



USAID
আমেরিকার জনগণের পক্ষ থেকে



World Vision

Sustained Impact of Male Engagement for Gender Equality

NOBO JATRA - NEW BEGINNING

USAID's Resilience Food Security Activity

Introduction

Bangladesh has made notable progress around key indicators such as poverty reduction, economic growth and improvements around maternal and neonatal health. However, this growth does not always translate into gains for both males and females. The 2017-18 **Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (BDHS)** found improvements in maternal health, child nutrition, gender and social norms. For example, the BDHS showed the level of stunting among children under 5 declined from 43% in 2007 to 31% in 2017. The percentage of women receiving four or more ante natal visits during pregnancy increased from 31% in 2014 to 47% in 2017. Age at first marriage continues to rise slowly. The median age at first marriage among women age 20–49 increased from 15.3 years in 2007 to 16.3 years in 2017. **However, concerted efforts are required to accelerate improvements in these critical areas.**

It is in this context that **USAID's 'Nobo Jatra – new beginning'** project, implemented by **World Vision Bangladesh** seeks to improve gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience in southwest Bangladesh. Nobo Jatra is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the **Government of Bangladesh and Winrock International**. The project has reached over 216,377 households including pregnant and lactating women, children under two, youth, adolescents, husbands and fathers with multi sector interventions.

Nobo Jatra implemented a deeply contextualized male engagement for gender equality approach targeted to husbands and wives to improve gender relations within families, prevent gender-based violence including child marriage, and improve male engagement in caregiving and unpaid household work. The approach encouraged men and women to reflect on issues including domestic and care work, household decision-making, women's mobility and autonomy, equitable participation in social and economic activities, violence against women and girls, and access and control over resources. This document is based on evidence captured through Nobo Jatra's annual monitoring indicators and a study conducted in 2020 on the sustained impact of the male engagement approach.



“After participating in male engagement sessions, men's attitude towards women has changed. Men help women in cooking and cleaning. Women go to the market and can go outside their home. Women go to the bank for transactions.”

- Shapan Kumar Mohaldar, Dacope sub district

World Vision Bangladesh - Male Engagement Approach

In addition to the Nobo Jatra project, World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) has leveraged and integrated the male engagement approach as an inter sectional theme across health, nutrition and livelihoods programming. WVB's male engagement approach is a group based learning process to promote men's involvement in caregiving for gender equality. The male engagement approach mainly targets husbands and wives to promote sharing household work and joint decision making between couples to facilitate transformation of traditional gender based inequalities. WVB is also intentional to include poor and extreme poor households, persons with disability and youth in the male engagement intervention. The approach paves the way for women to participate in decision-making and economic activities. The male engagement approach has resulted in positive outcomes for gender equality as seen through WVB projects and activities described in the section below:



Nobo Jatra's Male Engagement for Gender Equality Approach

Goal

Increase practice of gender equitable norms and reduce gender based violence.

Building on the success of male involvement in changing attitudes and reducing violence against women, Nobo Jatra developed and implemented a deeply contextualized Male Engagement for Gender Equality module. Through the male engagement sessions, Nobo Jatra targets both **husbands and wives** to promote inclusive change and transformational shifts in gender norms and covers key concepts such as shared decision making, division of domestic and care giving responsibilities and addresses the pervasive practice of child marriage.

Nobo Jatra targets **poor and extreme poor households** and is intentional to layer and sequence a range of activities at the household level. For example, male engagement couples are also participants in other Nobo Jatra activities in **Water Sanitation and Hygiene, nutrition social safety nets or Ultra Poor Graduation**.



6 months



12 sessions



"I didn't have confidence to talk to my husband before, we had an understanding gap. Now we understand each other very well. We are more friendly than ever."
says Tumpa, male engagement participant.

Male engagement module



LET'S BEGIN

Introduction, pre-test on attitudes and information



THE MAN I AM IN THE FAMILY

social and biological differences, 'masculinity' and its impact, attitudes and behaviors related to equality at home



MAXIMIZING FAMILY WELLBEING AND PROSPERITY

importance of men's support and share decision making at home, sense of contribution and ownership, skills to build gender equitable relationships



PEACE IN THE FAMILY

targets men as partners in ending violence/child marriage, skills for healthy relationships at home, measure attitudinal changes and identify future actions

