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TRANSFORMING 'MEN'TALITIES

Gender Equality and
Masculinities in India



পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার
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Transforming 'MEN'talities: Gender Equality and Masculinities in India

Transforming 'MEN'talities: Gender Equality and Masculinities in India

Roadmap and Scoping Report

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MEN AND BOYS ARE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

Onward and upward is how India's economic growth trajectory is often defined. However, just like most other countries in the world, India is struggling to keep pace with its gender equality targets.

National reports of progress against Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality, also evidence the need for increased understanding and awareness of the unequal power relations between men and women in society. These structural barriers are perpetuated by socially defined patriarchal norms and stereotypes.

Globally, current trends show that men and boys have largely been excluded from the gender equality discourse. As the saying goes, it takes two to tango. Gender inequality is not a woman's issue. It is a human rights issue that affects everyone in society and the engagement of men and boys is a crucial element for progress in India and beyond.

This one-of-a-kind report explains, through multiple means and across different spheres, the need to engage and empower men and boys to critically evaluate national, regional and local norms of masculinities and challenge negative gender stereotypes and behaviours.

The report also outlines how such a positive transformation will help stakeholders from the civil society, government, academia, and others, in addressing myths and misconceptions surrounding the different notions of masculinity, paving the way for societies to achieve peace and sustainable development, with gender equality as a core principle. This analysis and the resulting recommendations focused on India are expected to provide a valuable and important reference on this issue for the region and globally.



“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed”



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TRANSFORMING MEN'TALITIES - GENDER EQUALITY AND MASCULINITIES IN INDIA

It is not acceptable that, according to recent findings, it may take about 136 years for women and men to reach gender parity, along a number of dimensions, including economic opportunity, political power, education or health. I am terrified reading that 1 in 3 women around the world, that is, a staggering 736 million women, may experience physical or sexual violence. It is neither acceptable that, even if policies and practices are being adopted for gender equality, progress is so slow.

Undeniably, these dynamics are the result of (wrong) social norms and stereotypes, which contribute to nurture, reproduce and amplify gender inequalities, shaping the attitudes and behaviours of all individuals while disregarding their identities, needs, fears and ambitions.

Particularly important in this respect are the norms related to masculinity and the plural, dynamic, and constantly changing ways in which masculinity manifests itself across cultural contexts and social groups. But, what does it mean to be a man in a certain place and at a certain time? Sure, some norms are conducive to peace and healthy relationships, while others contribute to furthering gender inequalities and gender-based violence.

One thing is clear though. We need immediate, tangible, effective and concerted action. This is why UNESCO is steering a Flagship Programme against Gender Stereotypes to support Members States in their efforts to legislate and advance gender equality. UNESCO's aim is to fight biases

in all spheres of life, ranging from sports to the digital world, to youth and, more generally, the transformation of society as a whole. It also aims to engage men, through our initiative on "Men4Gender Equality" to promote positive role models that support societal change.

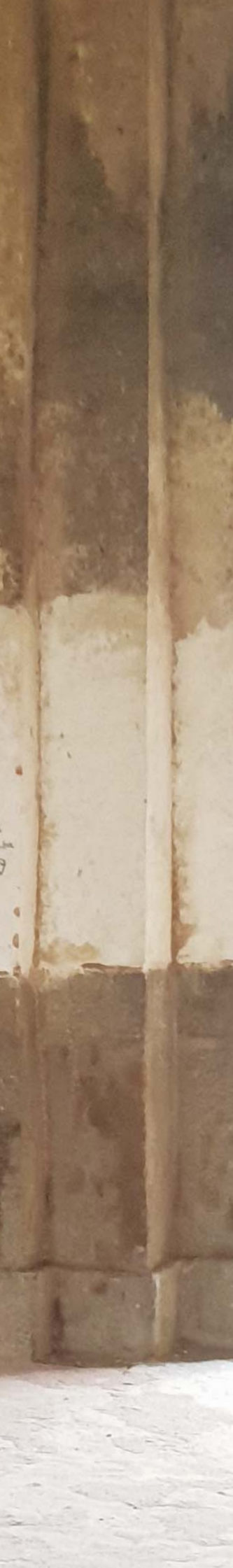
Indeed, the global Men 4 Gender Equality Initiative develops and implements research and capacity-building initiatives seeking to promote and understand how best to engage men and boys for gender equality, everywhere in the world, and particularly in our pilot countries, Costa Rica, Morocco, Zimbabwe and India.

Given India's rich and diverse social, cultural, historical, political and geographical context, this new and innovative report on "Transforming MEN'talities" aims to serve as reference for future comparisons and to steer collaboration at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

This report abounds of good practices and recommendations, which may contribute to the evolution of masculinity-related norms, the transformation of policies and practices, and thus to advance gender equality throughout the world.

Gabriela Ramos
Assistant-Director General
Social and Human Sciences Sector
UNESCO





TRANSFORMING 'MEN'TALITIES: A PRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underline that, in order to achieve equitable and transformative development, it is important that all women have access to the full range of human rights and equal opportunities.

Equality between women and men is enshrined as a principle in almost every human rights treaty, but making protection of all girls and women from gender-based violence and discrimination remains an unfulfilled obligation. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified across the world.

Women's empowerment is critical in the development paradigm, and for far too long men have been seen as part of the problem. It is now time for them to be considered as part of the solution.

Conventionally, issues about gender equality have only been placed in the public arena by women, through many waves of feminist movements. However, it is difficult to reform social structures towards equality without a broad social consensus and ownership between men and women. To rectify the discrepancy in power relations, men and boys must become active and positive advocates for gender equality. To tread on the rightful path towards a gender-equal society, stereotypes and norms need to be rethought, and relationships between women and men reshaped.

This report, entitled “Transforming 'MEN'talities”, maps the current ecosystem of men and boys' engagement within the gender equality framework and seeks to offer recommendations for their deeper and systematic engagement through behavioral changes

With an increasing awareness of men and boys as a necessary part of the solution, there is an urgent need to chart a clear road ahead for their involvement as change agents for gender equality. To this end, this report highlights the role of policymakers, civil society and educational institutions in challenging normative behaviors and ideas that perpetuate gender-based discrimination.

We hope that it will function as a broad guide for all stakeholders interested in the promotion of gender equality, as well as an enabler for incorporating these considerations in policies and practices.

As “Transforming 'MEN'talities” postulates, a holistic approach is essential in facilitating women's empowerment, and ultimately the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the objective of leaving no one behind.

Eric Falt
UNESCO Representative and Director
New Delhi Cluster Office

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Increasingly, research is showing that despite major efforts to improve gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) which includes promoting women's access to resources and opportunities for improving their lives, the results have been mixed, and positive results are too often short-lived. This indicates that there are factors beyond economic, education, health, and other structures that influence GEWE efforts. A growing consensus that cultural factors are at the root of the issue is forming. These cultural issues center on local history, customs, values, and belief systems and the role that they play in forming gender relations and norms. Therefore, there is a call for leading GEWE stakeholders to more actively engage with these cultural factors in the design, implementation, and analysis of future programs. In addition, acknowledging the social and cultural fabric of a community will better guide stakeholders in understanding the complex web of relations and barriers to GEWE and in crafting more contextually relevant and therefore effective programs to address them.

At the core of this cultural discourse around GEWE is the relationship between women and men and the perpetuation of certain patriarchal norms that institute structural inequalities. These gender norms include a range of acceptable behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations which serve to shape social interactions from the most minute and personal to the large-scale and national. Norms that apply particularly to men are called *masculinities*. Understanding how best to identify and then transform the expressions of masculinity that impede GEWE is the ultimate goal of this report. There are implications across the board on how such scholarship and subsequent recommendations can be applied.

This report offers a roadmap for stakeholders based on this perspective that can guide them in developing strategies for implementation. The report is divided into seven chapters, each contributing to a different facet of the discussion. Chapter 1 introduces the report and provides the national context, set of goals, and broad scope of the report. It also includes operational definitions and frame of reference that is used in the report. The justifications and contributions of the report are also given in Chapter 1, situating the work in the larger, global conversation on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical and cultural roots of masculinities in India to provide more context and accurate representation of India in particular while maintaining a strong foundation in well-researched areas of sociology and philosophy. Included in this chapter are the theoretical foundations of gender equality and critical masculinities, a reflection on how men and boys can best be engaged with SDG5 and an overview of the Indian context including its history, religions and social changes. The topics covered in this chapter were identified by the authors based on an extensive literature review, field experience, and through conversations with global experts in gender studies. Despite this, there are certain gaps and important discussions have not been included largely to keep this report to a more manageable length. Where possible, recommended readings and suggestions for further research are provided. One of the primary goals of this chapter is to clearly map the academic or theoretical landscape of critical studies on men and masculinities, and their role in achieving gender equality (SDG5). Key concepts of sociological theory and feminist principles are blended with Indian history, religion,

and cultural influences. It is hoped that readers will appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of the various elements that make up the Indian context, and why the theme of this report is so important.

Chapter 3 provides a policy overview of gender equality efforts in India, focusing on the (limited) history of the inclusion of men and boys in the process. It defines the concept of gender mainstreaming which is subsequently used for evaluating both global and national efforts. The chapter also provides a historical overview of the shifts in approaches to GEWE and the engagement of men and boys, giving the conversation depth and context. This is especially true of the section on Indian policies. It is found that while there has been some success in the global arena, and a long history of gender sensitive policies in India, there has been limited progress in achieving SDG5's indicators. There are many potential reasons for this, not least of which is a deficiency in enforcing policies and gaining political "buy-in" to champion truly gender-transformative programs. This chapter highlights both the positive accomplishments and areas of underperformance by global and Indian decision makers. It includes a historical overview, discussion of political pressures, and goals of each of the policies, and an analysis of the current impact of these on the state of GEWE in India.

Chapter 4 is the heart of this report. Based on a desk study analysis of nearly 80 organizations (including government and non-government, international and local, donors and field workers, and academic and grassroots), it identifies areas of saturation, gaps, and priorities. The analysis looks at programs based on their "dimension" or focus areas, geographic scope and scale, and the sector. Briefly, the results show that a majority of the stakeholders are based in urban centers in North India, as well as in and around Mumbai, with limited expansion into rural areas (especially outside Maharashtra). Likewise, a dominant dimension or focus area for stakeholder programs is safety and security of women and spreading awareness through public campaigns. The lowest number of stakeholder programs is found

in rural communities, in the Southern and Eastern states, and in aspirational districts. Further, environmental projects and efforts to reach youth in schools are also under-represented. Following this, at least one organization or program is highlighted for each of the eight dimensions identified. This chapter's goal is demonstrating that India has both a wealth of stakeholder capacity and resources and also critical gaps and areas of potential oversaturation.

Chapter 5 dives into the barriers that have till now stood in the way of engaging men and boys in GEWE and in developing more positive masculinities in India. A critical examination of the information gathered so far is needed to present a more robust set of recommendations in the next chapter. Following the organization of the preceding chapters, the barriers discussed here follow three broad themes: Socio-cultural barriers related to the gaps in theory, misconceptions and the predominance of certain cultural norms, and the complexity of initiating social changes for something like gender roles; policy barriers and the limitations of existing international, national, and state efforts to curb the destructive results of gender inequalities; and stakeholder barriers based on the analysis given in Chapter 4 and the exclusion of certain key dimensions.

Chapter 6 takes a decidedly more hopeful and positive tone and presents a number of recommendations and paths for successfully engaging men and boys in GEWE. Here again the preceding chapters serve as an organization tool with dedicated parts focused on research and socio-cultural changes, policy recommendations, and strategic stakeholder guidance to ensure better progress towards SDG5. Along with these, an addendum is added that emphasizes the importance of the context and complexity of the Indian social structure. Some of these recommendations, especially around positivity and engaging with faith groups, may seem controversial. The authors do not intend to promote any particular point of view or set of beliefs, rather the aim is highlighting groups and strategies that have been largely overlooked which hold potential benefits.

Chapter 7 concludes the Transforming 'Men'talities report by consolidating select key messages and crucial responsible parties who can potentially take up these key messages. These recommendations reflect broad areas of theoretical and social science research, policy and governance, and multi-stakeholder engagement. In

essence, this report lays a roadmap for how India might best engage men and boys in GEWE, ultimately leading to a more unified and collaborative effort. This is required to properly understand how to make design-effective strategies for engaging men and boys in GEWE.



At the core of the cultural discourse around gender equality and women's empowerment is the relationship between women and men and the perpetuation of certain patriarchal norms that institute structural inequalities.

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This *Transforming 'Men'talities* Report is consolidated into a few key messages and crucial responsible parties who can potentially take up these key messages. These recommendations reflect broad areas of theoretical and social science research, policy and governance, and multi-stakeholder engagement. In essence, this report sought to lay a roadmap for how India might best engage men and boys in GEWE. Multiple arguments were made in terms of the efficacy of this approach for achieving SDG5; however, these arguments are based largely in theory, in small pilot findings, or in limited sectors. Until now, efforts to engage men and boys in GEWE have been sporadic and limited, given relatively low priority in terms of funding and national and international support, and generally far removed from public consciousness. A more unified and collaborative effort is required to properly understand how to make design effective strategies for engaging men and boys in GEWE.

Key Messages

The following key messages are meant to guide and encourage the design of more effective strategies for engaging men and boys in GEWE:

Engaging men and boys in GEWE should be a priority for all stakeholders.

Without the major decision-makers among stakeholders actively and publicly declaring this as a priority action area, it is unlikely that this “new” approach to GEWE will gain much traction. Just as women’s health, safety, and economic development have become globally recognized as crucial for sustainable development, so too we should begin to critically reflect on the role of men and masculine identities in the process of reaching gender equality. Such efforts should include the involvement of men and boys in reframing gender norms in all critical sectors and promoting harmony and cooperation in achieving SDG5. National strategies are needed that treat the engagement of men and boys as a priority in every GEWE program. This can be done initially in a set of priority action areas, pulled from longer discussions in preceding chapters.

Starting early matters: Engaging youth, particularly young boys, has vast transformative potential.

Young boys in particular should receive early education in gender sensitization for building a foundation for social change and stopping the intergenerational cycle of gender discrimination. Early childhood education programs can be implemented to reach children during their most formative years when social norms are ingrained.

Addressing mental health can reduce gender-based violence and discrimination.

While still largely stigmatized, mental health is a significant risk factor associated with conflicts in masculinities and unbalanced gender roles. This is deeply complex and affects all members of society but is also a driver of violent or discriminatory behavior and therefore must be given priority.

Prioritizing improving policy enforcement and the criminal justice system is crucial.

Doing this will help achieve SDG5's goal in multiple ways. An effective criminal justice system can (and should) function as a deterrent against future criminal activities. Increasing the capacity of existing police and court systems to properly handle gender-based violence cases will help prevent future crimes and also encourage women to speak up, report crimes, and pursue justice. However, for this to be possible, gender sensitization must take place at multiple levels, as detailed in the Verma Committee Report including in response officers, medical workers, investigating officers, representatives in the legal system, and in particular, members of the judiciary.

Ensuring inclusivity by increasing stakeholder engagement with rural populations and addressing environmental concerns.

Approximately two-third of India's population still lives in rural areas, which are home to some of the most poor and under served communities. Despite this, most of the funding and GEWE programs are directed at urban centers. Rural populations require different strategies and considerations and pose challenges such as geographic distance, lack of infrastructure, and local power dynamics that can confound SDG efforts. To overcome these obstacles, a larger focus should be given to the rural areas. Similarly, environmental issues, especially climate change and resource depletion, affect rural populations directly. Although it is widely acknowledged that women are the first, and often the most disproportionately affected by these issues, these issues ultimately affect men and boys as well. Engaging men and boys in the process of sustainability will benefit both gender equality and environmental issues.

Focusing on achieving equality through changing social and cultural norms.

A developmental process by definition is gradual and so it is important to sow the seeds of social change in multiple areas. Ultimately, this has to happen through multiple avenues. These include:

- Engaging with FBOs.
- Producing and implementing school material that is gender sensitizing and gender sensitive and that engages all children in reflections on the concepts of respect, diversity, and acceptance, and producing.

- Disseminating information through the media (via various mediums) that normalizes positive role models for everyone and phasing out harmful stereotypes and tropes that build negative masculinities and femininities.

Beyond just media (primarily film and TV) portrayals, this will also involve redefining public roles traditionally held by men such as politicians, police officers, and other offices of power and privilege to be more gender sensitive and equitable as the ideal. It would ideally also include encouraging corporate social responsibility funding to direct at least a percentage of the funds towards GEWE efforts that engage men and boys.

Realizing that multiple masculinities exist and should be acknowledged.

As discussed throughout this report, masculinities are a plurality and a diverse one. Not all men are the same. Men are products of their environment, their family traditions, their religion, their caste, their class, and many other factors. Recognizing the intersections of these factors needs to be the foundation of any and all interventions including research. Hence, interventions should be diverse to be applicable to the various contexts of diverse populations of men. This includes broadening theoretical bases, drawing on policy support, and engaging multiple stakeholders across multiple sectors to effect long-lasting change.

Promoting stakeholder values: Transparency, accountability, collaborations, and convergence.

For all stakeholders, especially those in the Government of India, there should be a more transparent and rigorous evaluation of where funding is channeled and how it has been used for GEWE. Only by first taking stock of the various actors and efforts in this field can we properly create a strategy for unified action. Such a unified action strategy will greatly magnify GEWE efforts throughout India. This is especially relevant for the Government of India, which is continually increasing its Gender Responsive Budgeting but has yet to make significant progress. The NITI Aayog's SDG report (2019) is a brilliant start to this process but the scope of this report is limited to select indicators and misses other, potentially relevant factors. Other stakeholders in other sectors can supplement such reports, creating a more comprehensive impact evaluation of national Gender Responsive Budgeting efforts. Stakeholders should also be held accountable to feminist theory and should actively engage in a shift in paradigm to incorporate women's perspectives in their work to include men and boys in GEWE.

All stakeholders, especially academic and other research institutions, NGOs, and funding agencies should increase their production of impact assessments, best practices, and lessons learned. Sharing of rigorously obtained, high-quality research will serve to propel GEWE efforts and critical masculinity studies. This will help grow and develop national literature on masculinities, GEWE, and other sustainable development efforts. Such reports will also help spread best practices, lessons learned, and successful strategies from one context to another, aiding in scalability and sustainability efforts. Where possible, South Asian and Indian UN offices as well as relevant government ministries can host these reports in organized repositories for improving accessibility.

Finally, this momentum should be maintained and cross-sectoral efforts should be designed and supported that promote transformational gender approaches. This will require sustained, persistent actions, evaluations, re-evaluations, and a long-term commitment by all stakeholders. The weight of centuries of learned behaviors, beliefs, norms, colonization, and traditions plays a significant role in gender inequalities. Only through acknowledging

these will there be the necessary societal shift to accommodate gender equality and women's empowerment. Specifically, with regard to working with men and boys, there is an added layer of personal identity transformation through critical reflection on cultural norms, social expectations, and recognizing the political, economic, familial and other structures that govern life and reinforce gender inequalities. This process is challenging (but not impossible) to inspire in individuals, even on a nation-wide scale. What can be done for improving chances of success is creating the conditions under which such transformations can occur more easily and where like-minded men and boys can find more positive masculinities reflected and accepted. These conditions can be created by the various stakeholders in their sectors, and by leveraging their specific expertise for improving GEWE. Such conditions merit additional study and cross-stakeholder collaborations.

Champions of Change

These key messages require champions to take responsibility and represent the multiple stakeholder sectors, areas of expertise, and geographic scope. UNESCO New Delhi has taken a step forward to call for more concerted efforts in engaging men and boys with GEWE for re-examining dominant masculinities and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequalities and rallying together India's wealth of stakeholders for a common cause. The 2019 UNESCO New Delhi Partners' Dialogue on this topic showed that there are substantial resources and expertise in India. There are strengths in nearly every sector and domain that are already contributing to GEWE in remarkable and revolutionary ways. The task now is to bring these efforts to mainstream awareness for promoting their continuation and scalability, and engaging other stakeholders and decision-makers to further enhance their successes. This report has included multiple stakeholder spotlights to showcase these exceptional organizations and demonstrate the myriad ways in which men and boys can be engaged in GEWE. Taking inspiration from these, we list here the crucial levers of change which can contribute significantly to this aim.

Academic advocates

Social science research institutions are the obvious centers of academic interest in GEWE; however, given the multi-sectoral needs identified in this report, a more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach to research should be encouraged. There has been a steady increase in the number of social sciences departments in Indian universities and this growing strength can be leveraged to support the expansion of GEWE efforts including the engagement of men and boys. India's UNESCO Chairs and similar recognized centers of excellence in social sciences can spearhead collective efforts through conferences, joint publications, collaborative research projects, and other similar efforts.

NGO groups with community access

At the heart of sustainable development work and cultural change are those NGOs and social service institutions that are working directly with communities. Although they may vary in size, geographic scope, access to funding, and resource mobilization, they possess a depth of knowledge gained from their working within and advocating for their target communities. These champions should be engaged as consultants and advisors for national-level programming and be supported by relevant government ministries to improve program effectiveness. Given that engaging men and boys in GEWE is a relatively nascent field, NGOs with existing expertise will be critical and supporting them will be vital.

Government officials

Democratically elected government officials and ministerial bodies are public servants meant to reflect the needs of the population that elected them. As such, they are perhaps the most capable of breaking the structural chains of influence that perpetuate gender inequalities. The Indian government has a long and brilliant history of confronting social issues and championing and enacting revolutionary measures to improve the lives of 1.3+ billion citizens. In terms of engaging men and boys in GEWE, the government must play a central, leadership role in calling for consortiums of other stakeholders. Working together with experts in multiple sectors will only increase the effectiveness and impact of government programs thus helping improve the returns on investments for Gender Responsive Budgeting.

Philanthropy, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and other funding agencies

Funding agencies are the lifeline of many NGOs and charitable organizations that work directly with communities. Often, the priorities of donors translate into the programs that reach the population. For the goals articulated in this report to be met, these agencies must broaden their areas of interest and strategically plan how funds are distributed. The suggestions made in this report (especially an increase in publicly accessible project reports, impact assessments, government policy reforms, and academic conferences) will also prove to donors that this is a priority area where their funds can be used to great effect.

Conclusion

This report contributes to the conversation on gender equality, women's empowerment, and efforts for achieving SDG5's goals in India. Specifically, its goal is to further conceptualize and establish the engagement of men and boys in the process of gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority. With the recognition that this lack of engagement has impeded national progress in gender-inclusive development thus far, the report offers a range of practical solutions and areas for consideration by diverse stakeholders. Taken together, this report can serve as a roadmap both for addressing oversights and for creating greater collaborations and sharing of knowledge and most effective practices.

Much has been covered in this report, however, all the chapters (and many of the parts within the chapters) only skim the surface of the topics at hand. It would require a dedicated book series (or more than one) to do justice to the complexity of the concepts presented here. Some of these concepts, (especially those that are particular to the Indian context and to the adaptation of global research to local needs), present problems that do not as yet have clear solutions. These concepts require long-term engagement, study, and the active participation of target populations in order to discover potential solutions. These limitations have been discussed in the report and should be seen as targets for future work. Relevant to the theme of this report, there are a number important questions that can inspire new research:

- What do “positive masculinities” look like in the Indian context? How do these new masculinities become the norm? What resources are needed?
- How can stakeholders from non-government sectors and the Indian people themselves influence the people in power to reform funding channels, policy development, and enforcement?

- How can large-scale, international organizations (with access to world-class research and resources) collaborate with smaller, grassroots groups who do not have the visibility or legal status needed to receive funding?

Gender equality is essentially a relational phenomenon that represents a dynamic of power, resources, and access to opportunities that must find a balance where everyone can prosper. To promote gender equality without the participation and support of all members in a community, both women and men, is ignoring this multidimensional, complex social relationship. To adapt the words of the late visionary, Nelson Mandela: “No one is born oppressing others due to their gender, it is learned. And if they can learn to oppress, they can learn its opposite.”

At its core, “transforming 'men'talities” is a social process with deeply personal consequences where men and boys are also empowered to critically evaluate national and regional norms of masculinity and challenge gender stereotypes and negative attitudes and behaviors. This can be achieved through multiple means and across focus areas but must begin at a point of empathy and understanding of the complex and varied cultural legacies of and influences on the masculine archetype. The promise is that this positive transformation, already underway, will continue and lead to an India where everyone has an opportunity to thrive and progress without the burdens of gender discrimination and limited social roles.





The background image shows a vibrant religious festival float. In the foreground, a white swan-shaped float carries a Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, wearing bright orange robes. The float is decorated with yellow and blue patterns. Behind it, another float features a white swan carrying a yellow figure. The scene is filled with colorful decorations and traditional elements, suggesting a cultural or religious celebration.

ABOUT THE REPORT



ABOUT THE REPORT

Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is joining a growing dialogue by launching this initiative to engage men and boys in gender equality in India. *Transforming ‘Men’talities: Gender Equality and Masculinities in India* is a scoping report motivated by a recent publication by NITI Aayog (2018), the organization responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. This report gives a realistic picture of India’s challenges in the progress towards achieving SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The NITI Aayog (2019) report found that all of the Indian states, except Kerala and Sikkim, are behind on SDG5’s targets. Other international reports reinforce this finding. Recent analyses by the UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the UN Women found that the most basic indicators of the status of women in India are still quite low (Grown, Addison, and Tarp, 2016; UN Women, 2019). Another example of lack of progress can be found in India’s rank in the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index, where India was most recently ranked 112th (out of 153) with a 66.8 percent score (WEF, 2019, p.10). This significant challenge requires an effective and collaborative engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

Given the generally slow progress being made on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE), think tanks in India have long explored strategies for improving such efforts. However, the global spotlight on gender inequalities in India became much more intense following a widely publicized violent crime in 2012, known as the *Nirbhaya* case, in which a young girl was

violently raped. The tragedy led to a number of new policies and amendments at the national level and prompted an international discussion on the various causes and factors that perpetuate gender inequalities in India—from the most violent and extreme to the more mundane, everyday attitudes and behaviors.

One such discussion is on the necessity of including men and boys in the conversation on GEWE. Findings from a growing number of researchers show that, despite major efforts to improve access, opportunities, and resources for women, the results have been mixed, and even positive results are often short-lived. A growing consensus is forming that *cultural factors* are at the root of the issue as they play as much, if not more, of a role in GEWE as economic, education, health, and similar structural factors. Hence, there is a call for leading stakeholders to more accurately acknowledge the role of gender within the local history, customs, values, and belief systems in designing, implementing, and analyzing future programs. In addition, acknowledging the social and cultural fabric of a community will better guide stakeholders in understanding the complex web of relations and barriers to GEWE, and in crafting more contextual and effective ways of addressing them.

At the core of this cultural discourse around GEWE is the relationship between women and men and the perpetuation of certain patriarchal norms that institute structural inequalities. These gender norms, as they describe the range of acceptable behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations of men, are called *masculinities*.

Globally, there is a well-established body of literature that discusses the complexities



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are ambitious reinventions of the Millennium Development Goals with a greater emphasis on poverty, sustainability, and sustainable world peace. It was ratified by all of the member countries and stakeholders in 2015.

The Preamble to the agenda says: “This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnerships, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet,” (<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>).



of gender and the social structures that promote inequalities. The mechanisms that perpetuate existing, gender-based hierarchies of power, in particular, is a classic topic of interest for sociology and gender studies as an attempt to articulate the roots of gender-based inequalities (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974). However, it is only in the last three decades that masculinities have been a specific target for research. To overcome the critique that social sciences have treated men as the standard human experience, and therefore gender-neutral or, “as if they had no gender” (Kimmel and Messner, 1989, p. xii), efforts were made to conceptualize masculinities, its roots, and its relationship with existing social structures. Since the early 1990s, academic research on masculinities and the inclusion of this discussion in general discussions on GEWE has significantly increased with multiple, dedicated peer-reviewed journals, handbooks, and extended book series, as well as international events by top global agencies (UN, the World Bank, and WHO, among others).

