In addition, parents remain key decision-makers for a long time and are crucial in upholding or challenging social norms. Working with parents is therefore essential.

Interviewees said that parents must help their children develop gender sensitive attitudes and behaviours. Parents must understand the rigidity of conventionally constructed gender and its negative impacts on children's analytical thought processes and interpersonal development.

Children must be encouraged to think analytically, ask questions and have conversations with their parents on gender and sexuality. Beyond general statements, however, little detail was given about what parents should do.

Various barriers to parents being able to positively influence their sons were identified. The three main areas of concern were parents' own views about gender and sexuality, the reluctance to question adult authority and the difficulty of reaching parents on a large scale. Conventionally, the family both mirrors and perpetuates patriarchal values, making Participant 11 describe the family as "the fountainhead of patriarchy." Parents may have stereotypical ideas and show reluctance to engage with children on these issues. Participant 7, for example, was concerned that "a lot of conversation around sexuality happens in negatives where sex is the dangerous thing." Often children are expected to conform to parents' expectations and instructions without question, therefore preventing them from thinking and reflecting on social norms.

Although these issues make a strong case for interventions with parents, the family environment is not easily accessible to formal interventions. Participant 11 makes this argument by stating:

"It's not like a school where you enter and you sort of have the opportunity of talking to 2000 students "

Interviewees warned that attempts to reach families through community activities are resource intensive and it may be difficult to affect attitudinal change in this target group. To surmount these challenges, interviewees recommended reaching parents by using opportunities when they are interacting with schools. This might include children's performances, and parent-teacher meetings. It may be easier to reach the high income demographic in this manner as they tend to be more involved in such activities. It is worth noting the assumption that through individual exposure to gender sensitive attitudes and behaviours, parents will consciously impart them to their children at home.

Teachers

The second theme of critical importance across interviews was the role of educational professionals and the school system. School is a key site of socialization where boys spend a large proportion of their time. Practically, it is also a way of reaching a large audience through existing institutions with mandatory attendance. Due to these factors, interviewees ranked it as the most attractive option for long term, sustainable and nationwide intervention.

One of the key features of working in schools is the need for age-appropriate curricula which can be made part of mainstream education across India. Both the curriculum and its delivery need to be seen as integral parts of schooling and not ad hoc, one-off, extracurricular activities seen by students and teachers as being of little value. Whilst there are considerable pressures on teachers to complete core academic activities, this need cannot be ignored. Interviewees emphasised the importance of organisations collaborating to develop curricula, whilst noting that efforts are being made in this direction. Participant 3 suggested that a platform, consisting of experts in this area, needs to be created and sufficiently funded with the sole purpose of developing one curriculum.

Buy-in from gatekeepers to the education system, particularly state authorities, teaching professionals in leadership positions and parents, is crucial to introducing curricula. All of these actors may perceive such curricula to be covering immoral topics that challenge widely held cultural and religious beliefs. This may make them disregard the importance of this activity. Organisations need to increase collaborative advocacy efforts to change these attitudes and encourage the state to take action. Interviewees suggested that careful packaging of curricula is one strategy to create greater acceptance. Participant 4, for example, said:

“The first impression is that you are going to do sexuality education with our children.... But then when we explain that no, that’s not what we are doing but we are teaching children Personal Safety skills, then some openness comes up.”

If it is framed as meeting an objective of the school, including academic, career and personal development, there is likely to be less opposition. Identifying individuals within the system who can champion the cause was highlighted as a further strategy. One participant spoke of a professor who successfully lobbied the authorities at his university to introduce gender as part of the curriculum. Overall, the interviewees suggested that, despite the challenges of getting buy-in, thoughtful and well-planned efforts can work.

Trained and capable teachers are required to deliver the curricula. However, interviewees highlighted several problems. Currently, teachers lack knowledge about critical ideas surrounding gender, they may have discriminatory attitudes that reinforce stereotypes the curriculum is meant to prevent, and may be uncomfortable and hesitant to deliver messages in a classroom setting. This was articulated, for example, in the following observations by Participant 13:

“You know, they will not say anything during the training but they may not implement that by heart... They may not be very comfortable and it has been seen that they are not very comfortable.”

“There are instances when teachers discriminate between boys and girls.”

“So it’s not only they teach something, they need to believe in that.”

Teachers need training from the onset of their career on issues surrounding gender and sexuality. This will give them a framework around which to discuss gender issues with students and help them feel comfortable.