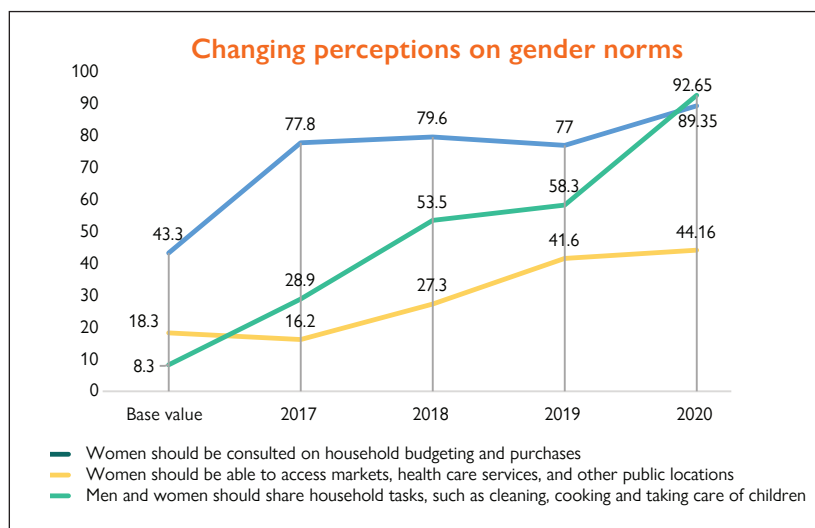


GRADUATION

celebration, recognition, acknowledgement

9,814 couples (husbands and wives) have graduated through male engagement for gender equality sessions. Couples become catalysts, sharing their knowledge with others in the area and setting a good example to their own children. Facilitators have reported that layering and sequencing of the male engagement activity has also helped to minimize any unintended impacts of women participating in Nobo Jatra activities that increases incomes, assets, confidence and skills such as Ultra Poor Graduation or nutrition safety nets. When Nobo Jatra first started implementing in 2015, only 8.3 percent of men thought that they should share household and childcare tasks. Today, over 92 percent of men say that husbands and wives should work together on household chores and care giving for children. Participation in male engagement sessions has shown positive changes in perceptions related to gender equitable practices at the household level:

Indicators	Baseline (2015)	2020
Men said that men and women should share household chores, including childcare	8.3%	92.65%
Men think women should be consulted on household budgeting and purchases	43.30%	89.35%
Men think women should be able to access markets, health care services, and other public spaces without restrictions	18.30%	44.16%



Study: 'Male engagement for gender equality - sustained impact and changes in south west Bangladesh'

Objectives

- To understand impact of male engagement intervention in improving gender equity in a household, and enhance the effectiveness and quality of male engagement
- To develop a plan on how the male engagement approach could sustain with regard to changes in perception, knowledge, attitude and practice of men and boys.

Methodology

A mixed method using quantitative as well as qualitative research components was applied. The study used a participant based sampling survey, which is a descriptive two-stage cluster design. The first stage is the male engagement groups and second stage is the sample couple from the group.

Quantitative data: 210 couples under case groups, 70 couples under control groups.

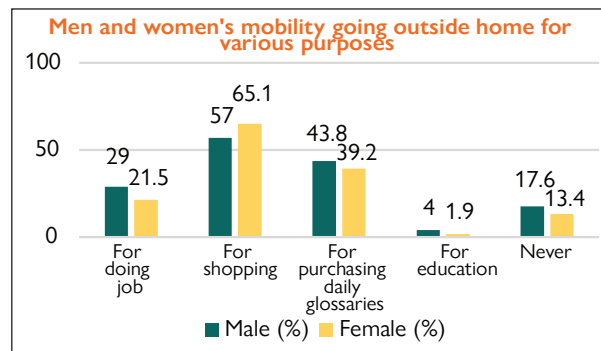
Qualitative data: FGDs (10), Key Informants Interviews (25), case stories (3) and consultations (10). Interviews with: standing committees and Union Parishad members, local government institutions, civil society actors at local and national level, academic, and representatives of development agencies.

Findings

Access

Women's mobility outside the home has increased significantly. Women can now participate in events outside the home, work and also go to markets. Nobo Jatra's baseline data in 2015 showed that 80.9% women below 30 and 66.3% women above 30 needed to seek permission to visit certain locales. The study (2019) found that 50.5% (case women) aged below 30 years need male permission to move around. Male engagement sessions change men's perception; earlier before being trained, men said, "Earlier my permission was mandatory for my wife and daughters to go outside home. After participating in the male engagement sessions they can go outside of the home and we keep each other informed so we don't worry" - according to a male engagement participant interviewed as part of the study.

39.2% of women are able to go and buy groceries without permission and 65.1% are able to go shopping for household goods; 21.5% women go outside to work.



Findings

Decision making

Couples have acknowledged that they jointly take decisions on many issues, which were previously decided by husbands alone. For small expenditures such as food, clothing, healthcare, household appliances, both husbands and wives took 77% of decisions. Equally, for larger investments such as buying assets, or land, livestock, agriculture and fisheries, 78% of decisions were taken by the couples jointly. 83.8% couples decided together on when to invite or visit friends and family members, 74.1% jointly decided on children's education and 87.3% took healthcare decisions together. Further, 89.35% of men think that women should be consulted on household budgeting and purchases in comparison to a baseline value of 43.30%.