The argument for including men and boys in a discussion on gender equality is that by not sufficiently including men in GEWE efforts as productive agents of change, those engaged in GEWE work lose a sizable source of potential support. Currently, conventional approaches to GEWE place the responsibility of empowerment solely on women and girls, making the efforts of existing approaches lopsided and unsustainable (Elliot, 2018). Through strategic inclusion, the participation of men and boys will initiate a systemic change in society, altering the structures that perpetuate gender inequalities. One of the positive outcomes anticipated from this process is that men and boys will develop an “enlightened self-interest,” recognizing their roles and responsibilities in ensuring a more equal society. By its very definition, GEWE is a relational phenomenon that represents a dynamic of power, resources, access, and opportunities that must be corrected *between women and men*. Solutions should, therefore, engage *both women and men*. In other words, a systemic, social transformation is required where all members of society participate and contribute to achieving SDG5.



Definition: Gender Equality (Equality between women and men)

This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development.

Source: UN Women, OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and definitions.

Despite this interest in academia, there has been a noticeable lack of large-scale GEWE efforts that include a focus on engaging men and boys in GEWE. This is especially true in non-Western settings, including India. There are notable exceptions to this, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this report; however, a clear disconnect between academic research and practical applications in all sectors is apparent.

One potential explanation for this global neglect, especially in the Indian context, is that the most common definitions of masculinity and its expression in society do

Definition: Gender

Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, as are other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, etc.

Source: UN Women, OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and definitions.



not fit perfectly within the national context—despite key authors within masculinity studies repeatedly arguing that the context is critical for understanding how masculinities emerge. India is immensely diverse, with substantial differences between groups based on caste, class, religion, language, region, and (increasingly) age. Group membership is a complex formula of intersecting identities, both modern and traditional, and subjected to increasingly fast changes due to the globalized impact of technologies and increasing access to the internet. The dominant masculine characteristics and their influence on gender inequalities are equally diverse, although there are some national commonalities. Accurately identifying both group-specific and shared masculinities can only take place after understanding the complex network of identities and their

antecedent histories, cultural practices, and distinct value systems. From here, it will be possible to confront national and regional gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes, and behaviors that underlie and perpetuate gender inequalities.

UNESCO has long contributed to global discussions and efforts to improve the engagement of men and boys in GEWE. Of note is the 1997 event, “Male roles and masculinities in the perspective of a culture of peace” that consisted of an expert group meeting in collaboration with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This event led to the publication of an edited book that included articles by some of the world’s top experts in the field (Breines et al., 2000). The UNESCO (2014) “Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021,” also explicitly addressed the need to critically examine masculinities and introduced several gender-responsive policies for engaging men and boys. As a continuation of the efforts to coordinate global dialogues and promote research on gender equality, UNESCO has also hosted a number of relevant conferences including the 2015, “Engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean,” held in San José, Costa Rica, which sought to initiate discussions on gender equality, masculinities, and the fundamental roles that men and boys have in the realization of SDG5. Most recently, there have been two regional events that directly preceded this report: An inter-regional seminar on, “Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America: Inter-regional Dialogues,” held in February, 2019 in Maputo, Mozambique, and a partners dialogue on, “Transforming 'MEN'talities and Promoting Gender Equality in India,” held in December, 2019 in New Delhi, India.

Building on UNESCO’s previous efforts, this report proposes that greater sensitivity and acknowledgement of diverse contexts should be included as another factor in GEWE programs in India, and seen as an integral part of contributing to meeting India’s national goals and the 2030 Agenda. An effective approach is starting from a place of

empathy and appreciation of historical and cultural roots—ideally a natural outcome of collaborations and open dialogues between stakeholders. If the findings of leading experts in gender studies and sustainable development are correct and cultural norms are among the root causes of inequalities leading to structural side effects including economic, healthcare, education, political, and other discrimination, then the heart of GEWE needs to be *social transformation* (Joy, Belk, and Bhardwaj, 2015). This includes a qualitative shift within a critical mass of the population, starting with individual men and women, but expanding to family units, communities, and eventually the nation. This qualitative shift or social transformation can be seen as a kind of empowerment of men and boys towards a higher ideal, where there develops a willingness to transform those elements of masculinities which perpetuate gender inequalities and embracing those which support sustainable development for everyone.

Engaging men and boys in GEWE has been included in sporadic discourses in Indian policy and national budgeting since the 1980s and has been championed by a handful of NGOs and private sector agencies. Unfortunately, what minimal research has been conducted on masculinities within India has yet to be reflected in most of the GEWE programs in the country. Before this report, the UNESCO Cluster Office, New Delhi published a Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis report that reviewed a

representative list of 60 stakeholders with a presence in India who have a history of engaging men and boys in GEWE (UNESCO, 2019b). These stakeholders represent major sectors, including government ministries and departments, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations.

The analysis from this stakeholder mapping demonstrated that engaging with men and boys and addressing the issue of masculinities is not a priority for most GEWE efforts in India. The report also found that while civil society organizations have had some success with programs that engage with men and masculinities in India, the Government of India has not embraced this approach despite its sizable investment in GEWE (Philip, 2015; UNESCO, 2019c). The mapping report recommended promoting collaborative and committed efforts by key stakeholders across all sectors in developing systematic, long-term shifts towards positive masculinities. Intensive consultations with all the relevant stakeholders are needed to achieve this in each of the sectors including government ministries, international and national NGOs, private sector investors, and academia. UNESCO has a unique capacity to initiate and maintain a dialogue between sectors and ensure that all relevant specialized fields are represented as needed. More details of the key recommendations from the Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis are discussed later in this report.



Structure, Scope, and Methods

This report's goal is to provide a comprehensive roadmap for attaining SDG5 (Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality) in India through the inclusion of men and boys. Through an evaluation of existing theories, a review of international and Indian national policies and legislations, and a stakeholder analysis, this report explores the multiple dimensions that construct gender inequalities, masculinities, and possible ways of addressing them. The

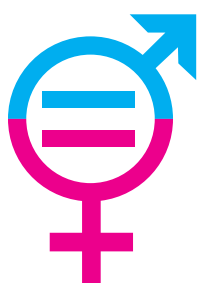
report consists of seven chapters, organized with the intention of inspiring action in engaging men and boys to support GEWE in the areas of sustainable development programming across all sectors and areas of focus (dimensions), policy reforms, social justice efforts, and academic research.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to understanding the social and cultural underpinnings, theoretical construction, and historical roots of masculinities and its connection with gender

inequalities. Chapter 3 evaluates areas of saturation or gaps within both national and global policies around GEWE, highlighting the importance of transparency and an impact evaluation of the Gender Responsive Budgeting, law and policy enforcement, and the need for inter-ministerial and cross-sector convergence and collaborations. Chapter 4 focuses on analyzing 77 stakeholders and the areas of saturation and gaps within current approaches to both GEWE and engaging men and boys. These stakeholders are organized by their dimensions (or areas of focus) and geographic sectors, and a short spotlight is put on exemplary stakeholder programs in each of the identified dimensions. Based on this analysis, Chapter 5 details some of the key obstacles to promoting positive masculinities and including men and boys in GEWE for the Indian context. Chapter 6 offers a vision of how these obstacles might

be overcome, providing recommendations in the thematic areas of social sciences, policy reform, and stakeholder convergence to achieve overall goals. Finally, Chapter 7 consolidates the key messages and recommendations targeting all concerned stakeholders, guiding future endeavors to engage men and boys in GEWE.

The scope of this report does not include defining specific expressions of masculinities, nor does it take a prescriptive approach for how stakeholders should design any programs or initiatives. The report is also not a comprehensive list of all policies, laws, or stakeholders engaged with masculinities, women's empowerment, and gender equality in India. Rather, it presents a representative sample that we hope captures a saturation of existing programs in the country. This report was inspired by the recent Maputo



Areas of Interest: Social Disruptions, Disasters, and Gender Equality

This report was written in 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic. As with nearly every other facet of social life, there are numerous gender-related issues that are exacerbated by extreme pressures related to a health crisis and resultant protective measures—with related effects on economic, political, social, personal, and environmental spaces that people inhabit. Vulnerable women in India are in an even more precarious state, with evidence that female domestic and migrant workers have been especially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (SEWA Bharat, 2020).

It would be remiss, therefore, to not speak about the effects of such global disruptions (that also include natural disasters, conflicts, forced migrations, and other major events that impact society) on gender relations and gender constructs. This means accounting for the socioeconomic, cultural, and health-related impacts (among others) that occur because of any social upheaval. It has been well documented that natural disasters, forced migration, refugee status, and other such events typically affect women, the elderly, and children disproportionately more. This is also true of the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, research is still awaited on the extent to which it has impacted all genders in India, specifically men and their mentalities.

UN Women (www.unwomen.org) initiated a paper series on its website called, “EVAW COVID-19 briefs” that offers a growing collection of research drawn from the knowledge and experience of a wide range of stakeholders who are supporting solutions to End Violence Against Women. At the time of publishing this report, there was no documentation on the role of men or masculinities in the context of COVID-19; however, it is an area of concern especially for men who lose their jobs, families who lose housing, and for the likely increase in poverty-related issues that hit Indian communities during a pandemic and for years after. Already, there is a reported increase in mental health issues and incidents of suicide as a result of the pandemic, which are likely to affect men more than women (Sahoo et al., 2020). As more negative effects of this pandemic are being understood in relation to gender based violence and other issues, it is clear that more research and promising solutions need to be developed, including engaging men and boys in GEWE and critically examining masculinities in such contexts.

Roadmap (UNESCO, 2019a) and follows a UNESCO Stakeholder Analysis and desk study (UNESCO, 2019c). Key definitions and the overall lens through which GEWE is approached is in line with the global UN commitment and held within the scope of UNESCO's mandate. However, alternative perspectives are acknowledged where appropriate and diversity is encouraged within the stakeholder call to action. Any singular approach to a solution will have limitations, and therefore openness should

be maintained when considering critical areas of sustainable development.

This report is entirely a desk study—a continuation of the original stakeholder analysis—in which we trace the theoretical underpinnings of masculinities, discussed the cultural and historical context of India and its influence on masculinities, and reviewed Indian and global policy priorities and case studies of various stakeholders involved in GEWE and engaging men and boys.



Justification for this Report

The chapters that follow present the concept of masculinities more clearly and the critical role such scholarship and its implementation plays in achieving SDG5. This is a complex and multifaceted topic, and an effective engagement of men and boys in GEWE will require careful research and experimentation including participatory approaches, strategic planning, and collaboration and convergence among existing stakeholders and their programs. This is true globally, and especially in India given its immense cultural diversity. As India continues to undergo a rapid transformation from a largely rural, traditional, community-oriented nation to a mix of old and new with super-urban, global influences—the strategic engagement of men and boys in GEWE is increasingly vital.

Women's empowerment inherently disrupts the status quo. It seeks to balance the power differentials between the genders and support women and girls to overcome the challenges that prevent them from achieving a higher quality of life. This necessitates that the traditionally dominant groups re-evaluate their roles in families and larger communities, especially the privileges that they have traditionally held.

This disruption can take many forms and lead to a range of consequences, from more benign reactions of men (for example, playful chiding and taunting) to multiple forms of violence. While male backlash to the threat of change and apparent loss due to GEWE programs is not universal, it is well

documented and should be accounted for by stakeholders in their efforts (Chant and Gutmann, 2002). What is not adequately documented, however, are the subtler and private resistance that men might display; likewise, neither are the small positive changes documented adequately. Extensive research at this level is still required. Relatedly, there is evidence that women in certain positions may also try to prevent GEWE programs that go against traditional values. This has been explained by some as an attempt by a generally more vulnerable group to protect itself from possible consequences of going against their community rules and norms (George, 2006). Some scholars maintain that this is because women, in general, bear the burden of cultural values in India; meaning, as previously described, a community's moral standing is determined in substantial part by the behavior and "purity" of its women, especially unmarried adolescent girls (Dube, 1997; Kumar, 1994).

Any progress made in GEWE must withstand counter-pressures from stalwarts in traditional communities who would rather preserve existing hierarchies. While it is reassuring to see UN agencies and other NGOs increasing their attention on the practical necessity of including men and boys in GEWE programs, it is still the responsibility of researchers and other stakeholders to ensure that this is done in such a way that both acknowledges and respects the unique



India continues to undergo a rapid transformation from a largely rural, traditional, community-oriented nation to a mix of old and new with super-urban, global influences—the strategic engagement of men and boys in GEWE is increasingly vital.

obstacles that women face while also strategically incorporating other members of the community to ensure their positive engagement. For this to be done effectively, we must be able to understand the dynamics of a community (including place, space, and kinship structures) and design approaches to women's programs accordingly (Coley et al., 2021). Such programs need to systematically and rigorously assess men's current role and place and also encourage discussion, dialogue, and an analysis of potential changes to gender and community dynamics as a result of the programs.

Such values have their roots in the very beginnings of gender equality movements, and harken to a central argument made by many advocates for women's rights: all GEWE efforts (including those that engage men and boys) must be held accountable to feminist theory (Norlock, 2019). In alignment with this accountability, the word "feminist" ought to be reframed in popular parlance as it cannot continue to be reduced to the negative stereotypes that it has received, namely that it is anti-male and promotes women's dominance over men. In reality,

feminist theory is a branch of sociology which holds a critical lens to the social sciences, arguing that a majority of the theoretical models in history, culture, and science assume that the male perspective is the standard human experience. In contrast, feminist scholarship seeks to bring forward the missing women's perspectives, validating the fact that women experience the world differently than men (Kachel, Steffens, and Niedlich, 2016). Central values that are held in a study of gender inequalities include gender based discrimination, objectification, gender stereotypes, interplay of power and oppression, structural and economic inequalities, and issues of intersectionality (Armstrong, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017).

By being held accountable to feminist theory and values, stakeholders can ensure that new GEWE measures do not promote institutionalized discriminatory practices based in patriarchal values, and can ensure that women's perspectives are accounted for in ways that have traditionally been left out (Barone-Chapman, 2014). Further, it can potentially (and ideally) make space for new constructs and ideas to arise.

What, then, is the goal of GEWE in relation to men and boys? What will more positive ideal masculinities look like? Are there viable alternatives to toxic masculinity? Within the realm of sociology, this comes down to concepts of power, privilege, attitudes, and behavioral choices. It is relatively simple to devise logical opposites to the most infamous toxic traits of machismo, violence, and chauvinism. Examples include celebrating men who are respectful, encouraging, and supportive of women and others, and men who are not threatened by women's empowerment and who are willing to step aside to allow women to flourish. However, what this new masculinity looks like in reality will be context-specific and is far beyond the scope of this report to define. Responsibly contributing to redefining masculinities requires extensive research and experience across the vast diversity of the Indian population, along with the patience and resources to conduct long-term studies. As is discussed in depth in Chapter 6, a more ethical strategy for defining the practical and relevant alternatives to unhealthy masculinities requires that all stakeholder groups converge and work together. Only those stakeholders who are experts in their sectors and dimensions or focus areas can properly represent the Indian context, and thereby create the most effective interventions that lead to lasting, sustainable cultural changes.

To accomplish this, it is necessary to critically examine policies and work along with stakeholders from multiple disciplines to shape a more unified approach to GEWE, specifically on strategies that include engaging with men and boys. A multi-disciplinary approach is necessary, not just because of the complexity of transforming local and regional masculinities into those that are supportive of SDG5, but also because gender equality is a cross-cutting issue. There are relevant applications in healthcare, public safety and security, education, political representation, economic growth, natural resource protection, and in other social and cultural areas. All of these fields intersect and overlap with each other, so that even a focused project in one area (engaging boys to support girls in education, for example) will need to include elements from the other fields (through sex-ed, prevention of eve-teasing, inclusion of gender studies in the curricula, promoting civic education, supporting girls in vocational trades, ensuring access to hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, etc.). Only by adopting a more holistic and intersectional approach can we hope to achieve long-term progress towards SDG5's targets. As no single stakeholder or policymaker can account for all of the fields, collaboration and convergence between and within stakeholders, the national government, and international bodies is essential.









INTRODUCTION
TO ENGAGING
MEN AND BOYS
FOR GENDER
EQUALITY AND
THE CONCEPT OF
“MASCULINITIES”



INTRODUCTION TO ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE CONCEPT OF “MASCULINITIES”

Chapter 2 Overview

This chapter explores the theoretical and cultural roots of masculinities in India, in order to provide more context and an accurate representation of the Indian context, while maintaining a strong foundation in sociological and philosophical principles. The topics covered in this chapter were identified by the authors based on an extensive literature review, field experience, and through conversations with global experts in gender studies. Despite this, there are likely gaps and important discussions that have not been included, largely to keep this report to a more manageable length. Where possible, recommended readings and suggestions for further research are provided. One of the primary goals of this chapter is to clearly map the academic or theoretical landscape of critical studies of men and masculinities and the role that these can play in achieving gender equality (SDG5). Key concepts of sociological theory and feminist principles are blended with Indian history, religion, and cultural influences. It is hoped that the readers will appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of the various elements that make up the Indian context and why the theme of this report is so important. The chapter is divided into four parts:

Theoretical Foundations

In addition to the topical areas listed below, key definitions are provided as well as Stakeholder Spotlights on organizations active in India in relevant fields.

- Social theories and definitions
- Culture: History, religion, and globalization

- Psychology and kinship structures
- Development and economic influences

Dynamic Masculinities

Along with elaborating on the following topics, a brief description of three stakeholder programs is given to provide context and examples of success.

- Alternative theories
- Intersectionality and competing pressures
- Open questions

What does “Engaging Men and Boys” in GEWE mean?

In line with the vision and mission of the SDGs, this part articulates the necessary conditions and high-level perspective required to engage men and boys in achieving SDG5’s targets.

- SDG 5
- Limitations and context

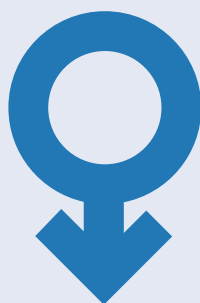
Justification for this report

This part provides an argument for the relevance and urgency of this topic and its place in global conversations around GEWE.

- GEWE is disruptive, and that is okay
- Social change requires holistic approaches
- Call to action

Definition: Masculinities

UN Women defines masculinities as, “A gender perspective, or way of analyzing the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions, that allows us to see that there is pressure on men and boys to perform and conform to specific roles. Thus, the term masculinity refers to the social meaning of manhood, which is constructed and defined socially, historically and politically, rather than being biologically driven. There are many socially constructed definitions for being a man and these can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting. Masculinities are not just about men; women perform and produce the meaning and practices of the masculine as well.”



Source: UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women. “Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You.”

Before discussing the best ways of engaging men and boys in GEWE in India, it is important to understand what *masculinities* means in India from a historical, academic, and developmental perspective. This is necessary to better comprehend the mores which have generally delimited the acceptable behaviors of men and boys. While there are many definitions of gender, masculinity, and related terms, each with its own merits, this report uses the UN Women’s compendium of definitions. Doing so ensures that this report is consistent with UN terminology and also relies on a well-researched and extensively vetted foundation of key terms. Too often, discussions of complex social phenomena, including empowerment and gender, falter as they lack unifying definitions of key terms.

This is not to say that this report ignores alternative definitions. Given India’s unique diversity, some definitions will need to be adjusted to account for this particular context. The goal of the following section is to examine masculinities within historical and contemporary India to identify potential gaps in research and development projects. We also operationally define the key terms that are used in the remainder of this report. From

this vantage, we then explore the malleability and process of change for masculinities and put a spotlight on some key Indian stakeholders who have contributed to this body of knowledge. Together, this justifies the study of masculinities and the imperative to engage men and boys in gender equality in India.

At the outset, it should be made clear that while this report promotes the inclusion of men and boys as a means for sustainable development in GEWE, it does not advocate for any particular school of thought when it comes to the complex construction of masculinities or other gender studies’ terms. Rather, we hope that this report provides a medium for reflection on the theoretical assumptions that stakeholders make when designing interventions or conducting research to engage men in GEWE (Hearn and Morgan, 2014). To this end, a summative review of key definitions and social theory perspectives on masculinity is provided with the aim of articulating the roles that men and boys can play in either the subordination or empowerment of women and girls.

The study of masculinity in the context of global development and the promotion of gender equality is not new, and a large body of research exists that explores the many ways that certain aspects of masculinity have influenced societies and created a dominating, and more often than not, violent system of oppression. There is a wealth of important literature on both the history and development of masculinities from multiple perspectives, although admittedly less on non-Western contexts. It is important for stakeholders to be aware of this literature and to identify any gaps in their area of expertise. This report identifies some gaps in the study of masculinity within the Indian context and provides suggestions for where future research can focus.



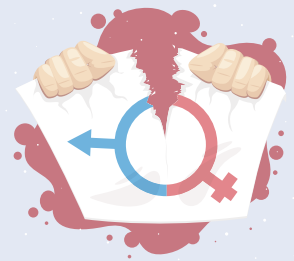
Theoretical Foundations

The UN Women’s definition provides a fairly comprehensive opening to the discussion of masculinities in general and for India in particular, capturing the plurality and evolving nature of the concept. This is reflected in multiple studies from several international contexts (Japan: Ishii-Kuntz, 2003; Dasgupta, 2013; Mexico: Gutmann, 1996; Mirandé, 2018; Africa: Morrell, 1998; Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger, 2012; Chile: Valdéz and Olavarría, 1998; Segovia et al., 2016; Ireland: Ferguson, 2001; Darcy, 2019). In each of these studies, it is noted that even within the same countries there are different masculine identities that are prominent and that these are constantly changing in response to new social scenarios, and especially changes in women’s status. This highlights the fact that there is no one definition of masculinity within a single community, and instead it is relational, shifting, and constructed based on the various social cues and environmental conditions that a person experiences over time.

The definition given above is based on an existing line of theoretical discussions and debates. Each element of the definition, from values and ideals to social construction and the role of history and political structures, to the importance of context are rooted in various sociological, psychological, and philosophical assumptions. The following section touches on some of the more relevant assumptions, but it is well beyond the scope of this report to provide a full literature review of masculinities.

Definition: Gender norms

Gender norms are ideas about how men and women should be and act. We internalize and learn these “rules” early in life. This sets up a life cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping. Put another way, gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms within a range that defines a particular society, culture, and community at that point in time.



Source: UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women. “Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You.”

Masculinities in Sociology: Social Constructions Over Time

The study of masculinity and its role in gender inequalities falls largely within the purview of sociology. Gender norms are examined within the social functions and mechanisms which organize how society operates, setting the boundaries for acceptable behaviors, funneling resources, and even defining how knowledge and meaning are created in ways that have varying effects on different groups. The sociological lens allows us to see how masculinities are products of social structures and reciprocally, how masculine ideals influence the mechanisms that organize society.

Many in gender studies and related fields within sociology have pointed to the system



Recommended readings

- Brines, I., Connell, R., & Eide, I. (eds.). (2000). *Male roles, masculinities and violence: A culture of peace perspective*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: *Rethinking the Concept*. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Cornwall, A., Edström, J., & Grieg, A. (2011). *Men and Development: Politicizing Masculinities*. London: Zed Books, Ltd.
- Kimmel, M., Hearn, J., & Connell, R. W. (eds.). (2005). *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

of patriarchy and the prevalence of extreme forms of masculine ideals as a root of gender inequalities (Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2005; Dube, 1997; and Kabeer, 2005, among others). From this frame of reference, the process of maintaining a dominant masculinity reinforces structural inequalities, in particular exerting control over women's bodies and minds, perpetuating systemic gender discrepancies, oppression, violence, and preventing sustainable development. As these social systems are deeply intersecting, complex, and linked to the economic functioning as well as political and cultural identities of many demographics, there has always been a debate between different schools of thought on the veracity or extent to which this holds true. However, it is only in acknowledging the negative role that

masculinities can play within society and their embedded complexities, that we can begin to develop effective strategies for engaging men and boys in GEWE (Coley et al., 2021). One of the more important complexities is context, including the caste, class, geography, time, and social setting as dominant masculinities can vary between them. Understanding the target community is critical for framing a discussion on masculinities.

It is difficult to discuss the interaction between masculine identity and social norms without using the term, "hegemonic masculinity." It has become a core theme in academic literature and popular culture on understanding men and gender (Duncanson, 2015; Hearn, 2004). Like most theories that



Understanding the target community is critical for framing a discussion because masculinities can vary between caste, class, geography, time and social setting.

become popular, it has developed a life of its own and is now used in ways that no longer represent the initial proposition. The concept is modelled after the Gramscian concept of “hegemony,” or the domination of one social group over another where the subordinate group “consents” to being dominated as a result of social “superstructures” that define the world of the subordinate groups. It is a form of social control where behaviors are influenced externally through a system of rewards and punishments, and internally through “moulding personal convictions into a replica of prevailing norms” (Femia, 1987, p. 24). In other words, the dominant group, through its amassing of power and influence, creates and reinforces its dominant position by structuring a society (its institutions, education/values, political, and cultural practices) in such a way that normalizes and requires the maintenance of group hierarchy for proper social functioning. The result of this is that subordinate groups accept their position in the hierarchy, seeing it as “just the way the world is,” knowing also that any attempt to take power for themselves will be punished (usually by law or other socially accepted means).

Hegemonic masculinity was a way for early researchers to describe the phenomenon of male domination over women (and an internal hierarchy for men as well) that spans the history of civilization. In its original explanation, it proves to be a successful tool for describing how society has been structured in a way that preserves male dominance. While there is no single definition of hegemonic masculinity, it has been conceptualized as the process or practice of idealizing a single construction of masculinity within a hierarchy of other masculine traits, while also legitimizing men’s domination in society and validating the subordination of other groups (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). These dominant masculine traits are reinforced by all members in a society, with some scholars saying that women contribute to the perpetuation of masculinity as much as men (Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2006).

More recently, the theory was interpreted in various ways and by various groups as a tool

to simplify and reduce gender inequalities to stereotypical roles. This has been done to an extent that all men are seen as consciously and actively seeking ways to dominate others (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In this way, the term became controversial in some academic circles (Moller, 2007). However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity persists in much of the literature, and this concept should be unpacked before it is either accepted or rejected in favor of other concepts. Hegemonic masculinity is a controversial topic because in discussing the dominant ideals of manhood and its role in oppressing other groups within each culture, it is tempting to assign these negative qualities to *all* expressions of masculinity. This collapses the diversity of a population into a single stereotype. There is also a risk of demonizing masculinity and everyone who plays into it, whether knowingly or unknowingly, as somehow damaged and in need of fixing. To do so is to ignore the complex role that social pressures and enculturation play in enforcing discriminatory gender attitudes and behaviors, as well as the complicated nature of the so-called “masculine” characteristics that can be valued differently in different contexts.

Despite the criticism of some descriptions of masculinities as hegemonic, the term has some critical uses in explaining the way society functions. The actual definition of hegemony simply reflects dominance in a hierarchy and level of influence on cultural norms. In the context of gender relations, “hegemonic masculinity” is the dominant cultural ideal(s) of how men should be that also enforces dominance through imposing consequences for non-conformance (Connell, 2005). It is quite possible that there are multiple dominant masculine ideals in one community. This is an important structure to note within the realm of gender studies as it opens space for introducing alternative masculinities or altering existing forms that can better support GEWE (Chopra, 2003). However, there is a perspective within critical masculinity scholarship in India that finds fault with this view of hegemony as it concentrates too much on sexual behaviors and gender stereotypes as the primary determinants of

Stakeholder Spotlight: Iesha Learning

Established in 2015, Iesha Learning is a social-venture company that has created educational courses on adolescent puberty, sexuality, and gender education for the Indian context, with a special focus on the prevention of sexual violence by boys. Based in Mumbai, Iesha Learning works closely with primary and secondary schools in urban India to provide much needed sexual and reproductive health education. To date, they report reaching over 500,000 youth across the country. Realizing that the Indian culture and context are extremely different from Western nations (where most sex-ed courses are developed), Iesha Learning created content and instructional design more suited for Indian children. Their focus on healthy sexual development, respect for women, and promotion of honest dialogue helps build positive masculinities among boys.

The success of Iesha Learning and others like it helped lay the groundwork for the newly passed Government of India's School Health Program (SHP) under the Ayushman Bharat scheme that seeks to introduce gradual sexual and reproductive health education, including gender sensitization and promotion of gender equality in all schools across India.

Source: <http://www.ieshalearning.com/>.



through every phase of life. The same logic that demonstrates that men should be accounted for in women's empowerment also applies in reverse: women certainly play a role in developing and reifying 'men'talities' and should also be engaged in transforming such norms.