It is important that teachers’ efforts and messages in the curriculum are mainstreamed into a broader school environment that is free from fear. From the beginning of their education, children should be taught empathy, respect and be provided with positive reinforcement. Committed leadership from Head teachers and passionate internal support for these ideas can help ensure that this happens. Participant 14, for example, highlighted the following:

“One of my headmistresses... would say, hey you boys when your mom is looking tired, why don’t you

just do the sweeping for her, and she just kind of put this in when she was chatting in assembly about things. She was consciously doing it." In addition to assemblies, messages about gender can be reflected in career counselling sessions and pedagogic materials. Schools should reach out to parents so that both key influencers give children the same messages.

Media Professionals

Interviewees also said that it is imperative to work through the media, due to its pervasive influence on attitudes surrounding gender and its large audience. Participants mentioned different forms of media and technology that could be targeted, including television series, cell phones, gaming, mainstream and non-mainstream newspapers, films, nursery rhymes and books for children and adolescents. As an industry, the media needs to take responsibility, self-regulate and reflect on its role in establishing attitudes in society. Media outlets must stop using sexist language and sensationalising issues such as rape. Participant 9, for example, was frustrated with the amount of victim blaming that occurs, particularly around the issue of clothing.

Participants suggested that media must promote anti-sexist attitudes and new models of masculinity. They remarked that although some media professionals are aware of gender inequality issues and their impact on women's lives, many remain unaware of the damaging effects of conventionally constructed masculinity. Organisations working with men need to work with the media to build this awareness and also provide content for dissemination to the public. Change may be easier to effect once there is strong leadership

Discussion

Our interviewees highlighted key actors and sectors required to provide every boy in India with the opportunity to reflect on and practise gender equitable attitudes and behaviours. Parents and families, educational professionals and media professionals emerged as critical to this approach. The following discussion situates the results within literature. We explore the extent to which participants are supported or challenged and draw out our recommendations.

Literature agrees with interviewees' sentiment that all interaction with men and boys on gender issues must be underpinned by certain principles. This applies whether you are a teacher providing formal education at school or a parent discussing issues with your son at home. Speaking about his experience in Irish youth centres, Harland (1997, p.12) emphasises the importance of a facilitator who has the maturity and personal awareness about their own identity in relation to gender and also that of class and race. They must also create a safe and trusting environment where young men can examine, reflect and question issues.

Interviewees' emphasis on the need to engage with boys at a young age before gender attitudes and behaviours become fixed is widely supported by research. Trautner, et.al. (2005) suggests that gender stereotyping involves a pattern of development characterised by three phases. Children learn about gender-related characteristics between their toddler and preschool years and consolidate this in a rigid fashion between 5-7 years. Around the ages of 7- 8 years they experience an increased flexibility in thinking about gender roles. Due to the practical difficulties in engaging very small children and the fixed attitudes they have, we suggest the older age group may be a more viable target for intervention. Further investigation is required to determine whether this is appropriate on a large scale in India, and the implications it would have on choice of methods and delivery agents.

Parents

We also find that interviewees unequivocally acknowledge the crucial role parents play in affecting gender attitudes. This concurs with examined literature. Children observe many forms of gendered behaviour in their home and family setting (Lowe, 1998, p.208). Parental styles of interaction, beliefs about gender (e.g. the cause of sex differences and gender roles) and the extent to which they influence their children's everyday activities, such as toy selection, impact how children think about and perceive gender (McHale et.al.,2003). Parents also influence their children's behaviour by explicitly teaching them their personal values and guiding them to certain academic and career choices (McHale,2003). Hence, children learn to behave in a gendered way, thinking and acting in a sexist and non-sexist manner because it mirrors the way they have learnt about gender roles through observation, initiation and modelling (MacNaughton,2006, p.128-129). We would suggest, however, that this be studied with specific reference to the Indian context, given the different family structures and the central role of the family throughout an individual's life. What is certain is that each parent needs to take responsibility for the development of their own child's attitudes and behaviours around gender.