Participation

Women are attending and contributing to discussions courtyard meetings at village level and meetings at union parishad (tier of local Government) level; thus women are taking part in the community affairs. 2,181 women participants in male engagement sessions are also participating in Nobo Jatra's Ultra-Poor Graduation activity which involves literacy training, income generating activities and participation in savings groups. This has not had any unintended consequences – rather, husbands have been supportive of their wives – in many cases, supporting their wives with income generating activities such as making bamboo products or paper boxes.

When Nobo Jatra first started implementing in 2015, only 8.3 percent of men thought that they should share household and childcare tasks. Today, over 92 percent of men say that husbands and wives should work together on household chores and care giving for children.



In 2020,
over 92 percent
of men say that husbands
and wives should
work together on household
chores and care giving
for children
(in comparison to
8.3 percent in 2015).

Systems

Child marriage is a major societal challenge in Bangladesh and, consequently, high rates of early pregnancy. One of the major impacts of male engagement sessions was a positive shift in attitudes and mind-sets around child marriages. Majority of participants (male 98.1% and female 94.7%) agreed that child marriage was harmful for adolescent girls and that it was a punishable offence. 93.6% men and 93.3% participants said they were encouraging and supporting their daughters to go school. Couples perceived that investment in education in girls/women was not a waste of money and time as 95.2% male and 96.7% female among case couples in the study consider educating their daughters as an important investment, and equally valued girls as important in families.

Well-being and Gender Based Violence

Prior to participation in male engagement sessions, women did not perceive domestic violence as a form of violence or as a violation of rights. The male engagement approach challenged this norm by developing understanding between the partners, creating an openness to share burdens and by promoting improved communication between the couples. Open communication between husband and wife has helped to reduce violence and family conflicts. Some men are giving more emphasis on family bonding and mutual respect.

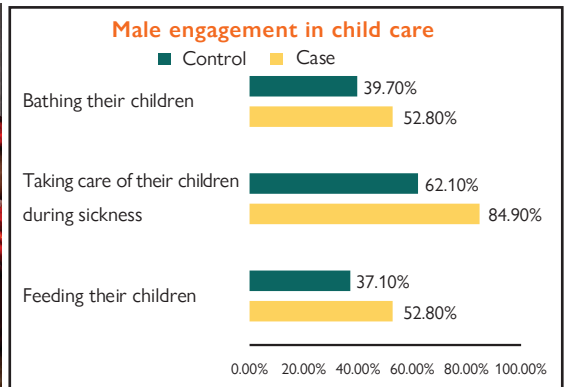
A major outcome of male engagement has been the increased communications between husbands and wives when it comes to conflict resolution. 97% (male) and 96.7% (female) of case couples said they were taking joint decisions to solve family disputes. Improved division of labour is evident as 71% of men are doing housework in comparison to 38.2% at baseline. 80% women and 85.5% men among programme participants discuss about their problems with partner on monthly basis and resolve that.

The male engagement approach also helped participants build skills on positive communication, emphasized mutual respect and developed skills to manage anger or outbursts of emotion. Another reason for decreasing domestic violence against women is that couples are spending more time together, sharing their personal problems, trying to find solutions together peacefully, which reduces misunderstanding, and increases respect.

Findings

Household chores and caregiving

In case groups, 52.8% men were feeding their children, 84.9% men were taking care of their children during sickness, and 52.8% men were bathing their children.



Recommendations

- 1 The male engagement approach or certain key sessions/messages can be embedded in existing Government structures (steering/ protection committees) at Union Parishad, Upazila, and District level; and in the existing programs of the Department of Women Affairs. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs are important allies and local stakeholders who can actualize these recommendations.
- 2 A simplified version of the male engagement module could be adapted by the Union Parishad Standing Committees particularly those working for women empowerment, gender issues and combating child marriage.
- 3 Government structures such as Youth Clubs could also be important entry points to spread messages on gender equality. An abridged version of the male engagement module could also be shared and adapted in Youth Club strategies.
- 4 Couples who have graduated through male engagement can serve as important community based advocates on the subject. Couples can be invited to join in relevant meetings and events led by the Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and divisional level structures.
- 5 Further advocacy is essential for inclusion of "male engagement approach" in articles/ section of The National Women's Development Policy 2011, education and child protection policies.

Key Stakeholders to Sustain Male Engagement Impact

- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs,
- Ministry of Primary and Mass Education ,
- Ministry of Education,
- Ministry of Youth and Sports
- National School Text Book & Board
- Divisional, District & Sub-district administration
- Union Parishad



"My dream is for Sumaiya to become a doctor one day. When Sumaiya tells us that she wants to be independent and provide for the family, I feel proud and blessed to have a daughter. I work doubly as hard so that I can invest in my children's education – because that way I am investing in the future."

Jaharul, male engagement graduate

Hope Joy Justice



www.wvb-nobojatra.org



<https://www.facebook.com/WVBangladesh>



<https://twitter.com/wvbangladesh?lang=en>

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