Masculinities in Cultural Discussions: History, Religion, Modernization, and Globalization

History is often an effective guide for understanding how certain cultural norms have developed. Understanding the past also helps acknowledge the role that time plays in shaping and evolving such norms, whether by tracing the impact of foreign invasions, religious conversions, or other paradigm-shifting events. Traditional Indian gender roles have been most frequently explained through religion, using interpretations of passages from classic Hindu texts, historic Islamic law, and Christian moral constructs introduced by colonial powers. Scholars extrapolate ideal masculine traits from various interpretations of these texts. Some of these historical values are reflected in modern times by Hindu national groups, orthodox Muslim societies, and fundamentalist Christian groups—and across the secular spectrum. Within feminist literature, the Hindu Nationalist groups garner the most attention for propagating a version of ideal gender roles that are criticized by some as overly aggressive and patriarchal (Banerjee, 2005; Osella and Osella, 2006). While this does reflect some of the ground reality in India today, it is perhaps too limited and does not account for the multitude of dissenting opinions or the full range of religious values associated with gender. The purpose of this section is not to evaluate or judge any religion or system of beliefs, but to discuss possible connections between scriptural texts, historical influences of various groups, and modern expressions of masculinity.

While approximately 80 percent of Indian's population identifies as Hindu (Census of

problematic, especially in the Indian context, as expectations of a man's ideal behavior are influenced by multiple, intersecting identities including caste, religion, economic class, and ethnicity (Jeffrey, Jeffrey, & Jeffrey, 2008; Singh, 2017). Such competing claims over men's actions complicate the expression of masculinity and require more study for a proper understanding, especially when translating theory into practice.

Drawing on the points of discussion on hegemony and the definitions of gender equality, we move the discussion to the historical, social, cultural, and developmental components of India's masculinities. We reiterate that social change requires all actors to participate. Both men and women play a role in enforcing dominant masculinities through punishing or rewarding certain behaviors and attitudes from early childhood

India, 2011), it would be incorrect to assume every Hindu follows the same practices, reads the same scriptures, or holds the same beliefs. It would also be incorrect to assume that other religions have not affected one another. There is huge diversity within Hinduism alone, with countless branches, sub-branches, orthodoxies, and unorthodoxies as well as differences between caste, geography, and language groups. Some branches adopt a nearly monotheistic system of beliefs (ISKON is one example), while others are polytheistic or focus their practices around certain temples. Still, other Indian religious branches (*Nastika* branches) deny the existence of any God. With such diversity, it is difficult to claim that any single historical text or belief system can represent *all* of Hindu culture. Just as with Indian languages or customs, there is no “one Indian religion,” with strong influences of Muslim and Christian perspectives from centuries of cultural mixing, as well as Hindu

offshoots influencing modern Hindu beliefs (for example, Buddhism or Jainism). Still, there are important trends and commonalities that unite a majority of the population into a national, Indian identity.

This diversity has been celebrated and studied for centuries; however, it is cause for concern that such diversity has seemed to escape the notice of many academics who study masculinities and gender inequalities in India’s history, favoring a more essentialist view. Focusing on the historical male stereotypes, whether from ancient Vedic texts or the caricatures given by European and British colonizers provides only one piece of the puzzle. Critiques of Indian male qualities from depictions in film and the media, or in the over-correcting displays of machismo ascribed to certain conservative political groups does provide some insight, but misses the inherent diversity of common Indian



Scholarship also extends to the study of Indian gender and other social structures, including interpretations of modern gender inequalities in ancient texts.

Area of Interest: Commentary on Religious Texts and Sociological Interpretations

It is important to keep in mind that just because a text has become well-known, it does not mean that it should be considered as the most important. That the *Manu Smriti* has come to academic prominence is likely because it was one of the first Sanskrit texts to be translated into English, and was used by the British colonial government to formulate Hindu Law (Davis, 2010). Regardless, this text has taken on a level of importance and accounts for a significant portion of academic discourse on the roots of gender roles in Indian culture. A sizable literature on the Hindu “Brahmanical Patriarchy” has formed that interprets the values of a few scriptural texts as a preoccupation with maintaining patrilineal succession and caste purity through male dominance and the sexual control of women (Chakravarti, 1993). Given the numerous interpretations and philosophies that have arisen over thousands of years, on literally thousands of scriptural texts, it would be inaccurate to limit the Hindu conception of social values, including gender roles, to the *Manu Smriti* or any single text or interpretation.

As with all interpretations of religious texts, many scholars and believers have strong points of view. From the perspective of historians or anthropologists, multiple interpretations are needed to understand how these seminal texts have influenced society. Just as Hinduism as a religion is complex and diverse, so too are definitions of one's dharma in practice, with variance between castes, station in society, religious sects, geography, and time. Furthermore, especially in the case of the Dharmashastras including *Manu Smriti*, these texts must be understood within the historical period in which they were written. They are generally not considered strictly authoritative, rather as a guide to right conduct in the most common situations (Lochtefeld, 2002). As situations and conditions change, these texts more often fulfil a symbolic role for contemplation rather than normative instructions.

citizens. More than this, it may also serve to condemn all Indians to a certain set of beliefs and norms, reducing people of varying backgrounds and communal traditions to a common denominator, thereby missing important qualities that are useful in the current discussion.

With this caveat, there are five major historical periods that researchers describe as the most important to the development of dominant Indian masculinities that we see today. Broadly, these are the Vedic/ancient period (pre-written history to 600 BCE), the Classical period (600 BCE to 600 CE), the Late Medieval to Early Modern period marked by Islamic/Central Asian conquests (600 CE to 1800 CE), and the Colonial period (approximately 1800 to 1947 CE).¹ The last is the post-colonial, modern era (1947 to present), including the relatively recent economic liberalization (1991 onwards).

The Vedic/ancient period (from pre-written history to 600 BCE) holds a significant place in the formation of modern Hindu culture as it was during this period that the *Vedas*, or

foundational scriptures of Hinduism were composed and Sanskrit as a written language was created. While it is far beyond the scope of this report to go into any detail, many scholars have traced elements of modern Indian values to these texts, including the traditional set of rituals or rites that many Hindus still follow at certain key periods in their lives (Jamison and Witzel, 2003). Such scholarship also extends to the study of Indian gender and other social structures, including interpretations of modern gender inequalities in ancient texts (Leslie, 1992).

From the Classical period, academic discussions on masculinity focus primarily on the *Dharmaśāstras*, particularly the *Manu Smriti* as it is one of the only ancient Hindu texts that explicitly refers to gender roles using direct language and in a codified form, more familiar to modern study (Banerjee, 2005). However, the canon of Hindu texts ranges into the thousands, with the *smritis* alone (under which the *Dharmaśāstras* and similar texts are categorized) including several hundreds of thousands of verses (Leaman, 2006).

¹ These time periods are broad markers and do not adequately capture the nuance and dynamism of multiple influential groups of history—which is beyond the scope of this report.

The *Manu Smriti* describes in detail the duties of men and how they may gain honor and merit through good deeds. These deeds include avoiding indiscriminate pursuit of wealth and physical pleasure for higher duties to care for the soul, family, and nation (Kakar, 1996). Physical and mental purity, celibacy (meaning avoidance of indiscriminate sexual activity), and self-control are highlighted as ideal qualities for men, and the importance of structuring one's home and society in such a way so as to preserve this purity. However, there are many other texts from the same canon, holding equal or more authority in Hinduism. There are also classical scriptures, such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, that have been used to demonstrate even more ideals for men and arguably have a stronger cultural influence on modern Hindus than the *Manu Smriti*. The ideals in these texts include the various principles of *dharma* or duty: to be a protector of one's family and nation, renunciation and self-control, and priority to spiritual goals over worldly attachments (Wadley, 1977).

From the Late Medieval/Early modern period, a strong Islamic influence is found where the tropes of manliness are defined by conquest and war: of the physically superior, dominating Mughal; the fierce, principled, and proud Rajput; and the aloof, intellectual, yet weak Brahmin (O'Hanlon, 1997). Men under Islamic rule were celebrated for their "purposeful action" and heroism, courage and self-control, control over their families, and most importantly, of "dignified submission to the legitimate authority of the emperor, who was himself presented as the perfect man," (ibid). Other values, including personal and community purity, modesty, and education are reflected in both the culture of military and political expansion and in the tenets of Islam. Those not within the Mughal oversight, or even Indian converts to Islam not from Persia, were seen as uncultured, rough, and generally inferior. These qualities and stereotypes were assumed by the British Raj and perpetuated throughout its rule especially in modesty of dress, restrictions on women's movements, and acceptable public behaviors (Heath, 2010). While women under the Mughals were relegated to primarily being servants for

their husbands and to childbearing, there are famous representations of powerful warrior queens from other kingdoms of the time (such as Rani Rudrama Devi, Rani Abbakka Chowta, and Maharani Tarabai, among others) where women could hold positions of honor and influence.

Perhaps the most discussed stereotype that still leads scholarship on masculinities in India is the British propaganda that contrasted British manliness, rationality, and decency against Indian men, described at the time as effete and subservient, superstitious, and uncultured—and the subsequent reactionary efforts of Indian men to prove the British wrong (Banerjee, 2005; Nandy, 1983; Sinha, 1999). At the same time, there is contradictory evidence that British rulers viewed Indian men as hypersexualized and a danger to women (especially white women), and so in need of reforming (Dasgupta and Gokulsing, 2014). Such cultural essentialism, rooted in a version of British Christian values of the time, was used for justifying the domination and a rather violent restructuring that characterized the British occupation of India. A so-called "purification of the obscenities" of India was taken up as a colonial task (Heath, 2010). Much of the current scholarship on post-colonialism and gender in India now recognizes the toxic effect that this has had on male identities in modern India, citing multiple, contradictory pressures to regulate men's behavior by reinforcing Western, hyper masculine traits within the context of traditional shame and honor norms (Nandy, 1983).

A discussion on the effects of post-colonialism on culture, especially after economic liberalization, is elaborated further in the section on masculinities in modern development and economics. One important point relevant here is the limitation of history as a guide for understanding the more everyday experiences of gender norms. An inaccuracy that arises in using popular culture (including history) to define masculinity is that we often take only the most visible men as reflective of the majority, for example, portrayals of royalty or war heroes, lead actors in Bollywood films, and the actions of politicians, celebrities, and

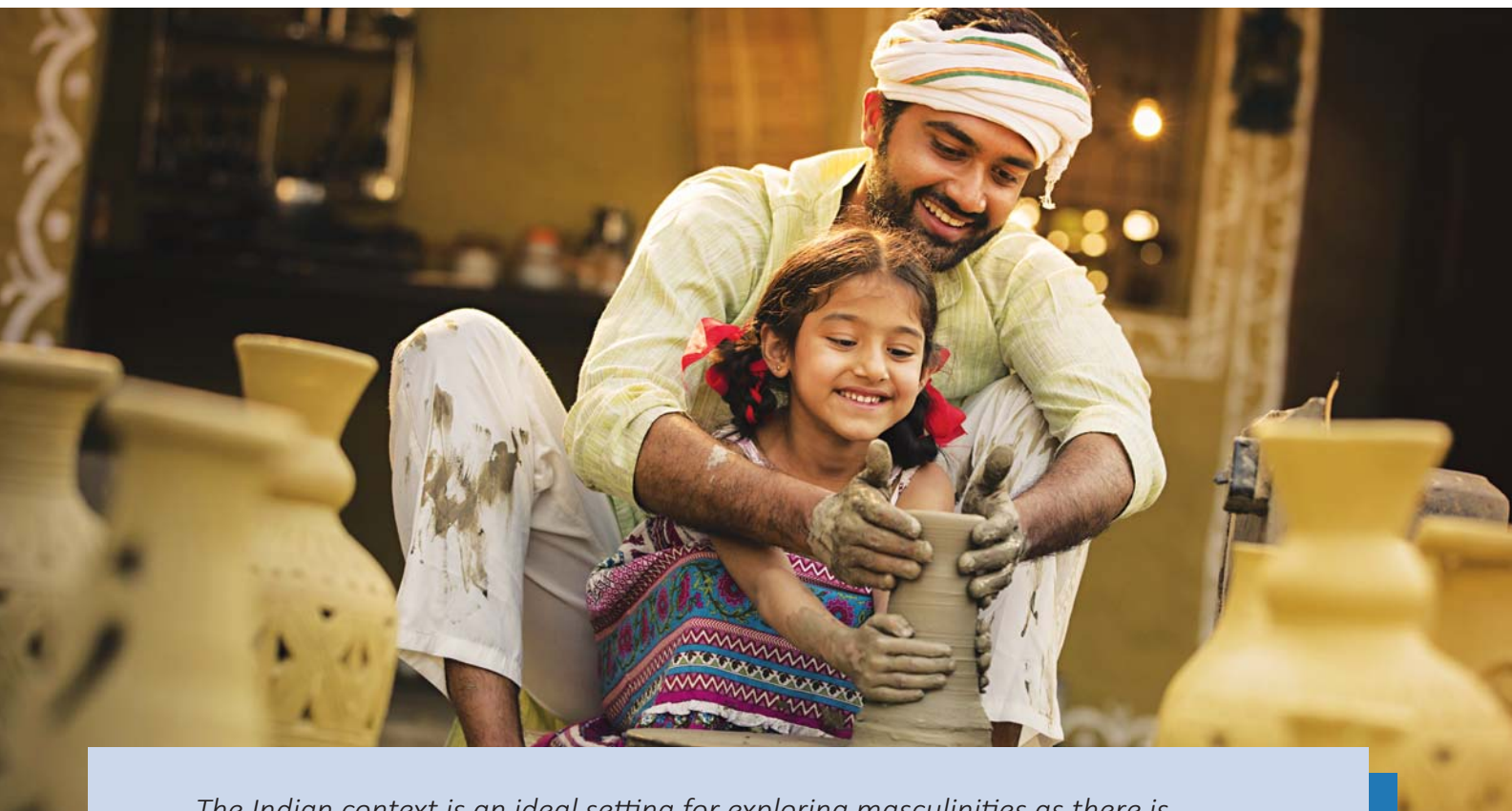
religious figures. To truly understand the range of masculinities currently existing in India, extensive, interactive studies with men in as many diverse contexts as possible are required.

Masculinities in Social Psychology, Kinship Structures, and Mental Health

India is often considered a collectivist culture as opposed to an individualist culture, as the West is frequently described (although the contrast between them might be rapidly reducing). The influence and characteristics of patriarchy in India are quite different from the systems in the West, with more emphasis on family prosperity and honor (Bhopal, 1997). This distinction is reflected in

psychological studies of well-being and social interaction, where people from collectivist cultures give greater importance to healthier social relationships and shame avoidance compared to individualist groups (Galinha et al., 2016).

This collectivist culture is most clearly expressed in India's traditional kinship structures. These vary between regions, religions, castes, and socioeconomic strata, and are thus unique to each household (Dyson and Moore, 1983). They have also been undergoing a rapid and major shift, especially in the last 30 years. However, there are still several defining factors. With few exceptions, men are the heads of households, the primary decision-makers, and the breadwinners who control financial resources. Sons are generally preferred over daughters. The patrilocal practices across much of India require women to relocate after marriage, creating a hierarchy that is both inter- and intra-gender in families



The Indian context is an ideal setting for exploring masculinities as there is extreme diversity and thereby reflects many different parts of the world.

(Dube, 1997). Men—fathers and sons—are almost always at the top of the hierarchy, with women in relatively lower positions. Women work their way up the hierarchy, wielding more influence among other women as they age and produce sons (Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2005). While there are notable and famous exceptions to these norms (for example, Kerala’s Nair communities, groups in Meghalaya, and others), a vast majority of the population can be described, to varying degrees, by these standards.

These traditional kinship structures reinforce gender norms and strict gender roles, including strong heteronormative ideals and the imperative of marriage and progeny (Osella and Osella, 2006). In fact, one of the defining features of many Indian households is the interest—and in most cases—the influence and control that parents exert over their children in terms of significant life choices, especially when arranging their marriage partners. These norms construct and reinforce gender identity, both masculine and feminine, and by association, the notions of honor and shame alongside them. This further underpins the role that family, kinship structures, and society play in forming gender identities (ibid). Some of the underlying psychological drivers of these gender identities are tied into the themes of chastity and purity, male valor, shame, and caste identity (Mahalingam and Jackson, 2007; Yim and Mahalingam, 2006). Even as the nation is evolving through growing urbanization and global influences, gender roles are slow to change, leading to conflict when threatened.

The norms of gender identity that are enforced through culture are extremely prohibitive of anything other than heteronormative lifestyles, leaving alternative experiences and expressions of gender outside of the social norm (Osella and Osella, 2006). This certainly has a negative effect on the mental health of both men and women in India who do not identify with prescribed norms. There is little, if any, support for those who struggle with gender norms as mental health awareness. Psychology and psychiatry are currently under-represented fields across India (Murthy, 2017). Given the statistics regarding mental health and suicide,

greater attention is needed, particularly on gender issues and engaging masculinities. Much of the construction of masculinities is an interplay between psychological identity and cultural norms and influences (Basu, Basu, and Bhattacharya, 2018). Mahalingam and Jackson (2007) explain the relationship between cultural beliefs and mental health as:

“

When socialised to value such idealised cultural beliefs about gender, the self-worth of men and women will be contingent upon meeting the social and cultural expectations of these ideals. We argue that such investments of self-worth in idealised cultural beliefs will be particularly acute where there is a high male-biased sex-ratio as a result of a combination female neglect, infanticide and sex-selective abortion (p. 1012).

”

The field of cultural psychology allows us to better understand and articulate these complexities around cultural norms, how gender norms develop, and the psychological mechanisms behind them. The behavioral rules that define group membership are largely determined by inherited cultural factors (knowledge, attitudes, practices, values, and economic and political practices) (Shweder et al., 2006). This inheritance is reinforced by community leaders but is linked to traditional and historical identities (ibid). In India, although these cultural factors are malleable and able to change based on environmental factors, there is a palpable tension between the so-called Western ideals of self-expression, freedom of choice and individuality, and traditional values linked to community preservation (Bhopal, 1997). Importantly, the defining cultural factors for group membership (such as caste, religion/sect, and language) are not chosen but are inherited. These can form rigid markers of one’s identity and are linked with ideas of values, duties, and other moral imperatives. Therefore, change is often slow and outside influences are treated with concern or distrust (Shweder et al., 2007).

Change can also be quite disruptive, especially if it is pushed by members

traditionally relegated to lower statuses (for example, women). This could explain why GEWE efforts, conventionally promoted by women and for women, are slow to find root in more traditional contexts. Cultural psychology gives some insights into how to overcome these challenges. In particular, we see that some gender norms are more flexible than others. For example, men are often encouraged to leave their native villages and establish nuclear families in big cities or even abroad, a clear break with tradition but with clear economic benefits and increased social prestige. Other challenges like child and inter-caste marriages are slow to change.

This is a rich field of opportunity that stakeholders should take advantage of as it exposes parts of masculinities that are difficult to understand without considering the cultural and psychological underpinnings of masculinities. Much more research is needed in this field, especially in early childhood and adolescent development of gender attitudes and gender equality which has been woefully understudied until now (Landry et al., 2020). This report explores the possibilities of this field as a guide for stakeholders in later chapters.

Masculinities in Modern Development and Economics

The relationship between gender and development is complex. Some aspects of so-called “developed” nations lead to improvements in women’s quality of life such as improved educational and economic access and freedoms, factors tied closely to the language of the SDGs. However, as can be seen in the World Economic Forum (2019) report, gender inequalities persist regardless of a nation’s levels of development. It is clear, then, that poverty alone is not a predictor nor cause of gender inequalities, although the lack of basic human needs certainly contributes to all social ills. Hunger, poor access to education, healthcare, and employment, lack of sanitation infrastructure, and polluted environments are pressures that

intersect with each other and contribute to the formation and replication of certain kinds of masculinities. It is far beyond the scope of this report to explore how each of these types of poverty contribute to gender norms, but it is an important area for future study. It is more appropriate to maintain a focus on human rights as the foundation of gender equality and as the true driving factor of this discussion.

One of the most common arguments made by researchers, with ample supporting evidence, is that by improving women’s equality markers in developing nations, other development markers will automatically rise (Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002; Kabeer, 2005). However, it is important to understand the full scope of how gender norms are influenced and, in turn, influence social and developmental structures. A clear example of this can be found in the significant body of evidence that points to a connection between low development indicators and gender inequalities that come from extreme preference for male offspring (Jayachandran, 2015). Working hand-in-hand with these developmental drivers of gender inequalities, there are several cultural, religious, and other structural factors that reinforce existing gender norms that favor men irrespective of the level of poverty. The Indian context is an ideal setting for exploring masculinities as there is extreme diversity and thereby reflects many different parts of the world. It follows that lessons learned here can inform other contexts as well.

In several parts of the world, including in India, investing resources in raising girl children is often given much lower priority as compared to male children. This is due to a few key factors:

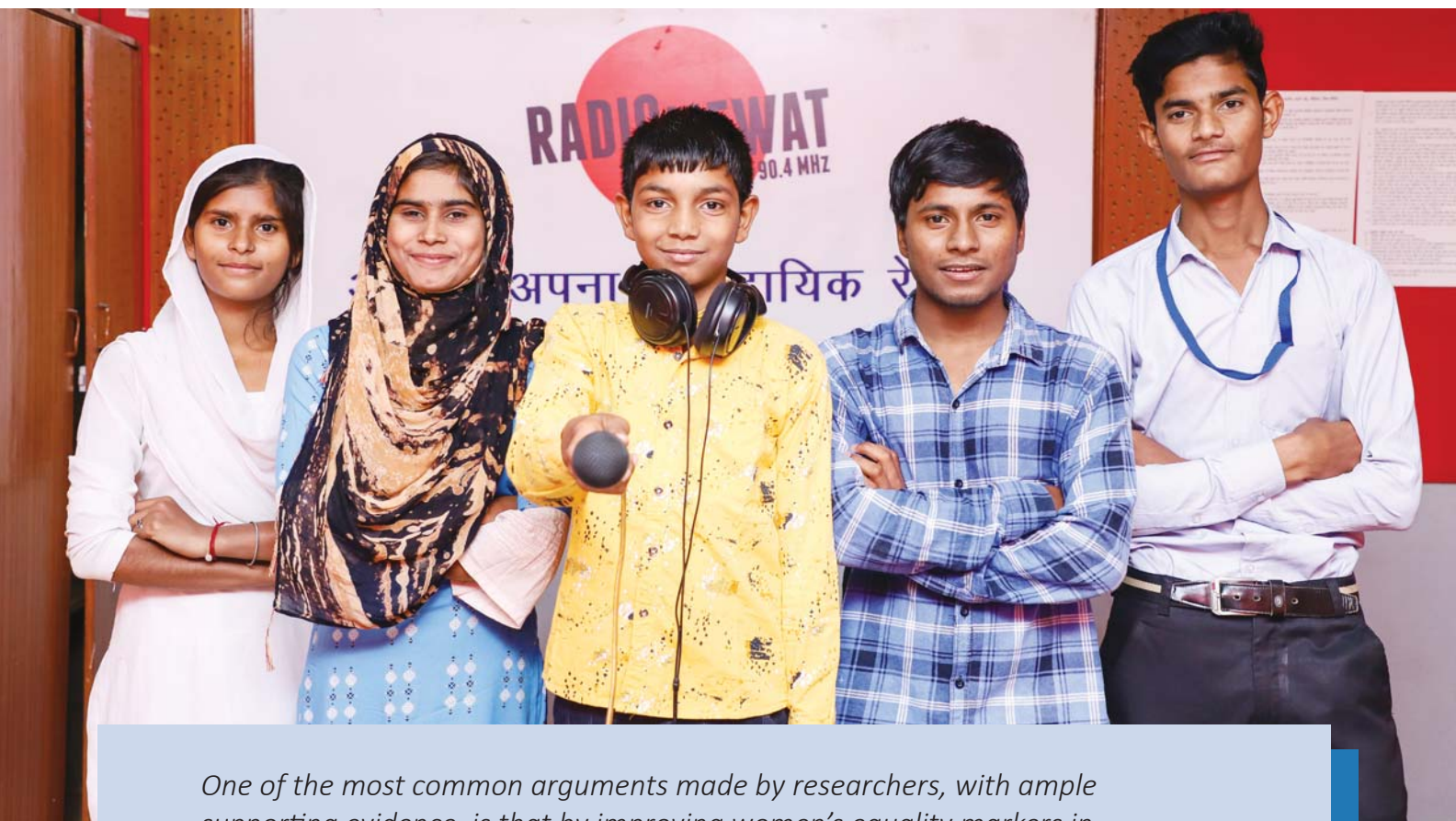
- Developing or underdeveloped economies rely more heavily on agriculture and manufacturing which offer a relative advantage to men in terms of their perceived physical strength and abilities;
- Lack of advancement in home production technologies reaching full-population saturation requires women to spend more time in home production-related work and household and family care;

- Increased risks associated with fertility in developing nations along with a higher desire for fertility (Jayachandran, 2015).

Further, female offspring can often represent a future economic burden with little return on investments as families have to pay a dowry to her future husband with whom she will then live, thus no longer contributing to her birth family. This further increases the preference for male offspring. These scenarios offer some insights into how poverty can create ideal scenarios for sustained gender inequalities, reaffirming male-dominant structures, and reinforcing prevalent norms of masculinities. These gender norms are often motivated by the belief that women's purity is representative of caste purity, and that it is therefore men's responsibility and right to protect and preserve this purity, thus justifying the restrictive norms placed on women (Eswaran, Ramaswami, and Wadhwa, 2013). These

types of norms set the stage for the reiterative cycle that keeps the preference for male offspring in place, thus negatively affecting both a nation's development and women's empowerment.

However, the process of development has also had dramatic effects on gender roles and norms (Derné, 2008). Modern industrialism and urbanization has led to rapidly growing urban areas, resulting in a large-scale shift in job markets. This has had multiple effects on the Indian population: educated, middle to upper class women have more opportunities in the formal employment sector, particularly in urban centers, and this is changing traditional domestic spheres. More and more often young men from lower socioeconomic, rural communities are required to migrate from their homes to urban centers. While it is not uncommon for migrant workers to join groups of other migrants from their region, the act of migration can destabilize these



One of the most common arguments made by researchers, with ample supporting evidence, is that by improving women's equality markers in developing nations, other development markers will automatically rise.

young men by untethering them from the cultural community that provided structure, a sense of security, and moral boundaries (Dube, 1997). While the men are away, women are often left alone at home or with the elderly and small children, and must either become more independent and self-reliant (even without the husband's consent), or submit to their husbands' families.

Further, while traditional Indian masculinities were likely developed in the context of joint-family systems, modernization increases the number of nuclear households, further complicating gender norms and redistributing traditional power hierarchies (George, 2006). This gives women more room to become empowered as there are fewer people to be accountable to but also deprives them of the potential support from a larger community sharing the burdens of daily life. Larger, traditional communities are also more likely to maintain stronger values, for better or worse as it applies to women. Such communities are often composed of groups of women connected by familial bonds who can support each other and prevent more extreme violence. Nuclear families are less bound to such values and also restructure a man's traditional role in the household or community. The related notions of male pride and shame associated with his role in a traditional family set-up are redefined, but are also a source of potential disruption as this shift in gender roles and values does not always happen concurrently with the new family situation.

On the other hand, rapid urbanization and "westernization" is also leading to a breakdown in many other traditional values and family structures, some of which contribute to even worse conditions for women (Channa, 2004). Higher divorce rates, urban isolation and lack of community support, the prevalence of violence against women in urban areas, increased reliance on state handouts, and a decline in traditional cultural identities are just a few examples of how "development" may actually create new forms of gender inequalities. Seeking a balance between improving the human condition while protecting the wealth of cultural diversity is one of UNESCO's priority

areas and should be a factor in designing approaches to achieving SDG5.

Masculinities in India Post-liberalization and in the Media

Along with the historical periods discussed earlier, the most recent paradigm-changing event occurred in 1991 when economic liberalization was formally instituted. The result of this economically driven, political decision was an opening of Indian markets to foreign investments and imports which also ushered in a new wave of cultural influences (Chowdhury, 2011). India was quickly swept into the effects of globalization, with consequences (positive and negative) across the board. Significant shifts included a reduction in the complex, government controlled bureaucratic machinery that regulated businesses (often called the License Raj), an influx of foreign goods into national markets, shifts in domestic business and production strategies to become competitive, and an enormous spike in the communication industry (for example, media, advertising, films, and the wider service industry) (Derné, Sharma, & Sethi, 2014). Many cultural theorists point to this period as the start of a modern Indian consumerist culture (Toor, 2000).