Interviewees mentioned the difficulty inherent in engaging parents, which is acknowledged and addressed by authors such as Berkowitz (2004). Like the interviewees, he suggests that parents be made aware of gender issues through school activities and initiatives. Comprehensive programs in

schools should involve parents at different levels. Seminars, meetings, newsletters, and emails can be used to reach parents with information about attitudes surrounding gender and the school programs in place to promote more gender equitable attitudes. This can help acquaint parents with the school's program and encourage them to adopt similar values at home to ensure that children receive the same messages from all key influencers (Berkowitz, 2004). However, due to a range of factors including geography, demography, parents' education and wealth, and school management policies and values, there is considerable diversity in Indian parent-school interactions. In some cases these are even non-existent. Interventions must therefore closely examine each case to identify appropriate engagement mechanisms and evaluate whether this method can indeed translate into changes in parent-child interactions.

Teachers

Schools also have a direct role in developing boys' gender attitudes, in addition to their role when interacting with parents. Since the school space is where children learn, interact with others and spend much of their time in childhood, it becomes a crucial site where gender sensitive attitudes and behaviours are inoculated and adopted (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2007, p.27). The presence of personnel who have established inter-personal relationships with children make teachers key actors in a long term, sustainable intervention. The following paragraphs draw out different points key to this intervention, namely curriculum, teacher training and general school environment.

Interviewees and researchers agree that gender needs to be part of school education, and not an extracurricular activity. However, there is little consensus about whether this should be a separate subject and/or that key messages need to be integrated into others. An independent subject may offer the benefit of an explicit focus on gender issues. On the other hand, few teachers have the time and inclination to teach anything beyond core academic subjects, as identified by our participants. Moreover, integration with other subjects, such as history, literature and social studies may provide a broader approach that deals with gender alongside other social issues of caste and class. This may give students the chance to understand the interconnectedness of gender, class, race and caste, thereby addressing the concerns of some interviewees, that failure to do so may result in students becoming more equitable in one area but not in others (Berkowitz, 2004; Connell, 1996).

Debates around curriculum are also fuelled by the challenges of developing material that parents and education authorities are willing to accept. As discussed in our results, there is much opposition to sex education and anything considered to transgress social norms. This varies depending on the school, parents, children's age and content and marketing of curriculum. There seems to be an underlying assumption that one curriculum, with age-specific material, could be developed through collaboration and implemented across India. This may be possible but we feel that there is risk of using standardised curriculum across all sections of society that are so incredibly divergent in terms of opportunities to live healthy, equal lives and resistance to change.

We recommend that, as a first step, experts in this field need to formally collaborate in order to research, develop and lobby for new curriculum. They must resolve the above tensions, which may

involve research into the expectations of gatekeepers, specifically education authorities and parents. It is necessary to find a balance between gaining acceptance from these key actors, and maintaining the integrity of the curriculum content. We need to recognise that developing curriculum is a political process and not just a technical exercise.

As key delivery agents of this curriculum, teachers will need comprehensive training in gender issues. This should equip teachers with a deep understanding of gender and how social roles develop in childhood. Training sessions should be an integral part of teacher education and not a one-off activity (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2007, p.33-34). We agree with our interviewees that providing knowledge through training needs to be supplemented with personal support for teachers who may be lacking the confidence to deliver messages to students. Returning to our principles underpinning all work with men, this highlights the importance of the facilitator who has both the technical knowledge and interpersonal skills to guide transformation.

Interviewees also recommended that the entire school system needs to reflect gender sensitive values. All staff need to be aware of their own ideas about gender and the gendered behaviour that children bring to school. School managements need to reflect on whether gender equality is a concern and identify policies and actions by which they can reach out to their students (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2007, p.30). Parents, NGOs and other civil society organisations can collaborate to ensure implementation (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2007, p.33-34). In particular, they need to identify champions who can promote the cause in their own school. It is worth investigating already existing initiatives using this approach to understand how to identify these actors and provide them with support.

Media professionals

The media works in tandem with families and schools to shape attitudes and behaviour. It is a much more diffused influence than parents and teachers. The media has an impact on almost all aspects of life and is a key socialising force effecting categories of race, class and gender (Gerbner, 1999). Thus if most media influences constantly encourage male supremacy, women's passivity and discriminatory attitudes towards women, a culture is established that espouses these views and begins to institutionalise and legitimise violence against women (Wood, 1994). Interview results find resonance in literature, which calls for promotion of media literacy, especially among the school-going population, and the formation of media critique groups in schools (Gerbner, 1999). The literature recognises the importance of long term measures to change the media industry and indicates the responsibility it has in endorsing, adopting and reflecting gender equality. Working with media groups, labour groups and independent media persons and bodies can help address significant needs and interests that have been ignored in mainstream discussions (Gerbner, 1999). Actors working in media can therefore work either in association with or in opposition to the efforts of parents and education professionals to provide gender sensitive messages to boys. We suggest that, as with schools, change is most likely to happen by identifying industry champions who can push for gradual improvements.