The effects of post-liberalization on gender can partially be understood by examining the role that political economy plays in reinforcing gender norms. Many of the changes that came about in the workforce and professional sphere and the effects of this on family life included serious gendered implications. By examining the shifts of locus of power and resource distribution through a gendered lens, it becomes clear that controlling these two crucial elements is firmly maintained within the patriarchal paradigm. Issues of women's access to jobs, jobs being considered inappropriate for women, division of labor, and the (ever-present and unaccounted for) domestic work that women are expected to perform are only three examples of this fact (Iversen

and Rosenbluth, 2006). However, a thorough analysis of India's changing political economy and the systems of production and resources also includes factors such as formal rules and rights (legal, official), social and cultural economic structures and norms (unwritten, unofficial), values and beliefs, and drivers of social and political change (Haines and O'Neil, 2018).

These factors are further complicated by changes and evolutions in context, and can be expressed differently in the different spheres where men and women interact including private, public, and professional. Further, these factors may even be in direct contradiction to one another which can lead to behaviors that undermine access to formal rights and resources (ibid). Understanding these components will help clarify how patriarchal norms have been centralized within almost all institutions and how they have been maintained and perpetuated.

While economic liberalization certainly influenced institutional cultures (for example, the dismantling of the License Raj and the associated power dynamics), it also made way for popular culture revolutions via the exploding Hindi and regional cinema, especially Bollywood empires. Growing advertising markets and consumerism-fueled capitalism also had a role in shaping modern ideals for both women and men.

The effects of the media have been well studied throughout the world for more than a century and although there is no one agreed-upon consensus of *how* the media influences and affects society, it is generally agreed that it *does* (Curran, 2010; Perse and Lambe, 2016). This can be through a multitude of methods that are still being understood but the fact remains that media, and films and television in particular portray new trends and reinforce existing norms to audiences in both explicit and implicit ways. India's media industry contains the largest and most prolific film industry in the world (Dastidar and Elliott, 2020), and it has had a great influence on the creation of India's national image (both pre-and post-Independence). This industry has introduced new norms and influences

post-liberalization, where films have helped to contextualize India within an increasingly globalized society (Miller, 2015).

Although there is much to deconstruct in terms of normalization of themes, tropes, and behaviors, one of the most well-noted and analyzed is that of gender representation and gendered behaviors that can influence society, particularly younger viewers. In terms of men's behavior, pre-2000 there was a general trope of the "angry young man" who sought vengeance for some wrongdoing in his or in his family's past (Raj and Goswami, 2020). These films presented a male protagonist who was capable of fighting off multiple villains at once to protect or save the heroine, an implicit reinforcement of the ideals that violence is acceptable, particularly when in relation to protecting the honor and safety of a woman, thus reinforcing the construct that women require protection (ibid). Another example of behavior that has become normalized is the idea that women are objects to be pursued, and that consistent pursuit of women is romantic, even if they openly express disinterest. This disinterest is often portrayed as shyness and is meant to imply appropriate behavior on the part of women, but as men continue to pursue women in the face of their demurrals, it teaches audiences that consent is optional, which can lead to a normalization of stalking, harassment, and rape.

Men and boys are also frequently portrayed following their love interests in public places, often taking photos or videos without a woman's knowledge, which further normalizes public harassment and stalking (Dhaliwal, 2015). This has a direct impact on society, especially on young boys at whom such content is largely targeted. As social media and online activities increase among India's youth, this issue will spiral into larger problems of sexual misconduct, harassment, and other forms of gender-based violence. Schools play a large role here, and it is through negligence or an unwillingness to engage in such taboo topics that this kind of behavior is able to thrive (Falt, 2020).

There is also the advertising industry which is widely acknowledged throughout the

world as portraying unhealthy body ideals, hyper-masculinized or hyper-feminized aesthetics, and promoting gendered behaviors through product targeting. Women are targeted by companies that produce home goods and appliances, baby products, foods, and beauty products, while men are targeted by companies that promote “masculine” products including cars, men’s razors, construction material, and often technology and electronics. These highlight the traditional roles that Indian society has constructed for genders to fall into (Das, 2011). There has been more awareness in recent years, however, in terms of breaking gender stereotypes in advertising. For example, the laundry detergent company, Ariel India, released an ad campaign that promoted men’s involvement in household chores via the slogan *#sharetheload*, starting in 2016 and continuing until the time of writing this report (P&G, n.d). However, the basic structure of Indian film, television, and advertising media remains one that, with few

exceptions, reinforces patriarchal structures, and therefore reinforces stereotypes of masculinities that need to be addressed.

Engaging boys and men in GEWE will be far more successful if a better understanding of masculinities is built through the lenses of hegemony, history, social psychology, and modern development. Although gender inequalities are systemic and unequal structures have ancient roots, it is widely acknowledged that they can be addressed and the gender discrepancies lessened through the active engagement of men in women’s empowerment. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010), the UN Human Rights Council (UN General Assembly, 2018), the UN’s Division for the Advancement of Women (Connell, 2003), and the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children (Buscher and Quick, 2005) have presented ample evidence on the efficacy of and the need to engage men and boys in the push for gender equality.



Masculinities Are Dynamic

Despite the complex, and often negative, components that comprise masculinities outlined in the previous sections, work on GEWE has many potential avenues for progress. Masculine identities are dynamic and shift across time and contexts in response to the needs and social cues of men’s environments. These environments are complex ecosystems in which all members play a role in perpetuating hegemonic masculinity, and are further influenced by a multitude of other, social pressures from the world. Altogether, such an ecosystem produces a group identity that encourages generational adherence to local gender norms. As we are seeing with the rapid transformation occurring in India due to global influences and the rapid spread of technology, when the environment changes, social norms and traditions also change. This dynamism of both masculine identities and the shifting environments that men exist within can be leveraged to bring about greater success in achieving SDG5, especially

by using systems theory and practice. Tim Lomas (2013, p. 179), draws from critical positive masculinity to highlight that “...it is possible for men to change in “positive’ ways and negotiate more constructive enactments of masculinity.”

Another possible mechanism that has been explored is through increasing critical consciousness in both men and women about the different forms of subjugation that everyone in society faces. This takes inspiration from the theory of intersectionality. In India this has been explored through working with men to understand the relationships between gender and caste, expanding on these concepts to engage men in critical reflection on gender dynamics (Edstrom et al., 2016). Most importantly, critical consciousness is an important point of reference and a potential guide because of its earnest requirement for a dialogue between all actors in an intervention. It also requires that the oppressed must be active, reflective

participants in their own liberation (Freire, 2005). This dialogue includes values such as mutuality, respect, and care which are essential for creating the positive cultural shift envisioned in SDG5.

This report points a spotlight at several stakeholders who are currently active in India. These stakeholders represent various approaches to engaging men and boys in women's empowerment and attaining gender

equality. In this section, we present four such stakeholders who have focused on leveraging the construct of masculinities to engage men and boys in gender equality outcomes. These stakeholders represent some of the major sectors within which men and boys are engaged in GEWE in India. A more comprehensive mapping of stakeholders to other sectors and a discussion of saturation and gaps is provided in Chapter 4.



Men, but also other key actors in society, such as education stakeholders, need to be part of the process of understanding the social and cultural meaning of fatherhood, and its importance to protect the rights of children.

The first example, *Breakthrough*, is a media and communication organization that focuses on human rights, engaging with the general population to inspire and raise awareness in a critical mass of agents of change—the Breakthrough Generation. Using creative, multimedia based campaigns, Breakthrough has worked to engage the public in key gender-based issues such as women’s human rights, ending violence against women, child marriages, sex-selective abortions, and issues around religion and peace. Breakthrough has worked to engage men in its media campaigns by initiating the first male-targeted media campaign to ask men to wear condoms to protect their wives from HIV/AIDS. This is an example of a very public approach to engaging men and boys, and it could possibly have a lasting effect on the psychological development of an entire generation. More information on Breakthrough can be found at: <https://us.breakthrough.tv/our-work-in-india/>

The second is a public campaign called Father’s Care, conducted by members of the Forum to Engage Men (FEM), a nationwide network of men for gender equality headquartered at the Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) in New Delhi. One of the key efforts of this campaign is the *Baapanchi Shala* or “Father’s Schooling.” *Baapanchi Shala* started as an effort to engage men and other key actors in society to be part of the process of understanding the social and cultural meaning of fatherhood in the context of various regions of Maharashtra, and working with men as fathers to protect the rights of their children. The Father’s Care campaign has expanded to many states in North India with a growing network of supportive organizations and volunteers. This is an excellent example of leveraging a component of the construct of masculinities towards a more positive expression of masculinity.

The third is a feminist organization that primarily works with women’s safety and empowerment—*Jagori*. Located in

Delhi but with partners throughout India, *Jagori* focuses on topics such as raising awareness about women’s safety, ending violence against women, engaging women in leadership roles, and raising awareness about women’s rights to resources. It also provides aid in cases of domestic violence as well as in the healing process. *Jagori* is working with both boys and men to train them in the use of analytical tools to develop awareness about ending violence against women. This is manifest throughout school programs and the Safe City Initiative that *Jagori* spearheaded in which the safety of women is one of the central considerations in city planning, refurbishment, and design. These types of fundamental and community-wide approaches to engaging men in gender equality highlight a collective approach where awareness raising along with suggested solutions opens up space in masculinities to engage in gender equality movements.

Finally, the *International Center for Research on Women* (ICRW) largely concentrates on women’s issues, but recognizes and advocates for men’s involvement to such a great extent that it has developed a framework for studying factors associated with intimate partner violence and son preference in India (Priya et al, 2014). This is an invaluable resource and can provide insights into the various components that underpin a successful endeavor to involve men in the process. The framework focuses on an initial gendered participatory analysis, with long term goals towards “enhanced and sustainable gender equity and positive social development” (ICRW, 2007). The framework acknowledges the difficulties in transforming gender norms and the reciprocal nature of gendered behaviors that require both innovative and delicate approaches to sustainable change, and also recognizes that it is a distinct reality in addressing the inherent dynamism in masculinities successfully.



Engaging Men and Boys

The ultimate goal we are working towards is gender equality and women’s empowerment. As outlined in previous sections, this requires the engagement of men and boys to be successful and sustainable. So, the question that arises is: *How do we engage men and boys in such a way that they become champions of GEWE, looking beyond their own privileges to recognize the benefits to themselves, women and girls, and to society as a whole?* In essence, a sense of enlightened self-interest must be awakened within men (including redefining many concepts such as the protection and care of “the feminine,” the environment, and the vulnerable), and young boys must be provided adequate awareness

and positive role models to guide them. This is, in actuality, a parallel process to women’s empowerment. It involves understanding the complexities of masculinities as they are formed in various social contexts, as well as addressing structural factors within the same focus areas that women’s empowerment targets (that is, kinship, resource access and distribution, personal freedoms, etc.). It also requires setting up mechanisms to enable and support self-reflection in men and boys that can engender greater contextual awareness, internal transformation, and provide guidance through the process of identifying and transforming identities, values, and beliefs around gender roles and

Area of Interest: SDG 5 Targets

(<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>)

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere (Social/Cultural)
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (Safety)
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Safety/Social)
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate (Economic/Social)
- 5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life (Political)
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences (Health)
- 5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws (Economic/Political)
- 5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communication technology, to promote the empowerment of women (Education—but also all others)
- 5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (Political)



“

Indeed, the paths by which men and boys come to support and live out gender equality are multiple and sometimes conflicting, with some based on self-interest, some on attitudes of protection (and thus potentially patriarchal), and others on a sense of gender justice and universal human rights. Our policies will be better informed, where men are concerned, if we understand these multiple paths rather than prescribe a single path to gender equality

– (MenEngage, 2014, p. 7).

”

norms that do not support progress towards SDG5.

One way of strategically organizing efforts to engage men is by leveraging SDG5's targets. These goals have been well-researched, and offer a framework in which to design targeted interventions and ways of engaging men and boys. Within this framework, a more holistic approach to navigating the complexities of culture, historical legacies, economic drivers of inequalities, and systemic institutionalized patriarchy can be developed. This will require the active participation of all stakeholders and support of agencies such as faith based organizations (FBOs), local leaders, and government policymakers. While this report does not prescribe a single way forward on engaging men and boys in GEWE, it does repeatedly encourage stakeholder convergence, dialogue, and open-mindedness to innovative approaches for achieving GEWE.

What all of this will look like in practice cannot be articulated in this report as solutions need to reflect on the diverse population and be multi-dimensional and context-based. Designing such solutions requires exploration and long-term engagement by researchers and other stakeholders to better understand all of the relevant factors and social/ environmental factors that contribute to

positive transformation among men and boys (and the overall population).

Unfortunately, there are limited studies on how to engage men and boys effectively, especially within the Indian context. Some organizations, such as the Instituto Promundo, have worked towards developing Gender Equitable Men's Scales (GEMS) that have contributed much towards identifying a range of attitudes among men towards gender equality (Barker et al., 2011). However, there are very few studies on understanding the mechanisms that lead to men's attitudes about GEWE, and even fewer that have led to replicable tools for analysis in other contexts (Sudkämper, Ryan, Kirby, and Morgenroth, 2020). The focus of literature seems to be on the reasons *why* it is important to engage men and boys, rather than the specifics of *how* to proceed. This speaks to the inherent complexity of this issue: There is no one answer.

The next chapters create a roadmap for addressing this gap. As was stated in the first chapter, the exact steps and appearance of *how* to engage men and boys in GEWE will always be context-dependent and require the expertise of relevant stakeholders. However, there is much that can be learned from tracing existing and past policy efforts and lessons learned by analyzing the myriad ways GEWE efforts have been implemented in India. Chapters 3 and 4 offer just this, building on the topics covered thus far. This leads to a summary of obstacles (Chapter 5) and important recommendations (Chapter 6). Due to the inherent limitations of reports such as this, not all of the relevant theories and discussions can be adequately represented; despite this, it is hoped that the discussion sparked here can facilitate a larger conversation where all perspectives can eventually be brought to light. This report does not claim to be the final word on the topics it discusses, but only to raise the torch and hopefully inspire further efforts.





A photograph of two young girls standing in front of a row of yellow pillars. The girl on the left is wearing a pink shirt and a yellow headband with pom-poms. The girl on the right is wearing a white shirt with a cartoon character and a striped skirt. In the background, a white car is parked, and a person is walking. A blue banner with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

POLICY FRAMEWORKS



POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Chapter 3 Overview

This chapter provides a policy overview for gender equality efforts in India, focusing on the (limited) history of the inclusion of men and boys in the process. Taking guidance from the Gender Mainstreaming scale of analysis, both global and national policies are examined. Our study found that while there has been some success in the global arena and a long history of gender sensitive policies in India, there has been limited progress in achieving indicators for SDG5. There are many potential reasons for this, not the least of which is a deficiency in enforcing policy and gaining political “buy-in” to champion truly gender-transformative programs. This chapter highlights both the positive accomplishments and areas of underperformance by global and Indian decision makers. This includes an historical overview, a discussion of political pressures and goals for each of the policies, and an analysis of the current impact of these on the state of GEWE in India. The chapter is organized into three parts:

Gender Mainstreaming

The UN Women adapted scale for gender mainstreaming is described in some detail

- a. Definitions
- b. Importance and impact

Global Policies

While not comprehensive, the general progression of GEWE initiatives on the global stage and current efforts are outlined that are relevant to the Indian context.

- a. History and leadership
- b. UN influences
- c. WHO, the World Bank, and others

Indian Policies

Following the historical trajectory of India’s policies and evolution of approaches to GEWE through critical events, a summary of the Government of India’s GEWE efforts is given

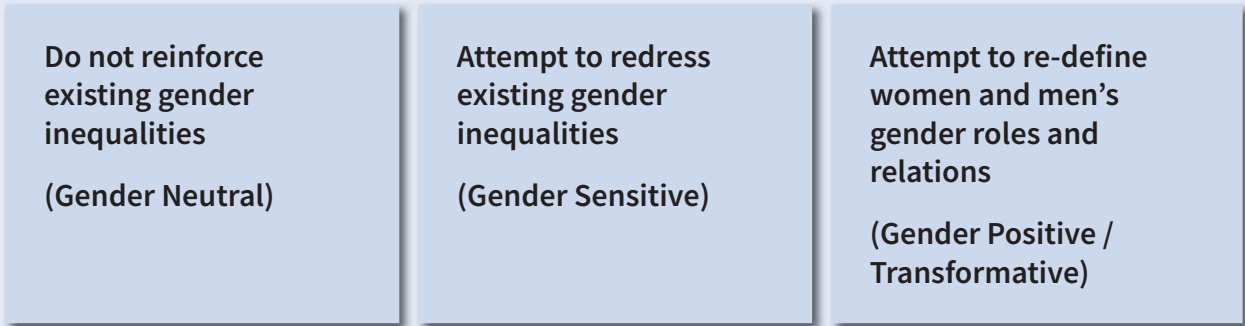
- a. History and Five-Year Plans
- b. Nirbhaya Case and the Justice Verma Report
- c. NITI Aayog and current efforts

This chapter reviews the more significant global and Indian policies on GEWE that have been introduced over the last several decades, highlighting those that include the engagement of men and boys. We first look at global policy recommendations made by international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the WHO. We then evaluate the Indian policies and laws that have been enacted and analyze areas

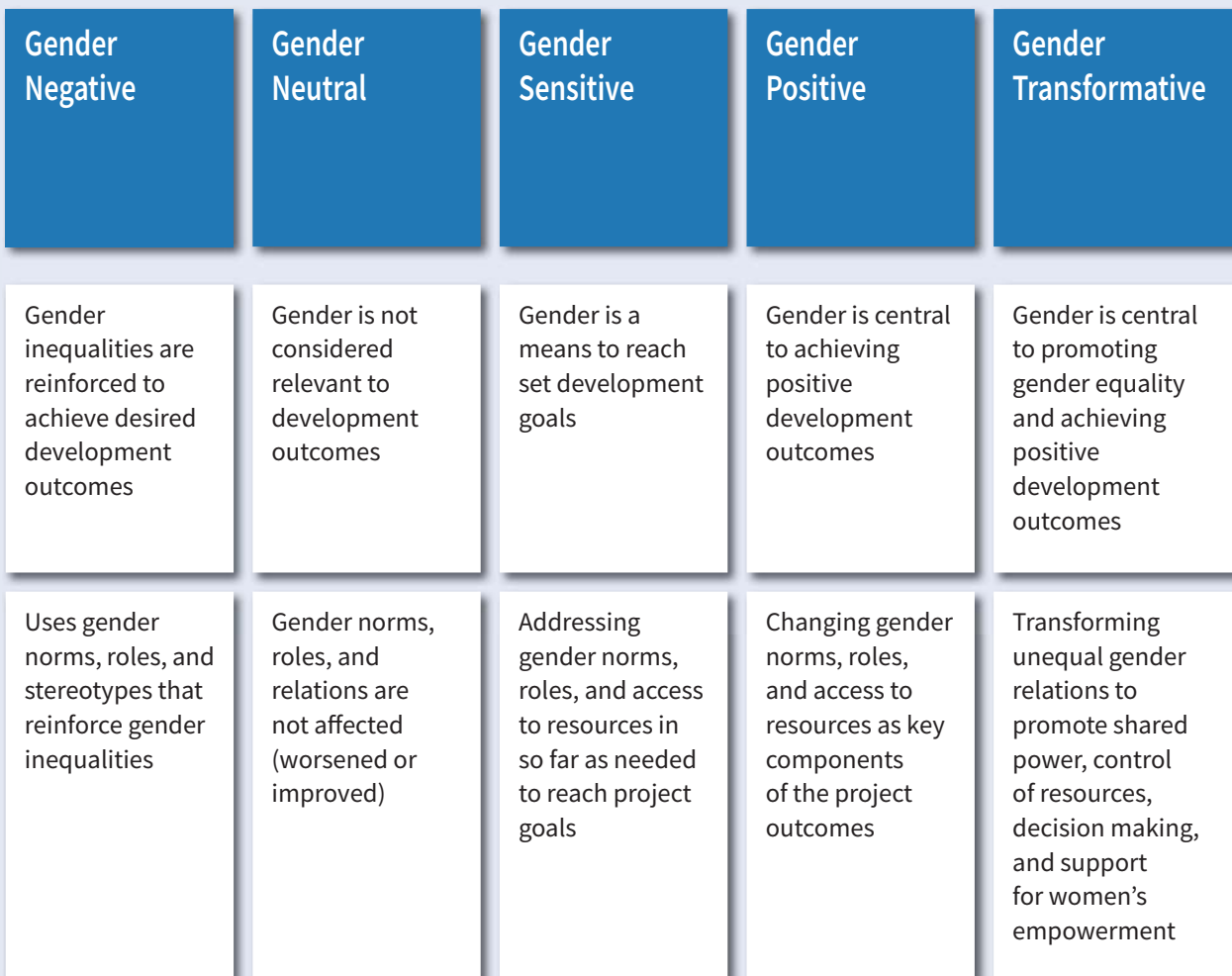
of focus, areas of neglect, and the level of consistency between global and national policies and laws. The concept of gender mainstreaming as defined by UN Women is an effective way of examining the quality of policies, and we use it here as part of the discussion. By using gender mainstreaming as an analytical tool, we are able to evaluate the level to which policies can effectively engage men and boys for achieving SDG5.

Gender Mainstreaming

The primary objective behind gender mainstreaming is to design and implement development projects, programs, and policies that:



The degree of integration of a gender perspective in any given project can be seen as a continuum:



Source: UN-INSTRAW (now part of UN Women), Glossary of Gender-related Terms and Concepts.

Ideally, new policies will be “gender transformative” as detailed in the UN Women’s definition in the text box. Furthermore, policy design and implementation should be held accountable to feminist theory and values as detailed in the previous chapter. Ideally, this combination will ensure that women’s perspectives are included in decisions and policies which are essential requirements of both of the frameworks. However, such changes are extremely difficult to bring about as they require the active support and participation of all the central actors, both in policy making and enforcement (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002). Further, these types of policies are contentious as they seek to modify long-standing traditions that are typically tied to religious, ethnic, or other identity-laden practices that are fiercely protected. Because of this, many strategies begin with a gender sensitive or gender positive approach, and within sectors that are more easily seen as “universally good” (for example, maternal mortality or women’s health), as these are far easier to reach consensus on. This is an acceptable strategy as long as there is a clear path towards more transformative programming. Such wide-scale shifts in culture and infrastructure are long-term projects and should be approached practically, but with higher goals always in the foreground.

Using the theoretical lenses defined in Chapter 2 we see that there is a greater emphasis on economic development and using broad sociological theories to justify providing women greater access to basic resources and opportunities. Unfortunately, few policies (from global or regional bodies) attempt to directly transform the psychological or cultural factors that perpetuate gender inequalities, especially through the engagement of men and boys. As MenEngage (2018) found in their study of historical UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and global symposia on gender equality since 1995:

“

Despite spanning a period of twenty-one years, the problems identified and the policy recommendations have altered little... This highlights the slow nature of progress and the deep societal change still required to engage men and boys in interventions to achieve gender equality... A focus on transforming masculinities is still completely absent. While there are numerous references to “gender stereotypes” no further attention is given to the kind of male attitudes, norms and expectations that are particularly harmful and how they can harm both men and women” (p. 02).

”

Thankfully, the dialogue in GEWE is shifting to include more practical strategies to engage men and boys in positive and transformative GEWE as highlighted in the UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014) and the more recent Inter-regional Dialogue on “Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality” in Maputo, Mozambique (2019a). The UN Human Rights Council (2018) also published a review of existing strategies to engage men and boys in the elimination of violence against women that further established this approach as a key initiative for global policies around GEWE. UN Women initiated an advocacy and

Stakeholder Spotlight: HeForShe



HeForShe
UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality

Launched in 2014 by UN Women, the HeForShe solidarity movement for gender equality provides a systematic approach and a targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents in achieving gender equality. The campaign aims to recruit individuals, especially men and those in authority with power and privilege to champion gender equality, thereby creating positive role models for widespread social change. The campaign includes action kits for individuals, students, civil organizations, universities, and corporations, as well as media and other awareness campaign material to increase global visibility. The HeForShe Proven Solution on How to Achieve Parity in Global Leadership was created and implemented by the HeForShe Champion Organizations (including Price water house Coopers and the World Bank) which increased female representation in their global leadership teams, setting an example for other organizations. According to its website, HeForShe has been the subject of more than 2 billion conversations on social media, with off-line activities reaching every corner of the globe (www.HeForShe.org, n.d.).

communication campaign in 2014 called “HeForShe,” with the goal of promoting and maintaining a global conversation of men supporting women’s rights. In India, the latest draft of a revised National Policy for Women’s Empowerment offers strategic support for transforming ‘men’talities (Government of India, 2016). While this policy is yet to be ratified, it is a sign of promising progress.

This renewal of efforts towards engaging men and boys for GEWE comes at a critical juncture: the UN Women (2020) report, “Gender equality: women’s rights in review 25 years after Beijing” finds that women’s progress has not only stalled, but in some cases is under threat of regression. Perhaps one missing element over the past several decades has been a lack of concerted efforts to engage men and boys.



Global Policies

Policy and legislation are crucial for successfully attaining gender equality and from its beginning, the UN system has sought to be a global platform for developing and recommending the most effective policies. Women’s rights were one of the first focus areas of the UN, cemented in 1946 with the foundation of the Commission for the Status of Women and promoted in many World Conferences on Women where women’s rights in various contexts were highlighted and discussed.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women represents a major milestone in global discussions on gender in policy. The outcome of this conference was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)—still considered one of the most forward-thinking documents regarding women and gender—where women’s rights were famously declared to be human rights, indicating the progress made by international women’s groups.

This was the first consensus-ratified document by the UN which acknowledged and detailed women’s rights, forming the foundation of global policy recommendations on women and gender equality with regard to the following 12 topics: poverty, education, health, violence against women, armed conflict, the economy, roles of power and decision making, the human rights of women,

the media, the environment, and the girl child. This document has formed the basis of the majority of GEWE policy and legislation recommendations, guidelines, and global calls to action since. It has also informed the UN’s SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, which, while also highlighting gender in SDG5, maintains that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue and one of the foundational means of achieving the remaining 16 SDGs. Unfortunately, the Beijing Declaration has very few instructions for engaging men and boys in GEWE, but does affirm that men should be engaged in all gender equality activities. The declaration urges shared participation and responsibility in all realms of life especially the shared burden of domestic work, though it does so briefly.

To ensure inclusivity and global buy-in, the UN mandated that a consensus be reached before ratifying the Declaration. During its inception, there were conflicts between some of the participating member states. The process of ratifying required multiple levels of consensus between more than 100 countries, requiring that the language be reduced to the “...lowest common denominator...” to be acceptable to all (Bunch and Fried, 1996). This is particularly true in the case of language around the actual term “gender,” which some states and religious institutions insisted should only be used in reference to the “... natural, biological roles of the sexes” (ibid). Also contested was the language around gender roles, women’s sexual rights, sexual orientation, and women’s rights as human rights, seen by some more conservative groups as a kind of “theoretical colonialism”

threatening to destabilize family values (Case, 2019). These opposition voices reflect deeply held cultural values that many scholars have linked to gender inequalities (Bunch and Fried, 1996). As a result, while the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action presented extremely strong and thorough propositions for gender mainstreaming in economic, health, and anti-violence measures, it was unable to transform the social, cultural, and psychological foundations of gender norms. Using the gender mainstreaming continuum detailed earlier, one can say that the Beijing Declaration was certainly gender positive in many regards, but fell short of a gender transformative approach (MenEngage, 2018).

This tends to be a recurring theme in early global policy recommendations for GEWE in which anti-poverty issues were prioritized (for example, ensuring basic resources, health, and education) through calls to action and investment trends, while underlying cultural and structural norms that instigate gender inequalities received less attention. This is exceedingly relevant to the theme of this report as culture and social power dynamics are at the very heart of masculinities.

Women's health, physical safety, education, economic advancement, and political participation have all been highlighted as key indicators for achieving global gender equality throughout GEWE approaches by numerous international bodies (including the UN, the World Bank, the WHO, and the UN Human Rights Council). These are all widely accepted goals that are grounded in the logic of a human rights approach. However, while the disadvantages for women are given the primary focus in GEWE efforts, attempts to tackle the structural privileges that favor men (and therefore reinforce the disadvantages for women) have been largely ignored (Flood and Pease, 2006). These structures are primarily driven by culture, tied closely to group identity, religious values, economic and political norms, and traditional practices. Especially in nations where ongoing conflicts between cultural groups have lasted for millennia, global calls to change long-standing traditions could be perceived as an attack against one group or favoritism for another.

CSW 48

The 48th meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) addressed the topic of “The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality,” (UNCSW, 2004). While this topic had been given attention twice before by the CSW in the Beijing Declaration and in the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, the recommendations offered by CSW48 was to go into greater detail in recognizing and acknowledging the barriers that men and boys also face in terms of discrimination. It was further recognized that men and boys have the capacity to positively affect GEWE. However, in its key recommendations, CSW48 focused primarily on infrastructural shifts and policy recommendations rather than a social engagement of men and boys in terms of developing positive masculinities. As mentioned earlier, an analysis of language used in the CSWs from 1995-2017 shows that all CSW outcomes contain language that focuses on structural recommendations for government policies, education programs, healthcare providers, and similar systems, but does not critically engage regional or cultural factors (MenEngage, 2018). Ultimately, CSW48 was an inspiring and successful event which led to global efforts for GEWE, including in India, to focus more on structural investments (microfinancing, maternal/child health, etc). Engaging men and boys was not given priority, although it was acknowledged. As with the Beijing Declaration, CSW48 falls into the “gender positive” category of the gender mainstreaming spectrum.

UNESCO GEAP II

One promising step forward in promoting gender transformative development came in 2014 when UNESCO adopted its second Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP II). This built on lessons learned from the previous efforts from 2008-13 to introduce a more comprehensive and strategic guide to GEWE. The action plan's long-term vision is “to strengthen the Organization's ability... to support the creation of an enabling environment for women and men from

all walks of life, to contribute to and enjoy the benefits of sustainable development and peace” (UNESCO, 2014). Among the eight strategic objectives, three promote a gender transformative component by ensuring inclusivity, representation, and equal participation of women and men in key programs. The means by which this will be achieved is primarily through gender mainstreaming of all UNESCO’s programs and activities both internally and externally. GEAP II promotes a mid-term to long-term impact trajectory and is most relevant for education policy, capacity development in leadership, and in promoting a gender positive media. The lessons learned from this framework can be applied to other sectors that have more immediate impact goals as well. The activities and strategic guides spelled out in GEAP II are meant to encourage a cultural shift towards

GEWE through restructuring education materials/environments to be more gender inclusive and supportive of women and girls; ensuring equal representation in positions of leadership along with capacity building to help women and men improve positive collaborations; recognizing and promoting women’s voices in SDG efforts; and supporting media transformations that deconstruct negative or oppressive gender stereotypes.

As with the other global efforts to address GEWE, and perhaps even more so as GEAP II is primarily a culture-change initiative, achieving this will mean relying heavily on coordinated and intersectoral support within UNESCO’s member states, especially the cooperation of key leadership. For those countries that have deeply ingrained



Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment will mean relying heavily on coordinated support.

systems of gender inequalities, this will pose a challenge. Starting with more benign policy interventions within the education and media sectors, and encouraging women's success in positions of leadership are possible ways of creating gender transformation that might take a generation to bear fruit, but is a promising beginning nonetheless.

Human Rights Council

In 2017 the Human Rights Council (HRC) gave detailed recommendations on the engagement of men and boys in an effort to end violence against women, and requested that the United Nations Office of the High Commission of Human Rights (OHCHR) collect and review information on best

practices and promising leads towards the successful implementation of such efforts. In response, OHCHR received and reviewed over 50 contributions from a variety of sectors and engaged in independent research of relevant aspects. The 2018 HRC report was the outcome, and it detailed the opportunities and risks of engaging men and boys in GEWE and the ongoing efforts and challenges faced. The report ended with a comprehensive list of recommendations. Throughout the report, HRC highlighted the need for gender transformative action with a specific emphasis on transforming beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, and challenging unequal power relations and structures. It also recognized how patriarchy privileges men and boys and oppresses women and girls, and that, if not done properly, these types of



“Transforming ‘Men’talities” report is heavily inspired by the Maputo seminar as it seeks to establish a roadmap for the Indian context in line with these goals and encourage cooperation

efforts can backfire, further disadvantaging women and girls and reinforcing the norms that privilege men and boys (ibid).

This report greatly benefits the discussion of men and masculinities as variables in GEWE, and reflects the perspectives of a growing number of stakeholders that are recognizing the importance of this type of work and enacting it successfully. Moving forward, the challenge will be how to mobilize the recommendations of HRC's report and engage stakeholders at all levels. It is also unclear how this can be done while simultaneously translating policy recommendations into local contexts in order to preserve the gender-transformative nature of this work. This last aspect is crucial as local governments and organizations will naturally have their own structures and frameworks, and these new gender transformative efforts will need to mesh with them. If this is not done successfully there is the risk of continued diluted language, misinterpretations by diverse stakeholders, shifts in focus, and prioritizing particular aspects while neglecting others—in particular, the focus on cultural changes. This report addresses these concerns further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Maputo Roadmap

In the same vein as the HRC report, UNESCO held an inter-regional seminar on, “Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean” (2019a) in Maputo, Mozambique. The main outcome of this seminar was the decision to establish a global framework to involve men and boys in the promotion of GEWE in what is now called the Inter-regional Roadmap for the UNESCO Global Initiative on Masculinities. The roadmap represents a “South-South-North cooperation” that will guide the design and execution of actions on transformative masculinities through recommendations on public policy implementation on this issue. Through a newly established inter-regional steering committee, this initiative hopes to encourage global engagement of men and boys in GEWE through program review, monitoring and reporting; policy and strategy recommendations; advocacy and

communication; and knowledge-sharing, capacity building, and governance. In line with these activities, the Maputo seminar defined the following priority areas:

- Continuation of the state of the art research on masculinities, male roles, and gender-based violence for policy guidance;
- Innovative capacity building and reinforcement for the dissemination and development of practical knowledge and tools including best practices;
- Communication strategies and advocacy to sensitize the larger public to the concept of positive masculinities and gender identities for achieving gender equality;
- Establishing an online repository of data on research, relevant evidence, and practices including a mapping of research centers.

This “Transforming 'Men'talities” report is heavily inspired by the Maputo seminar as it seeks to establish a roadmap for the Indian context in line with these goals and encourage cooperation among local networks composed of universities, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. This seminar, and the subsequent mobilization of regional UNESCO bodies to specifically target masculinities, is a turning point in global policy efforts in this area as it brings the issue of positive engagement of men and boys into the growing gender mainstreaming agenda. As we will see in the next section on Indian policies, the national government is beginning to respond to calls for more holistic and transformative gender policies and is seeking expert guidance from other stakeholders, in line with UNESCO's efforts to establish local networks of regional partners.

The World Health Organization

One of the earlier reports to advocate for approaches to engaging men and boys that address social and structural issues that underpin inequalities is the WHO's 2010

report “Policy approaches to engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality and health equity.” One of the key messages of the report is that engaging men and boys is crucial for success in eliminating health inequities; however, the report notes that, at that time, existing health sector programs with men and boys were generally only successful on a small scale and rarely reached the policy level. The two guiding principles in developing new policies were adopting a human rights approach and directly addressing social and structural drivers of inequalities and health inequities (WHO, 2010).

The WHO report outlined several recommendations for integrating men’s issues with the gender health policy, strengthening policy approaches, capacity building, and sustaining momentum. The suggestions include increasing men’s involvement in caring for children; interventions for men who use violence against women; increasing safe sex among gay men; promoting male circumcision as an effective prevention in the spread of HIV/AIDS; reducing men’s excessive consumption of alcohol; and reducing men’s gun usage and violence. One of the key takeaways of the WHO (2010) report is that to be effective, policy requires stakeholders from multiple sectors to be involved (ibid). Governments, NGOs, civil society organizations, and communities need to work together and be responsive to one another to ensure and monitor policy compliance and implementation (ibid). This particular point is something that this report also advocates.

The World Bank

In 2013, the World Bank published a critical review of economic policies that have affected men’s attitudes and behaviors towards GEWE, finding that those policies which only targeted women often led to less desirable results (Farré, 2013). The primary area of research was men’s attitudes and behaviors towards women and how they shape the power dynamics in the family context. Importantly, the study found that structural social practices inhibited progress

in fundamental women’s rights. One example given is that dowry and child marriage laws are not followed because women are treated as always dependent either on their parents or husbands. Promoting girls’ land inheritance and a woman’s right to own land would help, except those laws were also not followed. The report focused its solutions on the role of education and awareness raising for men. Overall, the study confirmed that those GEWE policies that also engaged men and boys were far more successful than those which only focused on women (ibid). However, the report also provided evidence that even such programs ended up benefiting men and boys over women and girls, and the only solution was to change the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. To this end, they provided limited practical strategies.

As part of a research series on women’s voice, agency, and participation, the World Bank commissioned a report specifically on the issue of engaging men and boys to confront gender-based violence (Fleming et al., 2013). Much of the report is centered around data collected as part of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) which sought to capture men’s attitudes towards women’s empowerment and gender equality. Not surprisingly, the report found that in countries where men (and women) were generally more accepting of violence against women, men were less likely to support gender equality and preferred traditional gender roles. The results from India were quite alarming, showing that even with high education levels, a majority of the men had a permissible attitude towards intimate partner violence, did not consider women in decision making about women’s health, childcare, or other family decisions, and felt that gender equality was an idea imposed by the West and not relevant for Indians. It is important to note that this study is far from representative, as it only surveyed 1,500 men in metropolitan areas of New Delhi and Vijayawada (Tamil Nadu). As Chapter 2 described in detail, it is extremely difficult to represent all of India in such studies and we should be careful not to condemn all by considering the views of only a few. That being said, the study provided convincing evidence to support a set of policy recommendations, focusing especially on

prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence, education policy, and engaging men as fathers and caregivers. The following are adapted from the World Bank report (Fleming et al., 2013):

- In all policy areas, decision-makers should adopt a gender-mainstreaming strategy.
 - Regarding violence against women, social norms block existing laws from being effective. Therefore, local enforcement should be strengthened and policy efforts should be combined with information dissemination.
 - Education curricula should be evaluated and adapted to weaken negative stereotypes about men and women. Integrating concepts of power, masculinity, femininity, gender role stereotypes, and gender equality into the school curricula can help break down harmful male gender norms around aggression, violence, and caregiving.
- The report found that depression was strongly linked to violence against women and pointed to hostile school environments as a perpetuating factor in depression among boys. Beyond the school environment, psychological support (through counseling or other supportive services) for adult men was also necessary in the Indian context.
 - Finally, the report pushed for policies ensuring paternity leave as an effective means of facilitating men's bonding with children and greater participation in child rearing, thereby helping men break down social norms around gendered divisions of labor. In addition, including fathers in policies and programs related to prenatal, post-natal, and child health would help them play more of a role from the start of their child's life.



India's Policies



Despite India's long history of GEWE efforts, there is no national policy, scheme, or government program in the country that explicitly seeks to engage men and boys. This trend might be changing, however, as the 2016 published draft of a revised National Policy on Women's Empowerment by the Ministry of Women and Child Development includes multiple calls to engage men and boys in *transformative* programs to support GEWE (Government of India, 2016). While this revised policy has yet to be formally accepted, it is a sign of progress and shows a fundamental shift in the government's ideology.

To its credit, India has incorporated gender sensitive and gender positive policies early on, with gender equality built into its Constitution. The Constitution guarantees equality for all women (Article 14), prevention of gender-based discrimination by the State (Article 15), equal opportunities for women (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Articles 39 and 42). It also allows special provisions that favor women and children

(Article 15), protects the dignity of women (Article 51), and secures just and humane conditions of work and maternity assistance (Article 42). Other notable early examples of legal protection for women and girls include the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, and a dedicated Ministry for Women and Child Development (established in 1985 as a department under the then Ministry of Human Resources Development—today the Education Ministry—and made a full ministry in 2006).

While these policies are long-standing and forward thinking, analysts have found that these early efforts did not achieve their stated goals. As stated in the 2001 National Policy for the Empowerment of Women: "There still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programs, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other," (MWCD, 2001). Some have explained this shortcoming by claiming

that the early policies were primarily “integrationist,” where gender perspectives were included in existing policy processes, but the policy paradigms remained unchanged. That is, an attempt was made to provide support to women, but there remained a lack of adequate participation and recognition of women themselves within policy design and implementation. This is considered a root cause of ineffective gender equality programs (Jahan, 1995; Sandler, 1997). These decisions led to end goals for policies that did not adequately address the more fundamental issues of inequality. While more recent efforts have been made to include “agenda setting” approaches to the GEWE policy (where the nature of policymaking itself is reoriented from a gender perspective), the country has lagged in reaching GEWE targets due to underperforming implementation strategies (WEF, 2019). As per the latest SDG dashboard prepared by NITI Aayog (2019), India underperformed in achieving SDG5 in almost every sector.

The following section gives a brief chronology of GEWE policies in India, focusing on initiatives and laws announced during key five-year plans, the establishment of dedicated ministries with associated schemes, and the mandate for Gender Budgeting. The discussion also includes a spotlight on the aftermath of the 2012 Nirbhaya case and the subsequent Justice Verma Committee’s report on preventing violence against women. This event and the report that followed is included as it sparked a national conversation on GEWE beyond the typical welfare or development programs to a fundamental reflection on gender equality and society as a whole.

India’s Five-Year Plans

India has invested heavily in infrastructure and systemic changes that can support gender equality, most notably in the Gender Budgeting mandate and increasing the number of policies and amendments to existing laws that support and protect women. However, there has yet been no mention of engaging men and boys directly

as part of GEWE efforts except in the form of punitive action for endangering women and girls. India’s approach to GEWE has evolved over time, adapting to address the recommendations from various internal and international reports on the status of women. Current efforts are a result of generations of trial and error, analysis and dialogue, and multiple stakeholder engagements. While there is still far to go before India reaches a state of gender equality, there have been significant successes and some milestones achieved since Independence.

A historical review of the central government’s initiatives provides some context for the evolution of GEWE within India. From Independence until 2014, the Government of India’s Planning Commission created a series of 12 Five-Year Plans (FYPs) to strategically allocate funds for national development initiatives. These initiatives included a wide range of programs and also funds earmarked specifically for women’s development. The central government’s approach to GEWE evolved over time, often following global trends in social development.

The first four FYPs (1951-74) took a welfare approach to provide assistance to all vulnerable groups in the form of essentials like food, education, and healthcare. Women were included as one such vulnerable group along with the extremely poor, farming communities, Adivasi people, displaced citizens from East and West Pakistan, and those with disabilities (Kaur, 2018). Social welfare was also a buzzword at the time and meant investing in services and programs that benefited an entire community, “...not only of particular sections of population which may be handicapped in one way or another,” (Chapter 29, second FYP). Early on, the National Family Welfare and Community Development programs were launched that included state and national welfare boards to identify the “social prejudices and disabilities that women suffered,” (Arya, 2000) and deploy resources accordingly. Some key programs that were designed to help women in this period were the formation of *Mahila Mandals* or women’s groups, the prohibition of alcohol, protection

of women from injurious work, equal pay for equal work for women, maternity benefits/ establishing crèches, expanded education services into rural areas, and immunization programs for children. Critiques of this period are that only the more elite rural women (that is, the higher caste and the wealthy) benefited from the support, and that these policies were primarily top down with little to no representation of women in policymaking (Kaur, 2018). It was as a part of this period of FYPs that specific legal provisions such as the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) were passed. As gender in these welfare policies is treated as an add-on and not a central concern, this period can be called “gender-sensitive” within the UN Women framework. That is, efforts were made to improve women’s lives, but social attitudes and the mechanisms that perpetuate inequalities were not of central concern and remained unaddressed.

The fifth to seventh FYPs (1974-92) marked a reformulation of the approach to GEWE from welfare to development where unequal gender roles and power structures in the family were recognized and major social reforms were enacted (Kaur, 2018). The new approach aimed to integrate welfare with development services, including a stronger focus on literacy for girls and women, more public healthcare that included family planning and services for new mothers, and general advancement of women. This was a formative time in the history of GEWE around the world, as 1975 was the start of the International Women’s Decade. As a part of this effort, the Indian Ministry of Education and Social Welfare published the “Towards Equality” report by the newly established Committee on the Status of Women in India. This report was considered groundbreaking at the time as it was the first time the issue of gender imbalances and disparities were documented in: i) The declining sex ratio; ii) Lower life expectancy; iii) Higher infant and maternal mortality; iv) Declining work participation; and v) Illiteracy (GoI, 1974). This report informed subsequent efforts in the development of women, focusing especially on promoting more economic independence, improved education infrastructure, and better healthcare services for women.

Most of the programs for women from the later part of this period were primarily economic services, such as STEP (Support for Training and Employment Program) that set up more infrastructure for cottage-based industries and training to support the *Mahila Mandals*. Despite these efforts, the 1988 National Perspective Plan for Women recognized that many issues still plagued women in India especially a lack of representation in governance, poor legal enforcement and policing of women’s safety, and the prevalence of negative or disempowering stereotypes of women in national media and communication (Kalbaugh, 1992). The plan recognized how much the portrayal of women in the media influenced the attitudes of men and boys towards women. To confront these issues, the plan recommended a number of strategic policy changes to better integrate women’s issues across all ministries and to promote positive cultural representations of women. This awareness was the beginning of a shift from simply gender sensitive policies to more gender positive policies, as women were no longer just another sub-category of vulnerable groups, but a guiding and central element of every policy and program. This period of FYPs included the following relevant GEWE laws: The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986), The Commission of Sati Prevention Act & Rules (1988), and The Equal Remuneration Act (1976).

The eighth to twelfth FYPs (1992-2014) transitioned beyond development to language around women’s empowerment. Influenced by a growing global and national scholarship and advocacy for gender equality and women’s empowerment, the eighth FYP recognized that previous efforts had not adequately involved women in policymaking and had used a top-down approach. It was also found that many women and poor communities had not benefited from past welfare or development efforts, and there were still unacceptable gender disparities (Planning Commission, 1990). As a result, the emphasis shifted to developing grassroots programs that were more decentralized, giving more discretion to state governments, and engaging the local population in

decision making. At this time, the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts were added to the Constitution of India which, beyond further establishing the *Panchayati Raj* system, mandated that one-third of local government seats be reserved for women.

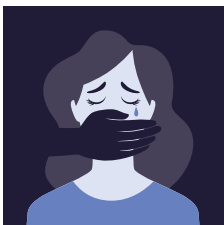
The empowerment model adopted at this time took the form of increasing convergence between other development ministries by mandating that 30 percent of the funds be funneled for women's programs, also known as Gender Responsive Budgeting. It also broadened access to free/subsidized education for girls up to the college level including vocational/professional education and broadening support for self-help groups (SHGs). The implementation of these programs was meant to take place through a newly formed Women's Component Plan,

but critics at that time considered this an afterthought without adequately accounting for existing cultural and social barriers to women's participation (Kaur, 2018). It was during this period that the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) was passed, along with the implementation of the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) program, the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act (2013), and the Nirbhaya Act (2013). During this time hundreds of NGOs became active in the GEWE sphere in India, prompting the term "NGO-ization of the women's movement" (Patherya, 2017). These NGOs worked to achieve many of the same goals that the government had outlined, but wanted to further serve the most vulnerable populations that may not have had access to the government's schemes.



The period of the five year plans marked the beginning of a shift from simply gender sensitive policies to more gender positive policies, as women were no longer just another sub-category of vulnerable groups, but a guiding and central element of every policy and program.

The eleventh and twelfth FYPs deviated slightly in the approach to empowerment, using strong language with regard to uplifting women, placing women's empowerment at the center of national development. The focus of these two FYPs was primarily on improving women's safety and security, extending the Domestic Violence (Prevention) Bill and strengthening task forces for improving economic, health, and education indicators for women and girls. Social empowerment was touted for the first time, where efforts were made to better integrate women through various affirmative developmental policies and programs. While Gender Budgeting was first introduced in 2005-06 (the tenth FYP), there has been a steady, annual increase in investments in



Area of Interest: Verma Committee Report 2013

In December 2012, India and the world were horrified by the gang rape of a girl on a bus in Delhi that left the victim in critical condition. Several days later she passed away. While by no means the first public gang rape in India, it swept the nation and the world like a storm, inciting protests and riots and drawing attention to the need for improved laws and services for ending violence against women. The Indian government swiftly responded, calling for strong and decisive action against the perpetrators and, within a week, had commissioned the Justice Verma Committee Report (2013) to amend existing criminal laws on violence against women amid efforts to prevent future crimes of this nature. Headed by renowned and respected Indian human rights jurist J. S. Verma, the report invited inputs from a multitude of sources including human rights organizations, legal experts, and gender experts.

Justice Verma and the two others assigned to the committee received more than 80,000 submissions. The report totals 644 pages of commentary and recommendations for social and legal amendments. One of the most fundamental components of the report is its reflection on the fact that the Indian Constitution, ratified in 1949, guarantees equal rights to women, while in reality women's access to a legal status equal to men has yet to be realized. Although many laws and legislative actions exist within India to ensure that women and girls are treated equally and have access to equal resources and opportunities, the actual realities for women and girls are consistently not in accordance with the laws (*de jure* vs. *de facto*). This is reflected in multitude ways but, most relevant to the Verma Committee Report, is with regard to women and girls' access to legal recourse and the protection of authorities from violent and sexually motivated crimes.

GEWE programs up to the time of this report. The early 2000s also saw the passing of the first National Policy for the Empowerment of Women and the expansion of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. While there were no clear strategic plans for how it would be implemented, this policy did explicitly state the need to address social and cultural inequalities through engaging men in a dialogue around GEWE, as well as a push for gender mainstreaming across all ministries in the country. This period led to such projects as the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter) Project (2015), the One Stop Centre Scheme (2015), and the Women's Helpline Scheme (2016), designed to improve women's access to emergency services when seeking aid or protection.

In 2015, the Government of India's High-Level Committee on the Status of Women in India published a report that assessed progress in GEWE over the previous 20 years. It found that efforts under the previous FYPs had largely fallen short. While the status of women had improved in certain sectors, in certain geographies, and among certain populations (especially for the middle class, urban, general caste populations and within health, education, and employment sectors), these benefits had not reached a majority of women, with unacceptable disparities found across the country. This report cited "legislative inadequacies within state policies and schemes" and "inadequate implementation by States, police, and courts," (Gol, 2015, p. xvii). It went on to evaluate the status of women in India across a variety of areas. In each, the report detailed the shortcomings of the existing situation and offered concrete suggestions for how to address them. The suggestions included gender sensitization, gender mainstreaming, including more women in positions of power and legislative design, and improving Gender Responsive Budgeting.

Significant to the aims of this current UNESCO Roadmap, it should be noted that in the history of Indian legislation, policy, and programming on GEWE there has been minimal acknowledgment of the roles that men and boys play in either supporting or hindering women's empowerment (Barker et

al, 2010; Philip, 2015). A few of the landmark policies have acknowledged the oppressive role of patriarchal traditions and men's chauvinistic attitude towards women. This has at least been true with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention, where men's role is paid attention to. However, there still are no policies or programs that directly seek to engage men and boys in overall gender equality. The HLC report and the tragic Nirbhaya case in 2012, have since propelled a new wave of GEWE in India which has prompted a dialogue between and across stakeholders on new strategies to improve the situation.

The Verma Committee Report (2013) dissected existing Indian laws on human trafficking, sexual harassment, verbal sexual assaults, acid attacks, honor killings, and child sexual abuse, as well as marital and non-marital rape. The report found that these laws had good intentions, but lacked enforcement. The report also discussed the need to address stereotypes through education and perception reforms, reforms in terms of medical and legal examinations, and police and electoral reforms. Additionally, it offered several suggestions for improving general public safety for women including well-lit roads, CCTVs on public transport, security on public transport after 5:30 pm, and increased sanitation facilities for women (ibid).

The Verma Committee report successfully brought to the forefront issues that have long been discussed by scholars in Indian Gender Studies, namely that Indian women's bodies traditionally carry the honor, purity, and cultural traditions of the community (including the individual, the family, and the family's caste). This has had multiple repercussions on gender relations and equality throughout history, but when it comes to sexual assault and rape, the Verma Committee report acknowledged that women were too often blamed, dishonored, disbelieved, and further victimized if their rape or assault was publicized. In legal terms, this does not equate to equal access to legal recourse for the crimes committed against them as many cases go unreported due to fear of repercussion, or if they are reported they are left pending without due diligence

(Verma et al., 2013). The National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) latest records of Court Disposal of Crime Against Women Cases (2018, Table 3A.7) lists 127,858 pending rape cases for the year. While the 28,469 cases that were sent to trial that year is no small feat, it does demonstrate the extreme backlog within the court system.

This number is, of course, only the reported cases. According to NFHS-3 data, in 2007 only 1.1 percent of sexual violence cases were reported to the police or lawyers (IIPS and Macro International, 2007, p. 524). Even today, "marital rape" is not considered a crime under the law (for women over 18 years old), despite the fact that 83 percent of the women who report sexual violence name their husbands as perpetrators (IIPS and ICF, 2017, p. 567). The NFHS-4 (2017) also says that for sexual violence reported by women and girls who have never married, 30 percent name "other relatives" as perpetrators and 13 percent name family friends. Given the extremely sensitive and potentially dangerous process of reporting crimes against known men, it is no wonder that many rape cases go unreported. The process of publicly acknowledging a crime that is considered shameful and for which society often holds women at fault is difficult at best, dangerous and prohibitive at worst. This is further made worse when the legal system is unable to process this type of case, leading many women to question the point of pursuing legal recourse. That such crimes are under-reported or mishandled, is one of the clearest examples of how the support of men and boys can be revolutionary in the protection of women.

It is important to consider these statistics as they help direct attention to where gender-based violence and sexual assault are the most prevalent. While the Nirbhaya case was perpetrated by a small group of migrant laborers in Delhi, according to the NFHS surveys and NCRB data this demographic is not representative of the majority of violent crimes against women. Despite this, the events of 2012 served to stoke anti-migrant (also called anti-Bihari) sentiments and xenophobia in urban areas, and strengthened the misguided stereotypes that migrant

laborers are dangerous or likely criminals (Datta, 2016). Such insights into the layers of complexity of this context will help stakeholders and policymakers create more effective solutions and programming and better target areas of concern.

The Justice Verma Committee Report was submitted within 30 days of the committee's formation and is an excellent example of accountability to feminist theory through its inclusion of gender expertise in its review. The committee proposed that the government should take urgent action in terms of implementing legal change. The government claims to have adopted at least 90 percent of the recommendations, however, it dismissed the proposal to criminalize marital rape, much to the disappointment of several feminist groups (Malik, 2013). While many of the policy recommendations were ratified, including widespread promotion of "gender sensitization" training, implementation and enforcement of the recommendations remains piecemeal and inconsistent (McLoughlin, 2020). Essentially, there are serious gaps in the Indian criminal justice system that need to be addressed to better ensure the safety and security of women and girls.

NITI Aayog and SDG5

The points of concern raised by the Justice Verma Committee Report as well as international stakeholder findings are further represented in the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog's (2019) "SDG India: Index and Dashboard" progress report on India's efforts towards achieving the SDGs.

The NITI Aayog report outlines several challenges in achieving SDG5 including weak gender-disaggregated data systems, declining female participation in the labor force, inequalities in land ownership rights and access, and issues for women accessing entrepreneurship benefits. The 2019 report shows that all Indian states and union territories were under performing in terms of achieving SDG5, with the exception of Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir/Ladakh at a "performing" level.

The remaining 33 states and territories were still at an "aspiring" level. It is from this perspective that NITI Aayog targeted 8 of the 14 established SDG5 indicators as priorities. The areas of focus that the Government of India is targeting include improving the sex ratio at birth, economic empowerment, women's safety, and their legal and political representation.

The report mentions that respect between genders needs to be instilled in the youth, but nowhere else does it explicitly address changing attitudes and behaviors of men and boys, in spite of the fact that one of the major drivers of the unequal sex ratio at birth is attitudes and social norms. It is important to note here that social and cultural barriers to GEWE are not mentioned in the challenges. It is also important to recognize that although the Government of India has provided legal, project-based, and legislative means for women to attain equality—which is an important milestone and should not be overlooked—the fact remains that the social and cultural barriers to women's parity and access to relevant opportunities are often insurmountable. This is a key area in which accountability to feminist values and theory can contribute to courageously confronting existing issues in a creative and more equitable manner.