Disparities between current and future initiatives

For us, one of the key discussion points arises not from the similarities between literature and our results, but the disparities between current initiatives in India and the ideal situation that interviewees described. The very limited data describing initiatives shows that work largely occurs through NGOs in communities and school settings using trained social workers to deliver short term, extracurricular programs. Adolescent boys are usually the target audience for interventions around specific issues like condom use. In comparison, interviewees advocate schools as primary sites of intervention, rarely mentioning communities, with teachers delivering broader curriculum and acting as positive role models to children from a young age. This is particularly interesting as most of our interviewees are practitioners themselves.

The reasons for this disparity need to be further investigated so that progress can be made, but general observations are possible at this stage. Our research question had a specific focus on scale that may have encouraged this result. We asked interviewees how every boy in India can be given the opportunity to reflect on and practice gender equitable behaviour. Interviewees felt that the best way to achieve this was to use already existing institutions that have the wide reach and potential capacity to deliver, and thus recommended schools. Current community-based programmes, on the other hand, often have only a limited reach because they have to create these structures themselves, including creating spaces to educate boys and parents and providing trained facilitators. This contributes to making them resource intensive, and their reliance on scarce donor funding for this type of work exacerbates the problem. As a result, they seem to be a non-viable solution to scaling work with boys and young men across India.

That said, community-based work by NGOs on smaller scales is still incredibly valuable. There are significant challenges to moving to a school-based model. In the interim, such work can ensure that at least some boys and young men are given an opportunity. Moreover, we can learn from community work in ways that help us to move to the ideal model. Pilot initiatives and curriculum, for example, have been developed, trailed and improved in this space with relative independence from government and other institutional actors. This has created an evidence base that supports the approach of working with boys and young men, and in doing so enables us to promote this type of work to other important parties identified in this report. We think that, for the foreseeable future, NGOs working at a small scale in communities and schools are likely to remain the primary actors engaging men on gender issues.

The long road ahead

We started this paper wanting to know how every boy and young man in India can be given the opportunity to reflect on and practice gender equitable behaviour. One of the first things we learned was that age is critical. We must influence boys at the earliest time possible, by identifying the key actors interacting with boys at this development stage. These are parents and teachers, with media playing a supporting role. In order to achieve scale, however, we need to use the most suitable channels. Due to the difficulty in engaging with parents in a non-institutionalised setting, schools are necessary sites of intervention to change the attitudes and behaviour of both parents and children. However, this is not a quick fix. Firstly, any involvement of men and boys in gender work is a process of transformation that is



difficult, complicated and messy (UN,2008). With this in mind, we need to collaborate to develop curricula, train teachers and improve the school environment as a whole. We must also learn to engage with the media. There are significant obstacles in our path, not in the least opposition from gatekeepers towards messages that challenge the status quo. In order to achieve these changes at a large scale in India, the state and its machinery needs to be involved at various levels. We must carefully navigate this political landscape, whilst remaining true to basic principles of this work. Inspired and motivated individuals within families, schools and media may hold the solution. It is they who have the required relationships and contextual understanding to create change in their spheres of influence. We need to better understand them and how we can use them as catalysts to produce the change that India needs.

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About Equal Community Foundation

Set up in 2009, Equal Community Foundation (ECF) seeks to end violence against women by providing every man in India with the opportunity to study and practice gender equitable behaviour.

In practice, we:

- develop and deploy high impact programmes that provide men with the skill, knowledge and tools they need to take personal and collective action to end violence and discrimination against women, and influence other men to do the same.
- conduct and support research and analysis of best practice methods so that we can inform the debate around the approach.
- develop and execute popular campaigns that raise public awareness of the approach, identify key stakeholders, and inspire these key stakeholders to take action, through peer sharing and training.

We will share the evidence and insights from experience and observations with grassroots organisations, policy makers, and funders in order to influence policy, increase the available funding and ultimately increase the number of individuals and organisations who empower men to end violence and discrimination against women.

On March 8, 2013, ECF is launching a campaign called Man Up India. It is based on the findings of this report.

For Man Up India and the approach of working with men to end violence against women to reach its potential we need your support. There are three ways in which you can support us:

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- Partner with us
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