As mentioned previously, over the last three decades a large number of non-governmental stakeholders have started contributing to the GEWE process, with a few who are leading the way in engaging men and boys. While there are critical limitations and gaps that must be reviewed, there are also important best practices that should be incorporated in future GEWE efforts. A review of these follows in the next chapters.





STAKEHOLDER MAP AND CASE STUDIES





STAKEHOLDER MAP AND CASE STUDIES

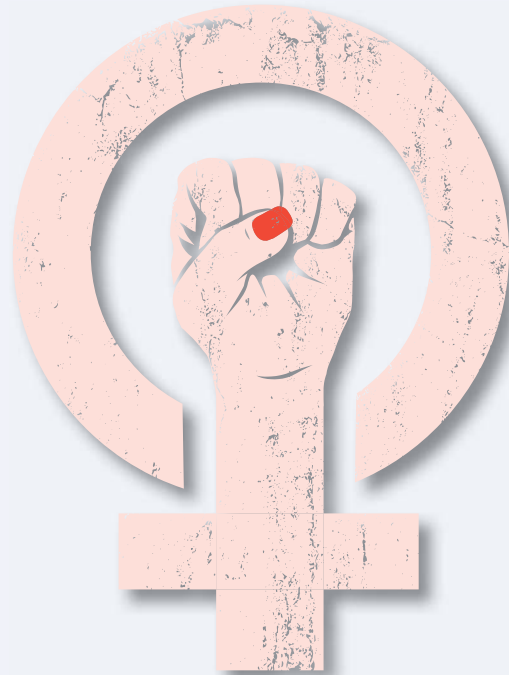
Chapter 4 Overview

This chapter is the heart of this report. It identifies areas of saturation, gaps, and priorities based on a desk study analysis of nearly 80 different organizations (including government and non-government, international and local, donors and field workers, and academic and grassroots). The analysis looks at programs based on the “dimension” or focus area, the geographic scope/scale, and the sector. Briefly, the results show that a majority of the stakeholders are based in urban centers in North India and in Mumbai), with limited expansion into rural areas. Likewise, a dominant dimension or focus area for stakeholder programs is safety and security of women and in spreading awareness through public campaigns. The lowest number of stakeholder programs are found in rural communities, the Southern and Eastern states, and in aspirational districts. Furthermore, environmental projects and efforts to reach youth in schools are also under-represented areas of stakeholder engagement. This chapter highlights at least one organization or program in each of the eight identified dimensions. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that India has both a wealth of stakeholder capacity and resources, and also critical areas of neglect and potential oversaturation. The chapter includes two main parts:

Analysis of Stakeholders’ Work

Continuing the stakeholder analysis done previously by UNESCO (2019), further conclusions are drawn from data collected from 77 stakeholder groups and their efforts towards GEWE. These groups were selected based on whether they had a public presence (website or published works), had contributed in some way to engaging men/boys, or were members of relevant networks like MenEngage or FEM.

- a. Dimension-wise analysis
- b. Geography and sector-wise analysis



Stakeholder Spotlights by Dimension

While certain dimensions had limited examples to choose from, at least one stakeholder spotlight or publication is given for each dimension to demonstrate a successful endeavor in each category.

- a. Exemplary stakeholders in 8 dimensions:
 - i. Education for youth and in schools
 - ii. Education and training for adults
 - iii. Health (physical and community)
 - iv. Society and culture change
 - v. Economic support
 - vi. Mental health and counseling
 - vii. Safety and security
 - viii. Environment

Besides the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 and the government's efforts reviewed in Chapter 3, there are other stakeholders invested and working in GEWE in India. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) make up a substantial portion of these stakeholders. Of the 98,000+ registered NGOs in India, 33,000+ have programs which contribute to "Women's Development and Empowerment," (NITI Aayog and National Informatics Centre, n.d.). It is telling that there are fewer than one hundred identified stakeholder groups (including government agencies) in the country that claim to have programs to engage men and boys in GEWE. To put it into statistical perspective, this is a mere 0.3 percent of gender equality stakeholders. This chapter provides a continuation of the stakeholder analysis previously published by UNESCO New Delhi (2019c), further disaggregating the identified stakeholders into dimensions (areas of focus) and geographic scope. The goal of this chapter is to identify areas of saturation of programming and areas of neglect. This information, paired with national and international development agendas, can be helpful for stakeholders when developing strategies for future efforts to ensure the greatest impact.

The UNESCO Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis report (2019c), "Transforming 'Men'talities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality in India," provides an analysis of 60 stakeholders within India who are working towards GEWE goals. The analysis breaks down stakeholders by sector (government agencies, civil society, philanthropy, international funding agencies, and NGOs), by level of impact (based on the number of partnerships, media presence, and years of existence), and interest (based on work history in the fields of GEWE and engaging men and boys in GEWE). The report recognizes that there are several limitations in the scope of its findings, including shifts in policy, evolving stakeholder priorities, and in the difficulty of adequately representing an organization based on secondary sources, such as websites and newspaper reports.

The report found that international organizations' direct involvement with or funding for engaging men and boys is extremely limited, and that the role of men and boys is absent in the government's existing policies. Similarly, philanthropic activities for achieving these goals are also minimal. In terms of the private sector, although there is a great deal of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity towards GEWE, only two organizations were identified that were engaging men and boys as a central goal. It is primarily through CSOs that masculinities have been addressed to date, for example, engaging in campaigns to engage men to end violence against women (Breakthrough's *Bell Bajao* PSAs) and in conversations with college students about masculinity as a construct, patriarchy, and gender norms.

In its findings, the report notes that the stakeholders identified will help in mobilizing funding and knowledge in accordance with the 2019 UNESCO Maputo Roadmap on Masculinities (UNESCO, 2019a). This original stakeholder analysis was presented in December, 2019 in New Delhi at a UNESCO Partners' Dialogue—a conference on the topic of engaging men and boys in GEWE. Stakeholders from multiple sectors came together to present academic research and field studies on the roots of the construction of masculinities in Indian society (both historical and modern), and on existing work, promising interventions, and some discovered best practices. As a result of the conference, several more important focus areas were identified: Lack of alternative constructs of masculinity in public perceptions, lack of appropriate role models displaying alternative constructs of masculinity, and priority areas such as education reforms, the role of community leaders, and the need to shift societal norms and values (UNESCO, 2019b). One of the deliverables of this conference was the announcement of a larger roadmap and scoping study, this "Transforming 'Men'Talities" report.

The following section of this report evaluates existing stakeholders further. In addition to the 60 identified by the original stakeholder

map (UNESCO, 2019c), 17 stakeholders were added and further analyzed based on geographic scope and dimension/field of expertise. It should be mentioned here that this stakeholder analysis is subject to the same limitations identified in the original (outlined above), and that there are many more stakeholders who are likely committed to engaging men and boys, but whose online presence is not comprehensive or transparent. Indeed, the global MenEngage forum has a list of over 500 stakeholders

around the world, and its country network in India, the Forum to Engage Men (FEM) has more than 50 organizational members. Several stakeholders from these two lists are included in our analysis. However, 39 of the 77 stakeholders included in this analysis have no explicit engagement with men and boys in their public information, yet they are either members of FEM India, MenEngage, or were previously identified by UNESCO in its first stakeholder analysis.



An Analysis of Stakeholders' Work

An initial analysis of the 77 stakeholders identified reveals several interesting trends and some gaps. First, as mentioned earlier, some of these stakeholders did not have a current agenda that engaged with men and boys. Second, of those that do work with men and boys, this engagement formed only a small part of their larger programs working with women. And third, a majority of the efforts to engage men and boys in GEWE were “multidimensional” and combined other fields of activity in a single project. The term “dimension” in this report refers to the area of life that is addressed by a stakeholder. An example of a multi-dimensional approach is a program whose primary focus is women’s health, but also incorporates a women’s safety component through an awareness-raising engagement of men and boys. The most frequent approach found was addressing women’s safety or violence against women, paired with other dimensions (education, economic development or financial literacy, health, and social change). A few organizations explicitly target women’s safety and the prevention of violence against women (for example, MAVA, detailed later), but they were less common. To effectively understand areas of concentration, saturation or neglect among the dimensions, we have disaggregated the stakeholders’ areas of engagement. This was only possible for active stakeholders. Several of the stakeholders identified were national or international funding agencies, and these

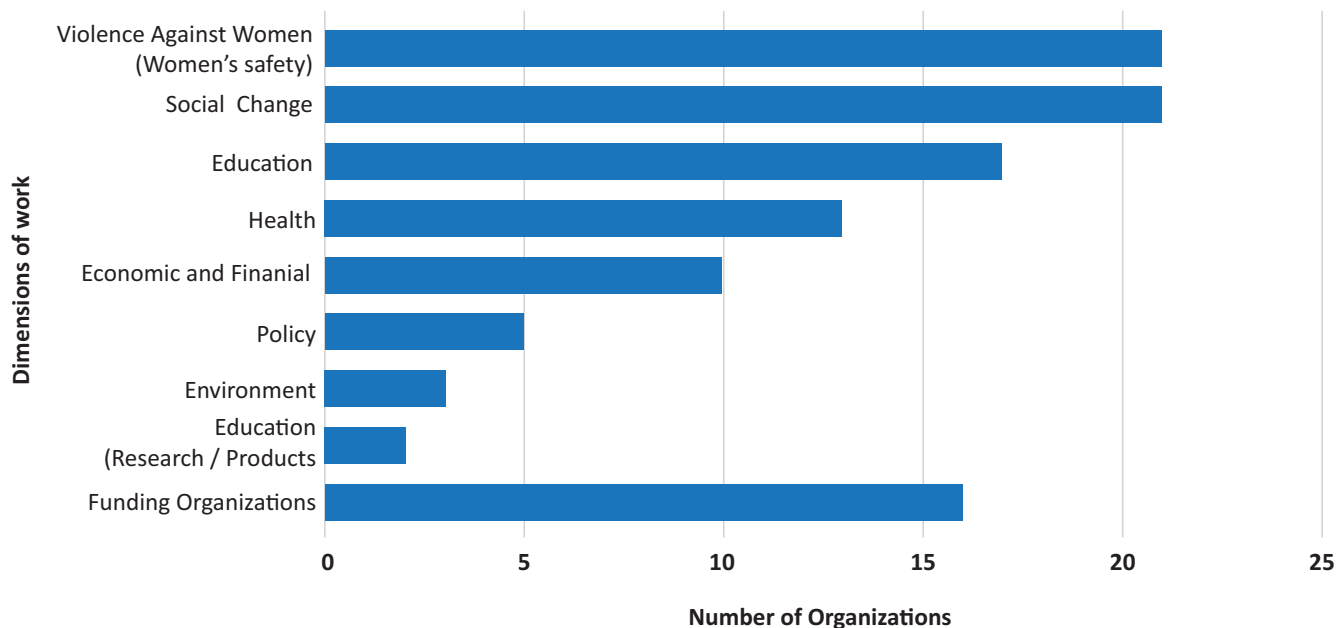
did not always disclose the projects they funded nor the details of the programs.

As an aside, neither the UNESCO (2019c) stakeholder analysis nor this report includes an overview of university-level academic programs with a focus on masculinities in India. Programs on gender studies exist in India, albeit on a small scale, and are potential goldmines of theory and research that can—and should—influence GEWE field initiatives. However, the primary reason why this report does not include them in the analysis is because their theoretical findings remain within the purview of academia, with extremely limited application by stakeholders in their activities. Surprisingly, none of the 77 stakeholders analyzed in this report include university partnerships. Further, academia has an important role in terms of measuring outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, and future research within theory and application. One way this could be achieved is through partnerships between NGOs and academic institutions.

By Dimension

When breaking down the stakeholders’ areas of focus we found that the two most targeted dimensions were *violence against women* and *social change*. We define the violence dimension as those programs that have explicitly stated efforts to reduce violence against women, reduce sexual and other forms of abuse, or in other ways promote

FIGURE 1: Overview of Stakeholders Work by Dimension



women's safety and security. Likewise, the social change dimension includes those programs that seek to promote a change in cultural norms or gender-based stereotypes, or whose primary activities are awareness-raising, discussion groups, and information dissemination. Both of these dimensions have 21 stakeholders active in these fields.

Figure 1 gives an overview of stakeholders' work by dimension and presents a picture based on dimensions, or the focus of programming. As can be seen in the figure, the environment is an extremely under-represented dimension, as are education research and publications, while women's safety, social change, and school education are the most saturated dimensions. This report does not recommend reducing efforts within the saturated areas, in fact education reforms, shifts in societal values, and the role of community leaders were the priority areas identified during the 2019 UNESCO Partners' Dialogue on Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality (UNESCO, 2019b). It is recommended, however, that the areas of relatively less contribution be given more attention.

By Geography

The geographic scope and regional involvement of stakeholders in India is also important to consider, as where the aid is focused does not always reflect where it is most needed. This section comes with a few disclaimers. First, there are several stakeholders who are either not based in India, are mostly funding partners (meaning they donate resources and are not directly active in the field), or both. These stakeholders do not have explicit geographical information regarding where in India they are active, or they claim "all India" to be their target. Another sub-set of stakeholders is the central government of India which, by definition, is also targeting "all India." Finally, as with other details on stakeholders, some information on geographic scope may not be publicly available or may not be provided on the agencies' websites and therefore is not reflected in this analysis.

Geographic Saturation

As discussed briefly in Chapter 2, poverty and gender inequalities are linked in several important ways. It therefore follows that

FIGURE 2: Geographic Locations of Stakeholders

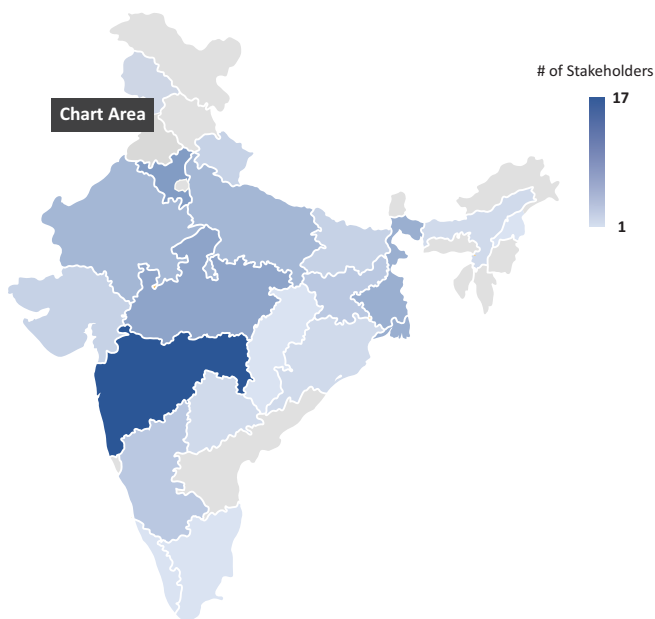
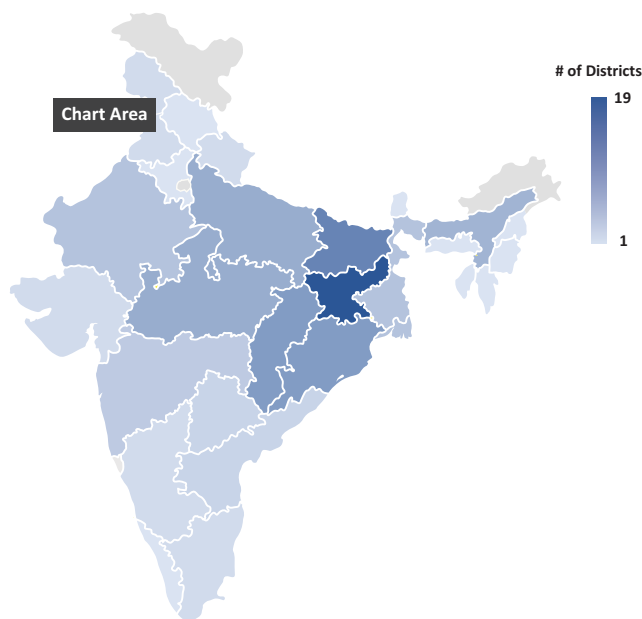


FIGURE 3: Aspirational Districts



stakeholders should focus their efforts on those regions and within communities that have higher levels of poverty. In an attempt to uplift these areas, NITI Aayog identified 115 “aspirational” districts (at least one from each of the 28 states) (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, n.d.; NITI Aayog, 2018). These districts have extreme levels of poverty, reduced resources and access to opportunities, and often have large concentrations of marginalized populations (tribal and Scheduled Caste groups). These districts have been evaluated by Gol ministries and other government agencies and have been given a composite score in five areas of development: health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, basic infrastructure, and financial inclusion and skill development. Each of the selected districts score less than 50 percent, and some as low as 26 percent on the indicators (ibid). While these criteria affect all members of a community, they typically affect women and children more. They are also areas of development in which women’s involvement improves the situation for all members of households and communities. When mapping the list of stakeholders to their regions of activity, we found that these aspirational districts are largely unreached.

A majority of the stakeholders operate in Maharashtra, which is home to only four aspirational districts. Most aspirational districts are concentrated in the Eastern and North-eastern Indian states, with Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar having most of them.

Figure 2 shows the geographic locations of the stakeholders and reflects the geographic concentration of stakeholder activities in India. As can be seen in the figure, a majority of them (17) are in Maharashtra, with many of those located in Mumbai and Pune. Likewise, Figure 3 shows the aspirational districts, and reflects the geographic concentration of aspirational districts, 19 of which are in Jharkhand.

Geographic Sector

Beyond geographic representation of efforts, it is also important to consider what geographic sectors are included in the range of programming. While there is a spectrum of geographic sectors, for the purposes of this report we have disaggregated the list of stakeholders into “urban focused” and “rural focused.” As several stakeholders operate in both urban and rural areas, it was

not always possible to determine the extent to which they focused on one or the other based on publicly accessible information. However, it is possible to state broadly that unless the organization specifically claims to work with rural populations, most of them work primarily with urban communities. Those stakeholders who work with both are identified as “mixed” in later figures.

While it is true there is greater population *density* in urban areas, and the urban growth rate in India is rapidly increasing, approximately 65 percent of Indians (nearly 900 million people) still live in rural areas (The World Bank, 2018). However, even with the imprecision of “mixed” as a category, there is overwhelming urban representation concentrated especially in North Indian states. Figure 4 presents the geographic

breakdown of stakeholder scope and gives a broad overview of the urban versus rural breakdown (based on local versus all India operating organizations, excluding GoI and funding organizations). In comparison, Figure 5 presents the geographic distribution of stakeholders by dimension, thus further organizing the stakeholders based on geographic sectors and dimensions.

As we can see in these figures, rural India is generally under-represented in terms of attention from stakeholders, and education and education research in particular are completely neglected in rural areas by stakeholders. Violence against women is something that may be addressed in rural areas, but we do not have concrete reports of this. Similarly, the central government may have specific policies addressing rural

FIGURE 4: Geographic Breakdown of Stakeholders Scope

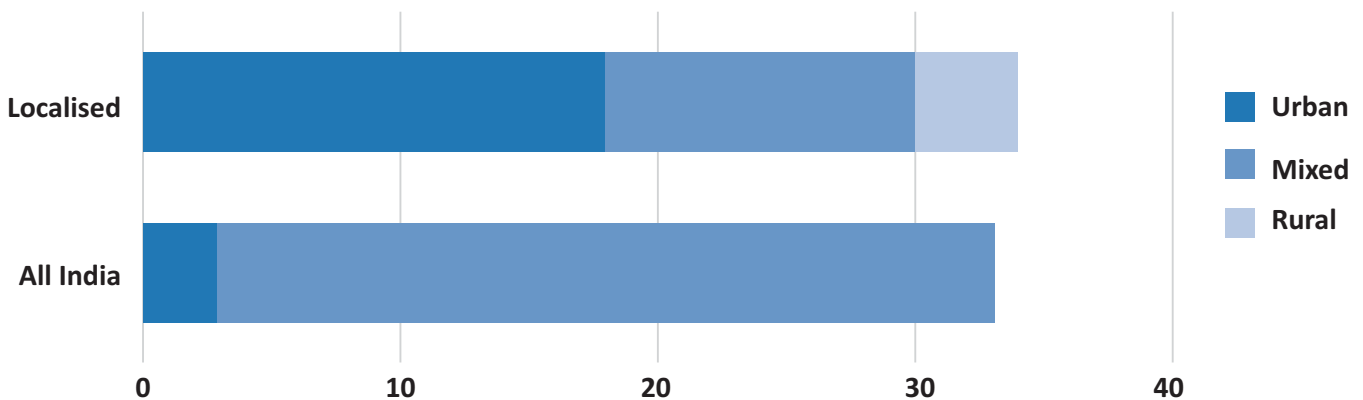
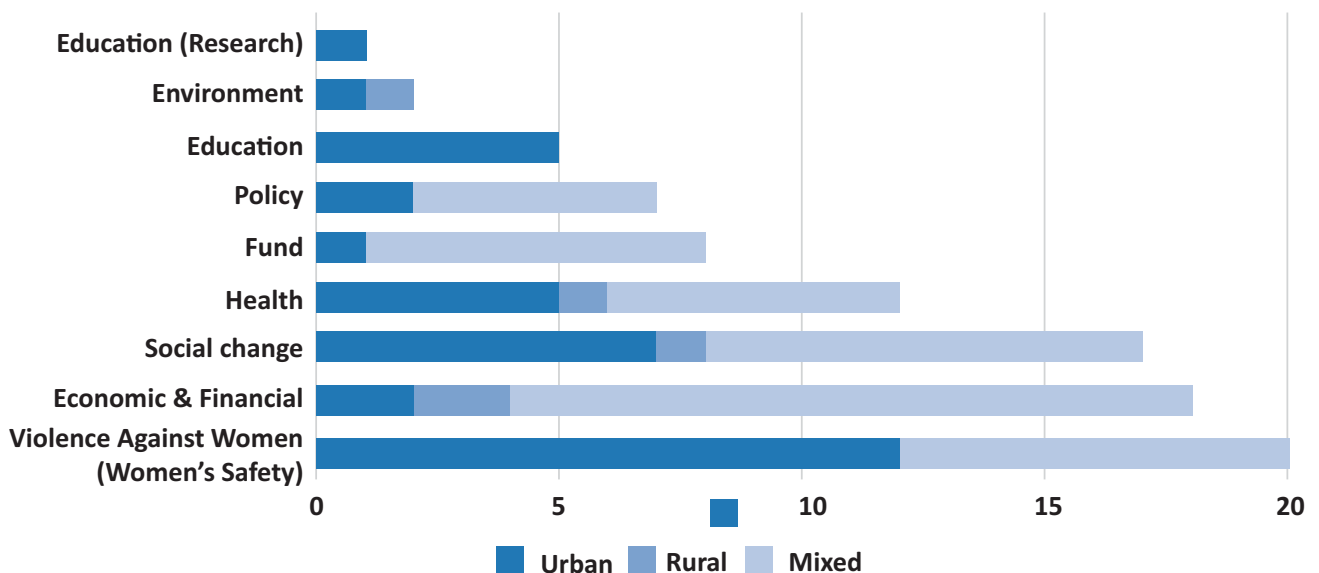


FIGURE 5: Geographic Distribution of Stakeholders by Dimension



areas, but this would require further research to verify that is outside the scope of this report. Of particular importance is the fact that the environment is under-represented as a dimension of interest, regardless of the geographic sector.

More of the issues associated with this geographic spread are discussed in Chapter 5. From the information presented in this

chapter, it is clear that those stakeholders who can influence where GEWE programming is implemented (for example, government ministries, funding agencies, and global networks and alliances) will benefit from examining where, to whom, and in what way interventions are deployed to ensure that the most effective, nation-wide changes are taking place.



Stakeholder Spotlights by Dimension

This section highlights several organizations that are actively involved with engaging men and boys in efforts to promote gender equality by showcasing some of the creative and innovative ways that GEWE issues in India have been addressed over the last

several decades. As in earlier sections, these stakeholder spotlights are organized by dimensions. While safety/security and society/culture dimensions have been defined previously, the full set of dimensions used in this report are as follows:

1. Education

- a. **Children and schools:** GEWE programs offered in schools for children and educators, to promote more balanced and healthy development, spread awareness on gender-based issues, and aspire to generational changes.
 - b. **Training and publications:** GEWE programs that offer training, publish manuals, or create courses for both children and adults. These often include gender sensitization efforts, awareness-raising courses, and education material to guide program replication and scalability.
2. **Health:** Traditionally, health topics in GEWE have been limited to improving women's knowledge and awareness about women's health and reproductive issues. There is now a growing effort to also teach men and boys the basics of these issues, and about their own bodies and their role in safe, consensual sexual activity. Cooperative efforts between women and men to reduce the spread of STDs and improving childcare and family health are also included in this dimension.
 3. **Society and culture:** Efforts in this dimension include promoting positive shifts in culture or social norms through engaging with populations via awareness campaigns, media (internet, TV, and radio), discussion groups, and mentorship programs. In all of these, the goal is to tackle negative attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate inequalities, gender-based discrimination or violence, and promote values of equality and social justice.
 4. **Economic Support:** This dimension includes projects that help uplift communities and individuals in poverty by providing increased access to financial opportunities, resources, and job skills. One of the more popular examples of interventions in this dimension is micro-financing and the formation of women's self-help groups. Engaging men in such programs entails encouraging them to support women in these, often new, ventures and advocating for more equal workplaces and other supportive structures that address economic inequalities that women face.
 5. **Mental Health:** Psychological well-being is a critical facet of overall health and is an often overlooked dimension within development work in India. Such programs include support groups, counseling and therapy services, and positive affirmations. This is especially true for those who fall outside "normal" social categories,

or are otherwise minorities (sexuality, gender, caste, class, etc.). In projects addressing masculinities and working with men to support social change in particular, ensuring positive mental health becomes critical. More than this, the deep stigma attached to seeking help for mental health issues must be addressed.

- 6. Safety and Security:** This dimension includes those activities which strive to reduce the various forms of violence that women and girls face, from the most severe and traumatic to the everyday attitudes and behaviors that demean or objectify women. It also includes addressing the roots of child sexual abuse and other violent crimes.
- 7. Environment:** This dimension consists of projects that seek to protect natural resources and work with communities to prevent/adapt to climate change. A relatively new field within GEWE, it is especially important for communities that are in rural sectors or otherwise directly reliant on nature and natural resources in their daily lives. As women and girls are often the primary caretakers of the domestic sphere, they collect water, prepare food, care for the livestock, and are central in agricultural labor, there is a clear link between GEWE and environmental protection.

This collection of dimensions may not be comprehensive, and there are certainly nuances between and across dimensions that are not reflected here. However, they do represent a majority of the stakeholder activities and focus areas and are a useful tool for organizing the collection of actors involved in GEWE. The goal of this activity is to identify areas of saturation and neglect, and we believe that the collection of dimensions presented here is adequate for this purpose. What follows is a set of examples of stakeholders in India who have successfully engaged men and boys in GEWE activities.

Education

a. Children and Schools: Project Khel (<https://projectkhel.org/>)

Engaging children at a young age, particularly young boys, is one of the most effective methods of transformative gender programming. In particular, sensitizing children in a co-ed environment normalizes the relationship between boys and girls, promoting a healthy relationship between men and women in the future and breaking the intergenerational cycle of gender discrimination.

Project Khel is a program designed to teach youth (aged 8-18 years) about gender inclusivity and sensitivity, self-confidence, decision making, 21st century life skills, and difficult topics such as child marriage, domestic violence, sexual abuse, menstrual health management, and reproductive health through the language of play. Specially trained facilitators (“play-ducators”) conduct age-appropriate and customized activities on the playground in a manner that is fun and approachable. The facilitators focus on creating a space that is open and

judgement-free to encourage children to gain the confidence to speak their minds, ask questions, and engage positively with topics that often cause tension and confusion in young minds. The overall approach involves actively engaging with children through games and activities to draw their interest, experiential learning through play, using activities to simulate real-life experiences, and a period of reflection and facilitated discussions after every activity, all with the hope of positive transformation in the lives of the children they engage. Project Khel is active in slums, government schools, welfare schools, private schools, shelter homes, after-school programs, and rural schools in the Lucknow region.

b. Training and Publications

Yaari Dosti (<http://coroindia.org/content/resources/yaaridostieng.pdf>)

Beyond early childhood, training programs for adolescents and young adult boys can also promote a transformative gender approach, as it can provide a positive environment for discussing sensitive and taboo topics as well as mentorship and role models through empowering community leaders. A review of stakeholders in this sector

revealed that while many organizations are providing some amount of education and training programs for youth, only a few have created and published manuals or best practices for others to replicate. Some, like FREA-India's Akshara project (Akshara Centre, n.d.), provide multiple certificate courses for gender-sensitization and guiding men to "confront patriarchy," but the material is proprietary.

One exception is "*Yaari-Dosti: Young Men Redefine Masculinity*," which is an open-access training manual developed in 2006 by the Population Council in collaboration with Instituto PROMUNDO, CORO (literacy and advocacy), MAMTA (health institute for mothers and children), and DAUD (village engagement) (Population Council, 2006). The manual was adapted from the Brazilian program, "Program H: Working with Young Men Series" organized by Instituto PROMUNDO and was developed as a resource for the Indian government and NGOs with the aim of promoting gender equity and addressing masculinity, specifically as a strategy for preventing the spread of HIV infection. The manual was validated for the Indian context through community-based research in Mumbai's slum areas and published online as an open-access resource for stakeholders. *Yaari Dosti*, "Promotes the positive aspects of masculinity, encourages men's participation in sexual and reproductive health, promotes respect for sexual diversity and improves the understanding of the body and sexuality" (ibid).

While it is unclear how many programs currently use the *Yaari Dosti* manual, at least one of the partner NGOs, CORO, has incorporated *Yaari Dosti* into its Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) program. CORO, in partnership with ICRW and TISS, developed and implemented a curriculum to engage young girls and boys aged 12-14 years to discuss and critically reflect on issues related to unequal gender norms and violence. As of August, 2020, GEMS is being used in 73 schools in Maharashtra, and will eventually be included in all state schools. ICRW and its partner organizations have also started expanding to hundreds of schools

across Rajasthan and Jharkhand (CORO India, n.d.). This kind of work is promising and is proof that such manuals provide a context-relevant, strategic guide for engaging in this field. If other agencies have access to such materials, use them, and share their experiences, the entire stakeholder system will benefit from lessons learned and best practices.

Health

Health promotion, especially reproductive health and sexual health education, is an area that is recognized globally as critical in reducing risky sexual behavior and the spread of diseases in adolescents. Such education initiates important conversations around personal health and difficult sexuality and gender issues, and starts to dismantle the ignorance and wrong notions around sexual activities (Vivancos et al., 2013). There is also evidence that such education can reduce gender-based violence if it is a part of more advanced and holistic interventions (Dune, Humphreys, and Leach, 2006). Until recently, there was no state or national curriculum on sex-ed in India, and there was strong cultural resistance to its inclusion in school curricula. Considering it taboo and an invitation to inappropriate behavior, many decision-makers resisted initial efforts in 2007 to include sexual health programs in normal classroom curricula, with several states banning it, considering it an affront to traditional values and an imposition from "the West" (Ismail et al., 2015). This trend is slowly changing, largely due to the work of UNFPA, UNICEF, and organizations like *Isha* (mentioned in Chapter 2 of this report) and the Public Health Foundation of India's (PHFI).

PHFI (<https://phfi.org/>) is a public/private initiative that was established with support from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2006 to strengthen public health training, research, and policy through interdisciplinary and health system connected education and policy program relevant research. It plays an integral role in India's public health efforts and contributed significantly to the recent Ayushman Bharat

healthcare scheme, including gender sensitivity and prevention of child sexual abuse. The newly launched School Health Program (SHP) under Ayushman Bharat was first announced in 2018, and will be rolled out over the coming years. It is a joint collaborative program of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development and includes, among many other important initiatives, “age-appropriate and incremental learning” on sexual and reproductive health. The vision in the Operational Guidelines is, “to influence behavior and enhance skills. The framework developed pays special attention to physical, psycho-social and mental aspects based on the developmental stages of the child” (MHRD and MoHFW, 2018). Beginning in middle school, children are introduced to topics

including puberty, HIV/AIDS, preventing bullying, and mental health. By high school, students are taught prevention of substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention, and more, including gender-sensitivity training. The guidelines specifically mention the inclusion of multiple resources to ensure the material covered is scientifically accurate, relevant to the Indian context, and representative of the population.

There are other community-based NGOs and stakeholders in the health sector who are working with men and boys to reduce gender-based violence, encourage positive masculinities, and promote healthy families—perspectives that are not explicitly included in the new SHP Guidelines. Organizations like the Family Planning Association of India



There are other community-based NGOs and stakeholders in the health sector who are working with men and boys to reduce gender-based violence, encourage positive masculinities, and promote healthy families.

(FPAI) and the Center for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) have long-standing and pan-India initiatives in this area, working directly with children, adolescents, and adults. Their programs extend well beyond the classroom to promote healthy and transformative dialogues among men and boys through national social media campaigns (for example, CHSJ's *Ek Saath*, <https://www.eksaathcampaign.net/>) and community health and advocacy through training men (for example, FPA's satellite clinics and mobile service units). Given the recent cultural resistance to sex-ed and other similar programs for youth, working with grassroots organizations (or those who work closely with communities) would be in everyone's best interests.

Society and Culture

Media

It is almost impossible to live in today's world without being exposed to, and therefore influenced by, the media. Media is one of the most powerful purveyors of social norms, visualizing, enforcing and reinforcing gender stereotypes that can translate into harmful beliefs and behaviors. Likewise, using media to address social issues is one of the most powerful methods of raising awareness in society, particularly on gender issues. *Satyamev Jayate* (satyamevjayate.in (a), n.d.), an Indian TV talk show, has done an exemplary job of openly, honestly, and fearlessly addressing many social issues that are prevalent in Indian society, many of which carry stigma and shame and are often difficult to speak about. Designed to connect with the common Indian citizen, the show was broadcast both on *Doordarshan* (public Indian television) and on private networks, and has been translated and dubbed in several Indian languages (ibid).

The show's topics were all socially relevant and often particularly relevant to the issues that most deeply affect women and children—from child sexual abuse to drug and alcohol addiction, rape, female feticide, honor killings, and domestic violence. The show has completed three seasons to date,

and has invited guests ranging from those who have had experiences of the topics being discussed first hand to social, psychological, political, and field-specific experts. These conversations were revelatory for most audiences, and brought these topics to the forefront of the general audience's attention and also to the attention of politicians and policymakers (ibid).

Of particular interest to this report is the episode on masculinities, entitled "When Masculinity Harms Men" (satyamevjayate.in (b), n.d.). The episode brought to light the construct of a "real man," and exposed the idealized vision that men have of this construct versus the experience that women have of men in their everyday lives. In the episode, men considered themselves to be protective, honest, and helpful while women identified men as disrespectful, dominating, aggressive, arrogant, and egotistical. The speakers discussed violence—against women and also between men—that so often ends in needless deaths. Ragging in universities that results in severe physical and psychological trauma (and sometimes death); men not allowed to carry their first-born child because it is a sign of weakness; not being permitted to cry at their own mother's funeral; boys being taught to persecute other young men who appear weak or feminine; young male children being made to sleep alone on the terrace are examples of how some men are conditioned in India to behave as "real men." It also included a brief overview of Indian cinema and gender representation, the objectification of women, and the typical tropes that are portrayed in films that glorify behavior like stalking. One of the biggest takeaways was that the process of conditioning men to behave within the confines of this type of traditional masculinity begins young, and both families and schools have deep and lasting effects on gendered behavior (ibid).

Satyamev Jayate was produced and hosted by popular Hindi film star Aamir Khan, whose filmography includes films covering topics that flout gender norms and conventions, and whose impact on the country and on filmmaking in India has been critically acclaimed. The show reached more than

600 million viewers during its original airing, and generated a great deal of discussion amongst critics, politicians, the film and television community, and the general public (Satyamev Jayate., n.d.). Overall, the impact of such an open and transparent conversation is invaluable, especially in a context such as India where many of the topics covered are widely considered taboo.

Social and Behavioral Change

Among the stakeholders reviewed in this report, a significant proportion of organizations promoted a “social change” approach as their core goal. This is often done through a combination of interventions that overlap with many of the dimensions discussed in this section. Common approaches include community engagement and advocacy that targets men and boys to improve their attitudes and behaviors towards women and girls, education/awareness events, collaboration with local governments for public services, and large-scale campaigns. To a large extent, the work of UNESCO and other UN bodies falls into this category.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, culture and social norms play a foundational role in the perpetuation of gender inequalities, gender-based violence, and the formation of negative, masculine hegemonies. This is not only supported by academic scholarship, but represents a growing, global awareness. As claimed on the websites and published impact assessments by these stakeholders, these efforts have led to positive changes among the target communities and are continually improving as strategies develop and support is given by governments and funding agencies. Large network organizations like MenEngage and the Forum to Engage Men (FEM) are excellent platforms for stakeholders in all sectors to find each other and share best practices. However, given the relatively limited public resources and published research on the effectiveness of many of these efforts, it is difficult to determine how well stakeholders have been able to converge and incorporate the lessons learned from one initiative to another. While many stakeholders release project

reports and impact assessments, there are still limited examples of those who conduct and publicly share rigorous field studies or analyses of data for program effectiveness.

The Youth Parliament Foundation (YP, <http://www.theyfoundation.org/>) is an exception, in that it is a CSO that publishes its research. One recent impact evaluation was published based on their *Mardon Wali Baat* project (Hindi for “talk about masculinity”), a research project on men, masculinities, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, or SRHR (Shekharan, 2019). The YP Foundation is fairly unique in the stakeholders working in this field. It is a youth-led NGO, which was established in 2002, whose mission is to support and develop youth leadership to advance the rights of young women, girls, and other marginalized youth, and to enable young people to internalize and engage in social justice, equity, and social change processes. One of its primary focus areas is in promoting SRHR through working with young leaders by: 1) increasing their access to information about SRHR; 2) empowering them to use existing platforms to strengthen engagement between young people, communities, civil society, and government actors to influence policies on youth, and 3) demonstrating “Youth Led Change” by building young people’s leadership so that they can identify and address their own needs.

The *Mardon Wali Baat* project is interesting in that it built on the researchers’ previous experience in community mobilization, and then sought to understand how masculinities are constituted and expressed by young, college going men in urban Uttar Pradesh. Through interviews, focus group discussions, and life histories, researchers at YP explored the intersections between gender, sexuality, caste, class, and religion in discussions on masculinities; examined the impact of social media on masculinities; questioned the value of relationships (friendships, love, marriage, and infidelity) for men; and looked at men’s perceptions of consent, sexual health, contraception, and violence. The results confirmed that men face a multiplicity of pressures to behave in a certain way that establishes their manliness, often via threats

and contestations for dominance. This pressure has many negative consequences on mental and physical health, and permeates into nearly every social interaction and relationship. Social media only serves to exacerbate these effects, and provides yet another layer of complication around performative masculinities. The program also found that social media plays a significant role in normalizing violence against women and other men, and risky sexual behaviors in certain contexts (Shekharan, 2019). The report, and the YP Foundation's other projects, provide detailed recommendations for how other organizations can approach this topic.

Such findings and recommendations reflect global research at a thematic level, but are extremely important for the Indian context where research is limited. The practice of conducting, and then making public, such rigorous research should be promoted among all stakeholders. Grounded as this kind of research is in particular communities, it provides a wealth of information that other stakeholders can use to inform and improve their own approaches.

Faith Based Organizations (FBOs)

Just as the historical roots of Indian mentalities are inseparable from religious influences, modern attempts to promote positive social change within GEWE should not ignore the role that FBOs can play in this process. Although religion is a topic of much criticism by activists and other stakeholders working in GEWE, its role is undeniable in maintaining certain practices that potentially reinforce negative gender stereotypes, restrict women's freedom, and promote versions of masculinity that are counterproductive for sustainable development. As religion is a deeply personal and profound part of one's identity, representative organizations of different religions can be a source of great positive influence on the people who support and follow them. Not all religious groups hold the same values and many FBOs in India have a long history of social service and charitable activities, including the support of women's empowerment and sustainable development. Recognizing this, international agencies such

as the World Bank, various UN bodies, and other funding agencies have increasingly leveraged the strengths of FBOs to reach deep into communities where they could not reach earlier. The World Bank's Faith Initiative is one example, where representative faith leaders (and their attached organizations) were invited to the policy table, recognizing their long-standing contribution to fighting poverty and other social issues and their influential role in the lives of a majority of the global population (Marshall and Van Saanen, 2007). This inclusion brought a perspective to community development that was missing or was under appreciated.

Especially in countries like India, where religion plays a dominant role in the lives of a majority of the citizens, not engaging with FBOs will leave out some of the greatest potential allies. There is evidence of the effectiveness of this approach in achieving progress in other social issues, including joint efforts between UNICEF, UNAIDS, and Mumbai-based FBOs to promote HIV/AIDS prevention, disaster relief, and other initiatives (Narayanan, 2013). FBOs also represent a sizable number of experts and experienced community workers, receive substantial funding from followers, and have a vast infrastructure embedded within almost every community in India. If such groups can be included in efforts to promote GEWE, including the engagement of men and boys, then many of the social and cultural obstacles to development might be reduced.

Economic Support

The Azad Foundation envisions achieving "...a world where all women—in particular women from underprivileged backgrounds—enjoy full citizenship, earn a livelihood with dignity and generate wealth and value for all" (Azad Foundation, n.d.). The foundation works to equip resource-poor women with knowledge and skills which can help them earn a livelihood with dignity in jobs and markets that have traditionally been closed to them. One of its primary programs, *Women on Wheels*, trains women as commercial drivers for taxi cabs, buses, and private chauffeur placements in New Delhi and other urban

areas. Capacity building, social and life skills are incorporated into the driving and vehicle maintenance courses to ensure women are equipped with all of the knowledge and resources necessary to succeed (ibid).

Although focusing primarily on women and girls, the Azad Foundation actively recognizes that engaging men and boys is crucial to the overall goal of GEWE. To support its Women on Wheels Program, Azad Foundation developed the Men for Gender Justice Program in 2014 to work with men aged 18-25 years in resource-poor urban communities (ibid). These men were from the same communities as Women on Wheels trainees, and their inclusion created a support network for the trainees in their own communities. This program forms groups of men around themes of sports, theatre, and other creative activities, who then attend workshops, educational activities, and awareness raising campaigns designed to question patriarchal norms and traditional concepts of masculinity. The program has proven to be effective in shifting men's attitudes towards gender-based violence, traditional gender-specific roles in public and home life, and willingness to encourage women in their families to work.

The Azad Foundation is currently active in Delhi, Jaipur, Indore, and Kolkata, as well as in Bengaluru in partnership with Neeva Foundation. Other than the Women on Wheels program, the Azad Foundation runs the Parvaz Feminist Leadership Program, which trains young women to conduct outreach and engage underserved women in understanding women's rights and entitlements and in enhancing their analytical and soft skills. Azad Foundation also does research and advocacy to build networks, engage decision-makers, and build evidence to influence policy changes. It also works in schools in resource-poor communities to engage young women and create awareness on gender, patriarchy, sexual and reproductive health, and livelihood choices and for teaching English, self-defense, and first aid.

Mental Health

MANAS

Mental health is a slow-growing area of focus in India, and mental health issues carry a great deal of stigma and shame in Indian society. Mental health is an often-overlooked area of potential leverage to positively engage men and boys, both for their personal benefit as well as for attaining GEWE.

The Manas Foundation (<https://www.manas.org.in>) is a mental health non-governmental organization targeting all sections of Indian society, seeking to shift negative perceptions of mental health and providing accessible, modern, and high quality mental healthcare services. Recently, it became known for its gender-sensitization certification training for auto rickshaw drivers in New Delhi. The NGO engages in awareness campaigns, advocacy, and lobbying with a variety of stakeholders to work towards enhancing the quality and quantity of mental health services as well as increasing demand for them (The Center for Health Market Innovations, n.d.). It directly provides services to clients and training programs for psychologists, paraprofessionals, and barefoot counsellors. Its mental health programs are delivered by incorporating them into existing models of service to efficiently and cost effectively target vulnerable populations such as people living with HIV/AIDS, slum populations, women under reproductive child health programs, and students in schools and colleges. Youth and adolescents form a particularly large target demographic, as research and experience shows that working with mental health at a young age prevents larger-scale issues later in life (ibid).

The MANAS Foundation has initiated a program to work with populations that consistently work with women, such as commercial vehicle drivers, police, and healthcare workers. This training works on gender sensitization with the goal of making women feel comfortable with accessing these services. It promotes gender equity and specifically aims to reduce gender-based violence. As of March 2020, the Manas Foundation has partnered with

transportation company Uber to provide gender sensitization to all of its cab drivers, and has trained 400,000 Uber drivers to date. In order for drivers to renew or receive a commercial driver's license, they are required to attend gender sensitization training (Public Transport To...Private Public Transport – Manas Foundation, n.d.). This training improves women's safety and security while in transit, one of the most vulnerable times during a woman's day. By engaging this population of men in discussions about women and their safety, the Manas Foundation is successfully implementing gender-transformative interventions that have the potential to affect much more than just their female passengers (Gender Justice Program – Manas Foundation, n.d.).

Safety and Security

MAVA

MAVA—Men Against Violence and Abuse—is one of the pioneers of efforts to engage men and boys in India to address issues of gender inequalities, discrimination, and gender-based violence through examining existing dominant models of masculinity. Its vision is “...to have a gender-just society—where men, women, transgender persons, and all others live in harmony and with self-respect, by providing spaces for mutual growth and well-being” (MAVA India, n.d.).

For over 25 years, MAVA has engaged with and mentored thousands of young men in schools, colleges, and communities on sexual health, gender sensitivity, and in deconstructing negative stereotypes and socially driven norms around masculinity, teaching men that issues of gender discrimination affect both men and women equally, and that men need to become stakeholders in the solutions (ibid). MAVA's approach is leadership-driven, and it uses interactive workshops, wall newspapers, story-telling, folk songs, street theatre, traveling film festivals, youth blogs, and other social media avenues. Through collaborative efforts with colleges, universities, women's groups, grassroots organizations, and health activists, MAVA's 700+ youth mentors work

in nine districts in Maharashtra. MAVA also provides counseling for men, providing them with tools to deal with dilemmas, emotions, and conflict management. MAVA has been nationally and internationally recognized in conferences and workshops and has been recognized by the Government of India as one of the Best Governance Practices in the country (ibid).

Environment

As mentioned earlier, the environmental dimension has been neglected as a means of working towards GEWE. While our research did uncover a few stakeholders who focus on elements of the environment, it was only through working with women—none that engaged men and boys in the quest for GEWE. Ideally, this will be addressed in the near future as changing environmental concerns and climate issues deeply impact not only women, but entire communities and it is a dimension that has a great deal of potential to inspire men and boys. Recently, MenEngage (2016) published a discussion paper on masculinities and the connection to climate change. This is a sign of progress in this field that may inspire more scholarship and practical action.

Summary

In this section we have provided a brief discussion and example of stakeholders in a variety of dimensions that include the role of men and boys in GEWE. It is important to realize that just as there are groups which support the vision of this report, there are also those which do not. These include some conservative or traditional-leaning political groups, certain religious bodies, and even NGOs, who feel that disrupting conventional gender roles is detrimental to social values. One example of this is the Mumbai-based NGO, the Save Indian Family Foundation (SIFF, <https://www.saveindianfamily.org/>), which claims that many legal cases filed by women against men are false. The group provides legal representation to:

“

“Fight for men’s human rights and protect men and their families from Govt sponsored undemocratic social experiments. SIFF’s Mission is to expose and create awareness about large scale violations of Civil Liberties and Human Rights in the name of women’s empowerment in India. SIFF also supports male victims of domestic violence and false dowry cases.”

”

This perspective is not unique, despite the overwhelming evidence of gender inequalities and their negative effects. That is not to say that all legal cases against men are by default true, as surely in all legal matters there are false cases filed; however, statistics from multiple, reliable sources over decades has made it abundantly clear that a vast majority of gender-based violence cases are legitimate.

It is important to acknowledge the existence of such groups and their point of view in the national conversation around GEWE and sustainable development, as they represent a portion of the population which will be affected by these programs and they have strong opinions and beliefs. Any stakeholder who hopes to inspire widespread change will need to be prepared to have difficult conversations with those who will resist changes to gender roles. An argument could be made that stakeholder efforts to introduce more radical transformations to gender roles and power dynamics that do not account for potential resistance are likely to struggle for long-term success. Hence, there is a critical need to develop strategies and skills for

engaging in dialogue with groups of varying beliefs, all of whom have a stake in GEWE programs. A deeper understanding of the lay of the land can only help the GEWE efforts.

In summary, a majority of the programs focus on school-based education and social change, and promoting safety and security for women and girls. Rigorous and publicly accessible studies and analyses of these programs are lacking; furthermore, there is a dearth of visible efforts in the environment sector and in academia-led field work. Certainly all the stakeholders discussed here, and many others besides, have done commendable work. But unless these programs can build and grow from the lessons learned and best practices followed by others, and experts of multiple disciplines come together to tackle the complex issues at hand, any successes will remain piecemeal and not extend to a nation-wide shift in gender norms. Organizations such as the MenEngage Alliance, FEM, UNESCO, and UN Women are doing excellent work in periodically connecting NGOs and other stakeholders, hosting national and international conferences on the topic of engaging men and boys, and sharing resources, but more is needed. There is also evidence of CSOs and government collaborations, as with MAVA and PHFI, where policies and schemes are designed with their guidance but, again, more is needed. While some success has been achieved in these efforts, it is clear that more work is still needed to ensure that successful, effective programs are created that can engage men and boys in GEWE.







BARRIERS
TO POSITIVE
MASCULINITIES



BARRIERS TO POSITIVE MASCULINITIES

Chapter 5 Overview

This chapter dives deep into the barriers in India that have, until now, stood in the way of engaging men and boys in GEWE and in developing more positive masculinities. A critical examination of the information gathered so far is needed to present a more robust set of recommendations in the next chapter. Following the organization of the preceding chapters, the barriers discussed here follow three broad themes: Socio-cultural barriers related to the gaps in theory, misconceptions, and/or predominance of certain cultural norms, and the complexity of initiating social changes for something like gender roles; Policy barriers and the limitations of existing international, national, and state efforts to curb the destructive results of gender inequalities; and stakeholder barriers based on the analysis given in Chapter 4 and the neglect of certain key dimensions. These themes are articulated in three main parts:

Socio-cultural Barriers

The barriers given here reflect both the theoretical challenges to understand men and boys in relation to GEWE in India and the overall cultural factors that are resistant to change.

- a. Context and complexity of Indian gender norms
- b. Social-change theories and practice

Policy Barriers

Using findings from the Government of India's task forces and reports from respected international agencies, key shortcomings that explain India's slow progress in achieving SDG5 are identified and discussed.

- a. Ineffective Gender Responsive Budgeting
- b. Low capacity for enforcement
- c. Insufficient inter-ministerial and cross-stakeholder cooperation

Barriers within Existing Stakeholders

An analysis of stakeholders is elaborated on further with reflections on the limitations of existing stakeholder resources, know-how, and impact areas.

- a. Missed opportunities for GEWE support by FBOs and other community-based groups
- b. Exclusion of aspirational districts
- c. Poor stakeholder convergence and cooperation

The preceding chapters have explored the theoretical and practical expressions of dominant masculinities and the effects of these on India's progress towards sustainable development. This report has also provided an overview of the evolution of national policies and other stakeholder efforts to promote the engagement of men and boys in GEWE, celebrating achievements and bringing attention to those areas which will benefit from greater attention and

investments. This chapter focuses on the gaps and shortcomings identified previously and discusses barriers to widespread, positive masculinities in India. To reflect the discourse in the preceding chapters, this chapter is divided into three subsections on: Socio-cultural barriers, policy related barriers, and stakeholder gaps in successfully engaging men and boys in GEWE. Chapter 6 carries this analysis forward and includes recommendations for each of the major barriers addressed in this chapter.

Socio-cultural Barriers to Positive Masculinities

As discussed earlier, the origins of current, dominant masculinities have deep historical roots that reflect the dominant groups of each historical period. In addition, gender roles and power dynamics, as well as the personal, gendered characteristics that are held in high regard in many populations are justified through a complex narrative of moral values, group membership, and aspiration for higher social status.

India is home to a plethora of cultural groups, many of whom have different qualifications for an ideal masculine archetype, although there are a few common threads that can be combined to describe the dominant masculinity. There are also competing values that can be at odds with

each other leading to personal or group discord, for example, the ideal of masculine virility and dominance over others and the competing values of celibate self-control and equanimity. Another example, perhaps more relevant and less poetic, is the conflict between a strong pride in traditional values and lifestyles with the desire to appear modern and guided by individual desires over communal goals (in other words, to appear more “western”).

It is also important to recognize the intersectionality of men’s identities, and how caste, class, and religion converge to exacerbate certain masculine ideals. Poverty, hunger, and other vulnerabilities may also contribute significantly to gender dynamics and masculine identities. Addressing such a complicated system of identities is an extreme barrier to social change. While there has been an apparent rapid and widespread shift in cultural values more recently, changing socio-cultural norms is a long-term, non-linear process. Traditional values, especially around gender, sexuality, and family life, are still largely maintained in much of India, albeit with a growing number of exceptions, adaptations, and mutations that point to an undercurrent of change.

This is complicated further when one considers that Indian men face a multiplicity of pressures from their environment, including caste, religion, class, and geography. These also define and delimit “what it is to be a man,” and often require different, even conflicting behaviors depending on the situation or context. The unique diversity, rapidly changing cultural norms, and pressures from global media and internal shifts in Indian culture make studying “hegemonic masculinities” extremely difficult. In fact, some scholars feel that R.W. Connell’s characterization of “hegemonic masculinities” has led to an obstacle to positive masculinities, as it concentrates too much on sexual behaviors and gender stereotypes as the primary determinants



of hegemonic ideals (Duncanson, 2015). This is problematic as, especially in the Indian context, expectations of a man's ideal behavior differ based on the situation and are often far more fluid than in Connell's conception (Chowdhury, 2015). Generally, masculinities are formed and influence social behavior as a result of multiple intersecting identities including caste, religion, economic class, and ethnicity (Jeffrey, Jeffrey, & Jeffrey, 2008; Singh, 2017). According to a report by the YP Foundation after their *Mardon Wali Baat* project, "Addressing these complexities involves revisiting the concept of hegemonic masculinity and asking ourselves whether it is always possible to identify what becomes hegemonic when and why," (Shekharan, 2019). This is a challenge that must be met as much as possible by Indian stakeholders within the Indian context, rather than relying on outside perspectives that may not consider such India-specific issues.

In the face of this complexity, it is difficult to suddenly propose a "new masculinity" for Indian men that is more in line with gender equality. For traditional communities in particular, such ideas can be perceived as yet another invasion of questionable outsider morality, often labeled a "western influence," and a danger to individual and family well-being. A perennial challenge for stakeholders in GEWE, especially for those attempting to engage men and boys, is to convince target groups that they are not trying to "westernize" India or eclipse long-held ethical beliefs, but to examine, introspect, and determine which norms are in line with a more positive society and what elements need to be held up to greater scrutiny. It is possible to see different strategies for inspiring such critical reflection in stakeholder programs, where often behaviors that are more obviously problematic (normalized gender-based violence, preference for male children, chauvinistic attitudes, etc.) are targeted. There are also other behaviors associated with dominant masculinities that are less obviously problematic (for example, only men should work and earn and taboos around male sexuality). These more deep-seated, socio-cultural norms require long-term interventions with strong role models who

can demonstrate the desirability and efficacy of alternative masculinities.

These role models need not only be men. Mothers can be considered the first and primary role models in the formation of children's identities. This is an important approach that receives less attention: working with mothers and women in the family to incorporate gender-equality practices in their family life, especially in raising young children. As gender identity and concepts of value, shame, and honor are often imbibed at an early age, teaching young children to respect everyone regardless of gender would go a long way towards promoting a new generation of equality. The same community outreach programs that empower women through microfinance, SHG formation, awareness raising, or other similar means of direct contact, can also incorporate an element of self-reflection and capacity building on how to raise boys to be more gender equal. Rather than putting all the household chores on girl children while boys play, share the load. Rather than feeding the son first and giving the girl leftovers, show equal value for both children's health. Engaging at the family level, especially encouraging mothers to impart more gender-equal values to their children, is a means of promoting a positive, generational shift.

Social Change Theories

This challenge to alternative masculinities can be framed within theories of social change that claim a tipping point or critical mass of new beliefs/attitudes/behaviors is needed for social norms to shift. Until that time, the tension between dominant and alternative norms will persist, often leading to some kind of conflict (Marwell and Oliver, 1993; Ostrom, 2000). Within social change theories, various arguments are made that explain why many individuals hesitate to act outside the prescribed norms, especially with regard to gender, sexuality, and other identity markers. Whether because of fear of ostracization, acting to preserve resources that are dependent on communal acceptance, unwillingness to confront moral uncertainties, or other equally complex

reasons, the hesitancy of many individuals to break from their community's social norms reflects the larger, social dynamics of a subgroup's inability to overcome dominant group proscriptions.

While it is clear that there are multiple masculinities, or acceptable "ways of being a man," in the Indian context, some men do face severe discrimination because of their sexuality, physical abilities, caste, class, and other reasons. Despite this, men, in general, are still the dominant decision-makers in Indian society. As such, what motivation would men have to willingly lower their place in the hierarchy? Social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al., 2004) and system justification theory (Jost and Major, 2001) argue that men are unlikely to support gender equality movements because they are satisfied with their high-status positions and hence motivated to maintain or enhance group-based hierarchies. Therefore, from this angle,

social change will be largely dependent on women's (or perhaps disenfranchised men's) dissatisfaction with, and their efforts to improve, the status quo. In response, alternative social change theories including the Political Solidarity Model of Social Change (Subašić, Reynolds, and Turner, 2008) and the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (van Zomeren et al., 2011) rely on a moral transformation, in which men engage with less fortunate groups from a place of compassion and higher-order appreciation of social well-being.

As with other approaches, these social change theories also emphasize the importance of role models and supportive groups, where like-minded men can gather and feel that they are not alone in their different views of the world. Media portrayals are a primary source of role models and many of the values of a community can be understood by examining the media it consumes. The pervasive and dominant



As gender identity and concepts of value, shame, and honor are often imbibed at an early age, teaching young children to respect everyone regardless of gender would go a long way towards promoting a new generation of equality.

forms of masculinity are certainly reinforced in politics and by elected politicians, through the public personas of celebrities, and in media representations of gender. India has the largest film industry in the world (Dastidar and Elliott, 2020), housed in the world's second most populous country. The Indian film industry also has an enormous international reach (Thussu, 2006). In an ideal world, the media would be cognizant of the fact that it has an impact on viewers in terms of normalizing behaviors (Galdi et al., 2013) and endeavor to portray gender in a positive, empowering light. However, there is ample scholarly evidence that Indian cinema mostly portrays both genders in ways that laud

negative stereotypes and reinforce traditional gender norms and behaviors (Bhrugubanda, 2011; Datta, 2000; Mazumdar, 1991; Niranjana, 1991; Prasad, 2008). This unfortunately means that there are few positive male role models “to counter balance the hegemonic or prevailing conception of masculinities, which contribute to gender inequality or violence against women” (UNESCO, 2019b).

Along with this lack of media representation and cultural leadership for alternative models for what it is to be a man, there is a general lack of awareness or priority given to promoting such a shift. This is also apparent in the national policy for GEWE and in other stakeholder efforts.



Policy Barriers

As there are currently no policies or government programs that engage men and boys in gender equality and women's empowerment, no evaluation is possible for policy efforts. Rather, this section highlights the gaps in policy and makes comparisons to issues in GEWE programming that must be avoided in future efforts to ensure that any new policies do not repeat the shortcomings of the past and from other contexts.

Despite massive government investment in policies, programs, and schemes to support GEWE, there are as yet no initiatives that prioritize a gender transformative approach. This report makes a case for the viability and necessity of engaging men and boys in GEWE efforts, including policy interventions. The fact that ministry efforts and government funded programs do not yet support this is cause for concern and demonstrates a limitation or lack of awareness that such a problem exists, or that it is very low in the government's overall priorities. A critical reflection on the government's GEWE efforts in general is already underway by NITI Aayog, and will hopefully result in positive steps in the next iteration of GEWE policies. The 2016 draft for a revised National Policy for Women's Empowerment by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, for example, does hint at efforts in this direction, but as of

the publication of this report it is still unclear whether or not the revised policy will be enacted, and if so, when.

One preliminary step that the government can take is to review how government funds have been earmarked for GEWE. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has been mandated since 2005, and has steadily increased from an initial investment of Rs 14,400 crore (USD 144 billion), to over Rs 1.2 lakh crore (USD 1.2 trillion) in 2018, approximately 5 percent of the total annual budget (Ministry of Finance, 2019). Despite this influx of government investments, third party analysts have found that 80 percent of GRB funds go towards children's services (Integrated Child Development Schemes), rather than women exclusive programs, where there is actually a steady reduction in budget allocations (Partners for Law in Development, 2017). The same study found that the budget for the Ministry of Women and Child Development has reduced by over Rs 1,000 crore (USD 10 billion) from 2014 to 2017. This should be addressed by policymakers and evaluated in light of the multiple reports on national progress towards SDG5. While programs for children are essential for national development, some critical reflection is needed to determine if this allocation to GRB is effective in

achieving the stated goals of the initiative. Some oversight is needed to ensure that all relevant sectors and ministries are engaged in GEWE and that a range of initiatives are supported. Such policy gaps and funding inconsistencies are barriers to promoting positive shifts in masculinities as they preserve those systems and socio-political structures that are at the heart of the issue to begin with.

Along with the creation of new gender-transformative policies, it is also necessary to continue working to improve the enforcement of existing policies, government programs, and public services meant to protect women and girls and to reduce instances of violence or abuse by men and boys. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Indian legal system has admitted that there are very high levels of under-reporting of violent crimes against women and inefficient processing of existing cases (including slow provision of legal protection, apprehending perpetrators, and reducing instances of violence). Without improving the police force, court system, social work support, and related government infrastructure it is likely that any new policies will exist only on paper. Moreover, it is important to remember that violence against women (and men) is a symptom of an entire ecology of gender inequalities, and therefore the legal system should become better equipped and knowledgeable about the various sources and instigating factors that result in increased gender-based violence. As with other public welfare initiatives where citizen behavior is regulated for the public good (for example, traffic laws, money borrowing/lending, government taxes and tariffs), often the fear of punishment is a primary motivator for acting properly. When immediate and publicly recognized consequences of breaking the laws meant to protect women and girls do not exist, it is not surprising that there is a national problem of gender-based violence.

It is important to note that preventing violence against women and girls should not be the only focus of policy. There are other, more everyday programs that will further the conversation on GEWE and men's role in it. One of these that has received a lot of

press and attention is the importance of paid leave for parents (both maternal and paternal leave), and its role in the workplace hiring culture. At present, there are laws protecting maternity leave but not in inclusive hiring, meaning that employers are less likely to hire qualified women as they prefer to avoid the costs associated with potential pregnancies. Such practices and lack of holistic policy protection serve to reinforce existing gender roles and stereotypes by making it that much more difficult for women to enter the workforce and earn equal pay for equal work and promoting the idea that men are more reliable investments for companies. Similarly, gender roles are reinforced by limited or non-existent paternal leave, restricting a father's availability and involvement in parenting.

Such efforts will require significant inter-ministerial cooperation. Part of the justification for establishing the Ministry of Women and Child Development was to promote "Inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitable and child-centered legislation, policies and programs" (MWCD, n.d.); however, it can be argued that even more cooperation between ministries is needed, especially with those that claim GRB funds. This will ensure that any scheme, program, or policy that contributes towards GEWE will be informed by experts from all the relevant sectors and that women and men will have the necessary support and services to truly benefit from such efforts.

One example of an enormous government program that supports women but faces criticism for not properly addressing socio-cultural, gender-based obstacles is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). While MGNREGA has contributed significantly to the welfare of many underprivileged groups in India including women, critics have raised concerns that women's unpaid care work, domestic duties and restrictions, and social and political discrimination are not properly addressed (Chopra, 2019). By focusing only on women's participation in worksites and providing incomes, some argue that MGNREGA has unintentionally:

“Invisibilized women’s unpaid care work responsibilities; perpetuated the gender inequities in the benefits that can potentially accrue to women as workers; and prevented women’s participation as decision-makers in the process of implementing MGNREGA” (ibid.).

If other ministries had been involved, such oversights might have been avoided.

This is not to say that MWCD and other ministries do not collaborate. Recently, the Ministry of Health and MCWD agreed to

several joint and multi-ministry programs to support women and children’s health and nutrition services, generating awareness about government schemes, representation in research, and other programs (Press Trust of India, 2019). Even greater collaboration will propel such efforts further and ensure that other indicators of SDG5 are also supported. Especially in tackling untrodden territory, like engaging men and boys in such programs, the collective experience and expertise of multiple agencies would lend itself to more robust solutions.



Barriers among Existing Stakeholders

As mentioned in Chapter 4, almost 33 percent of the nearly 100,000 registered NGOs in India claim to target women’s issues in some capacity. And although interest in engaging men and boys in GEWE is both well acknowledged and even supported in name, the number of active stakeholders in the field is a small fraction of that number. This indicates that even though there is overwhelming evidence of the need for male engagement in the process, it remains a low priority for a vast majority of the stakeholders. This is the first stakeholder barrier which leads to the question: How do we change this? International networks and their local partners such as MenEngage and FEM can provide some answers to this question but a larger convergence is needed that includes more strategic engagement of stakeholders across dimensions along with supporting collaborative efforts.

As the stakeholder analysis in Chapter 4 shows, there is a saturation of focus on certain dimensions when addressing GEWE, in particular education and social change. While this report does not intend to dissuade stakeholders or funding agencies from engaging with these two important dimensions, we do advocate for an increase in addressing the remaining dimensions. However, it is important to consider the whole and take a holistic perspective when addressing GEWE in general thus looking beyond just the areas of saturation and

neglect. This means conducting more broad needs assessments that incorporate variables of each dimension and using the results to guide future efforts. A particularly important point is that when women’s empowerment programming adopts an approach which excludes other elements of a woman’s life, or takes a fully unidimensional approach, it can lead to negative unintended consequences in other parts of her life. Just because “empowerment” has been engaged with in one area of a woman’s life, it does not automatically translate to all other dimensions (Gressel et al., 2020).

Another gap in a stakeholder analysis is the lack of faith-based organizations (FBOs) involved in these efforts. The tradition of seeking guidance and social involvement of faith-based entities has a long heritage in India and given India’s diverse and influential religious panorama, it would be beneficial to harness the influence and leverage that FBOs hold in Indian society. The 2007 World Bank publication details the importance of engaging FBOs in development and points out that the world’s religious institutions have long been doing the work of development through social services such as schools, hospitals, food distribution, and orphanages. Several other authors (Giri et al., 2004; Clarke, 2011; Deneulin and Bano, 2009; Rakodi, 2012; Narayan, 2013) have also explored the importance of the relationship between development and FBOs.

Stakeholder Spotlight: MenEngage

MenEngage is a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that seeks to engage boys and men in achieving gender equality and includes more than 400 NGOs from sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Asia, and Europe. The Alliance came together in 2004 with the general goal of working in partnership for promoting the engagement of men and boys in achieving gender equality, promoting health, and reducing violence at the global level including questioning the structural barriers to achieving gender equality.

MenEngage's partners work collectively and individually towards the fulfilment of the SDGs, particularly those components that focus on achieving gender equality. Activities of the Alliance include information sharing, joint training activities, and national, regional and international advocacy. MenEngage develops joint statements of action on specific areas of engaging men, carries out advocacy campaigns, and seeks to act as a collective voice for promoting a global movement of men and boys engaged in and working towards gender equality and questioning violence and non-equitable versions of manhood.

The Alliance has published a wide range of reports and other publicly accessible resources that critically examine global efforts at promoting gender equality and critically assesses the changeability of masculine cultural norms and other structural factors that promote inequalities.

Through its country-level and regional networks, MenEngage seeks to provide a collective voice on the need to engage men and boys in gender equality, building and improving the field of practice around engaging men in achieving gender justice and advocating before policymakers at the local, national, regional, and international levels. In India, FEM (the Forum to Engage Men) operates as a country-level network with over 50 organizational and individual members.

<http://menengage.org/>
<https://www.femindia.net/>

In India's case, there is a wealth of religious diversity and linked organizations committed to social service including for SDG5 so there is great potential here for engaging men and boys. All the major religions in India have examples of this kind. The Christian, Catholic, and Islamic communities have a well-established infrastructure of community-oriented outreach. ChristianAid is an example of an international FBO funding agency that supports women's empowerment projects across India, although there is a long history of Christian charities being active in the country. There are also Muslim FBOs that support Muslim women's legal rights and advocacy including the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), the All-India Muslim Women Personal Law Board, and Awaaz-e-Niswaan. The latter has established the Muslim Women's Rights Network to help women in India (www.niswaan.org).

There are also hundreds of charitable mission trusts associated with Hindu ashrams (for example, the Ramakrishna Math, ISKON, Chinmaya Mission, Sri Aurobindo Society, Yogoda Satsanga Society, and the Mata Amritanandamayi Math), many of which are engaged in massive community development and humanitarian projects including programs for achieving SDG5's goals. The MA Math (a public charitable trust), through its associated university Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham has received a UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality thanks to its extensive work in the area (<https://www.amrita.edu/unsdg/sdg5>). Likewise, Sikh gurudwaras and Jain derasars famously contribute significantly to community development. Together, these FBOs represent a potentially enormous resource that can support GEWE, and more so when one considers the influence such organizations have on the development of attitudes and behaviors among their followers.

Relatedly, Indian culture has a long history of "everyday giving" through small, individual donations of food, clothing, and small monies as well as community support rooted in religious and spiritual ideologies. In 2017, an estimated Rs 34k crore (USD 5.1 billion) was donated through such means (Mohan et al., 2019). However, the amount of donations and funding that actively reaches GEWE initiatives is quite low (ibid). This reflects community priorities and as GEWE is in essence a community change effort, we cannot

underestimate the effect this has. This is yet another reason why it is essential to bring FBOs into the community of stakeholders for working with GEWE.

As reflected in the geographic analysis of the identified stakeholders in the previous chapter, there is a dearth of stakeholders working in some of the most significantly underserved areas of the country, especially in the aspirational districts. In many instances, these districts are home to some of the most traditional communities in which patriarchal norms restrict women's involvement, mobility, and rights. This type of community is well-suited for stakeholders to address men and boys' engagement with SDG5 for improving outcomes for everyone under the other SDGs. However, lack of stakeholders currently active in several of these most severely disadvantaged districts indicates unbalanced community and government priorities. This is also true of under-representation of active stakeholders in rural communities which often require different approaches and engagement priorities.

In the course of researching for this report, we found that academic research in gender studies, and masculinities in particular, especially peer-reviewed publications specific to the Indian context is limited. There are exceptions that should be recognized where organizations have publicly-accessible research reports and a history of publishing academic papers (ICRW is an example, see: <https://www.icrw.org/resources-publications/>). The need for well-developed theoretical and applied research (and research publications) to inform policy and increasing stakeholder transparency is critical for the foundation of effective stakeholder convergence which this report also identifies as a major barrier to positive masculinities as well as achieving SDG5. To ensure good quality of subsequent reports, greater collaboration is needed between

stakeholders, especially universities and research institutions to ensure improved sharing of best practices and other resources. Many stakeholders work towards developing excellent methods and materials but they remain proprietary and un-scaled, or simply unavailable to the public.

This limited convergence amongst stakeholders from different sectors is one of the key barriers that this report identified as it fractures the efforts of all stakeholders over time. The lessons learned in one area of the country must certainly be useful for similar programs elsewhere. Such practices can be scaled out to other areas but they are often not. For example, the relative success of the gender sensitization training that all Delhi drivers are required to pass to renew their licenses could be replicated across all tier I and tier II urban centers in India. It is important for lawmakers at the state and national levels to reflect on why such programs, though they have proven to be successful, have not been adopted across the country.

The 2019 Stakeholder Dialogue hosted by UNESCO (2019b) identified education reforms, shifts in societal values, and the importance of community leaders as areas of priority and this report would like to underscore their importance. However, as this chapter argues the larger picture requires more strategic, comprehensive, and holistic action. This includes assessing policy and legislation in terms of practical successes and enforcement. It is also essential to ensure that programs that seek to address the social and cultural reinforcement of gender norms and structural inequalities are structured in ways that are culturally sensitive and inclusive. Finally, broader scope and increased resources among stakeholders are needed to include geographic areas that have been neglected and for drawing on the experience and expertise of other stakeholders in the field.





The 2019 Stakeholder Dialogue hosted by UNESCO identified education reforms, shifts in societal values, and the importance of community leaders as areas of priority and this report would like to underscore their importance.



A photograph of three school children in blue uniforms standing outdoors. The child on the left is a boy with his arms crossed. The two children in the center are girls with braided hair. They are standing on a paved area with green trees in the background. A large blue rectangular box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing white text.

A VISION FOR
ENGAGING MEN
AND BOYS IN
ACHIEVING GENDER
EQUALITY IN INDIA



A VISION FOR ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IN INDIA

Chapter 6 Overview

This chapter takes a decidedly more hopeful and positive tone and presents a number of recommendations and paths for successfully engaging men and boys in GEWE. The preceding chapters serve as an organization tool with dedicated parts focused on research and socio-cultural changes, policy recommendations, and strategic stakeholder guidance to ensure better progress in SDG5. Along with these, an addendum is added that emphasizes the importance of context and the complexity of the Indian social structure. Some of these recommendations, especially those centered around positivity and engaging with faith groups, may seem controversial. The authors do not intend to promote any particular point of view or set of beliefs; instead the aim is to highlight groups and strategies that have been largely overlooked, yet which hold potential benefits. The recommendations and vision for progress are articulated in four main parts:

Socio-cultural and theory recommendations

Taking inspiration from the accomplishments of other stakeholders in academia and field research, a more holistic and productive perspective is suggested.

- a. Systems-thinking approach
- b. Promoting positivity

Policy Recommendations

There are examples of successful government programs, although limited, that have demonstrated some success. These, and others, are recommended here.

- a. An improved legal system, especially for the police force

- b. Gender sensitization training for government employees
- c. Mandate for engaging men/boys in GRB

Stakeholder Recommendations

Summarizing the points made earlier in the report in each stakeholder dimension, a series of strategic recommendations are given.

- a. Open access to knowledge tools and high-quality research/impact assessments
- b. Engaging faith based organizations
- c. Youth-focused interventions
- d. Mental health: Destigmatizing and expanding services
- e. Including more programs for the rural sector and those which address environmental concerns

Contextual Awareness

Arguments about the importance and appreciation of the complexity of the Indian context are reiterated and the benefits of collaborations and convergence between experts is reflected on further.

- a. Human rights in the Indian context
- b. Collaborations, convergence, and grassroots mobilization

Thus far this report has made a strong case for the need to include men and boys in GEWE programming and in what ways existing efforts are not yet sufficient. Building on successes and best practices and keeping in mind the lessons learned from the stakeholder analysis done for this report, this chapter offers a vision of how India could move forward in achieving SDG5's targets in ways that strategically engage men and boys. This report demonstrates just how complex and interconnected the issues around masculinities are and how social structures, cultural norms, and interpersonal power dynamics perpetuate gender inequalities and unhealthy masculine (and feminine) identities. Any roadmap or plan that seeks to overcome such challenges will need to adopt a multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral approach, where diverse stakeholders converge and cooperate on shared programs. In addition, by advocating for a participatory approach, the communities who eventually receive the program will have an opportunity to represent themselves at all levels of the intervention: from planning, to policy, to implementation and enforcement, and in its evaluation. This will ensure that the efforts are grounded and relevant and reflect the nuances of the populations that they are meant to serve.

It must be stressed how important it is to ensure the participation of all stakeholders and to respect and prioritize the voices and perspectives of the population whom all these efforts are meant to benefit. Maintaining an aloof and purely theoretical approach will lead to programs and policies that do not reflect the lived experiences of the population. As GEWE is essentially a relational and cultural process, having a grounded approach is necessary to properly account for all the complexities of social life. This is especially true for a country with huge diversity like India. A one size fits all solution will likely not be effective so a range of holistic programs is necessary that reflect India's diversity which must be inclusive of all groups. In line with this, the scope of this report is insufficient to prescribe exact programs, policies, or behavioral changes that can effectively engage men and boys

in GEWE. Such practical solutions must be defined by the stakeholders through their expertise and through long-term assessment of the impacts.

In addition, the collection of GEWE stakeholders who are given priority in funding and centralized or international support should be expanded to include cultural influencers (for example, media outlets, FBOs, and online groups), academic researchers, environmental groups, and smaller or lesser-known organizations who specifically serve rural communities. Such a broad vision of engagement will help unify national efforts so that real, lasting changes can take place. Finally, central and state governments need to increase cooperation with these stakeholders, leveraging the support of international agencies where appropriate and continuing to support dialogues between local stakeholders and decision makers.

There are many benefits of converging diverse stakeholders and encouraging multi-sectoral collaborations. No single organization can do everything for everyone in every location. Other than increasing access to resources, domain expertise can be expanded and more holistic programs implemented that will be better able to tackle the complex issues surrounding engaging men and boys in GEWE. As described in previous chapters, there are multiple factors that dictate how dominant masculinities are formed and performed. While some of these factors are certainly nefarious and lead to antisocial behavior and active discrimination against women (and other men), many are subtler and tied to the social, political, and economic structures that govern society and are largely taken for granted. Initiatives that are able to engage with more than one of these factors or structures are likely to have more success than those that are limited.

This kind of dynamic collaboration can be applied to all the three major organizational topics covered so far in this report: theoretical and cultural modeling, policy design and implementation, and stakeholder engagement. What follows in this chapter is an articulation of what this unified, national vision will look in each of these topic areas.

Socio-cultural Theory

Recommendations

The theoretical underpinnings of masculinities covered in Chapter 2 represent diverse, and often conflicting aspects of social and cultural behaviors. The fact that these need to be addressed for successfully engaging with men and boys on work towards SDG5 has already been demonstrated in this report. This has also been clearly demonstrated by multiple agencies and organizations in many reports over the last two decades. One of the first suggestions that this report makes is drawing more heavily from existing academic research and doing more research that is tied directly to the

Indian context. The insights that academic research provides can guide practical applications in the field to produce positive transformations in psychology, sociology, culture, and sustainable development. However, one of the key points to remember is that nothing exists in isolation with regard to gender. Gender norms are an inherently social institution and therefore cannot be addressed by any one of these theoretical foundations alone. This calls for comprehensive, multi-dimensional, holistic, and systematic methods for addressing the diverse elements at play.

Area of Interest: Advancing Women's Empowerment through Systems Oriented Model Expansion (AWESOME)

One example of an academic research effort that can bridge the gap in theoretical and practical silos, is the AWESOME Framework. The Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham has developed a framework for evaluating multivariable issues in a systematic manner. Drawing on vulnerability mapping from the fields of disaster management and climate change combined with existing women's empowerment theory, methodology, and field experience, the AWESOME Framework approaches the task of achieving SDG5 using systems thinking to understand the vulnerabilities that women face in their everyday lives that prevent them from engaging with the empowerment process (Gressel et al., 2020).

Some of the key features of the AWESOME Framework are that it is inherently context-based, which allows measuring and evaluating individual, household, and community levels including the community's geographical settings; it is multi-dimensional, addressing health, education, economic vitality, the environment, safety and security, and social, cultural, and political influences and factors; and it is time-based, requiring measurement at various points in time to measure vulnerability and empowerment factors and how they interact with one another; and finally, it is systems-oriented, which captures an understanding of the interplay of all the variables within and between each context (ibid).

Although it was originally designed to improve women's empowerment efforts, it is, in fact, applicable to almost any human-centered issue. Mapping the vulnerabilities that men and boys face in all these dimensions will equip stakeholders and researchers to understand the interplay between psychological, sociological, socio-cultural, socioeconomic, and developmental factors that existing theoretical research has identified as crucial in the ultimate success of any efforts that work to engage men and boys in SDG5. The AWESOME Framework may be applied to a range of elements that contain multivariable issues: institutions (government, civil society, NGOs), marginalized populations, and children all of which may be relevant to engaging men and boys as well.

The ultimate idea behind understanding these various factors is designing contextualized programs and interventions to improve lives, while simultaneously attempting to mitigate unintended consequences for the already marginalized elements of society and the planet.

For more information, visit <http://ammachilabs.org/cwege-awesome/>.

Chapter 2 provided a spectrum of theoretical approaches to understanding masculinities, how they form, how they are perpetuated, and their impact on GEWE efforts. Based on this, some recommendations can be made for promoting the continuation of an Indian study of masculinities. The academic rigor described in the Spotlight on the AWESOME Framework provides an example of an approach that can provide a wealth of data leading to a deeper understanding of the diverse forms of masculinity. Data of this kind can be used by experts in various research fields and sectors to modify existing social change theories, critical masculinity studies, psychological and mental health approaches, and other relevant approaches to promoting the transformation of mentalities in India.

Promoting Positivity and Strengths

One of the more immediate recommendations that can be taken up with thought-leaders and social scientists is an appraisal of masculinities in India following a more strengths-based approach that includes positive psychology perspectives. As one study found, in a top journal *Psychology of Men and Masculinities*, only 15 percent of the published articles published between 2000 and 2018 had a positive focus (Cole et al., 2020). This demonstrates an underrepresentation of scholarship and research around this aspect of critical masculinity studies.

This study points to a central principle within the Strengths Model of mental health recovery, namely that social work and related efforts are more effective when the strengths and resources of people, communities, and their environments are put at the center of the helping process, rather than their problems and pathologies. This approach is a corrective and transformative response to dominant practices and policies that reduce people and their potential to deficits, pathologies, problems, and dysfunctions (Saleebey, 1992; Weick et al., 1989). Compelling evidence has been collected that suggests that people are more likely to act for individual and collective empowerment and social justice when their inner and environmental strengths and resources are

mobilized (Rapp and Goscha, 2012). This is also reflected in scholarship on positive psychology that demonstrates how behavior-change interventions are more successful when they balance an amplification of participants' strengths and acknowledge their weaknesses (Conoley and Scheel, 2018; Magyar-Moe et al., 2015; Seligman, 1998; Wong, 2006). If our entire scholarship is dedicated solely to creating an inventory of all the negative facets of masculine identity, there will be fewer resources in the way of characterizing the ways in which men can and do perform positive and necessary functions in a healthy society.

This same argument can be made for studies on Indian culture and society. Rather than reducing the spectrum of Indian social norms to oppressive hierarchies, for example, "Brahmanical Patriarchy," a more accurate and nuanced appraisal should be done of the social pressures and influences that India has experienced over history. In addition, an academic appreciation of the positive elements of Indian culture and social structures might go a long way in identifying potential solutions to the ills that the country is facing today. This is another area where FBOs and other representatives of cultural values might contribute to creating a new narrative around gender roles and power dynamics. Such strategies could also encourage the participation of more patriotic organizations or communities which may feel alienated from current GEWE conversations. Taking a more positive approach does not mean ignoring or justifying the destructive elements of society; rather, it means acknowledging the complexity of any community and approaching issues from a place of empathy and compassion after which strengths can be acknowledged and weaknesses identified with the ultimate goal of progress and sustainable development.

As was briefly outlined in Chapter 5, the question of, "What is in it for men?" in promoting gender equality, will be difficult to answer unless a balanced, accurate, and nuanced understanding of the ground realities can be achieved. By limiting the study of masculinities in India to only those characteristics that are negative and

destructive, there is a tendency to reduce all men to such stereotypes and that a man is defined only by these characteristics. Such a perspective ignores and discounts the complex and diverse identity of individual men and therefore leads to interventions that are equally flawed and incomplete.

The strengths model and positive psychology approaches argue that by identifying, understanding, and using an individual's strengths (traits such as empathy, forgiveness, and gratitude), people develop resilience and are better able to overcome their deficits (for example, violence, genetic predispositions, and environmental stressors) (Magyar-Moe, 2009). Broadening the social

study of men in India in such a way will help in explaining the growing complexities and divergence from so-called hegemonic masculine ideals such as the growing acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals. Whether from research in Mumbai documenting how definitions of honor are being changed by unemployed men to justify a shift to domestic chores while women work (George, 2006), or in the colorful fabric of sexualities, gender roles, and personal expressions documented in *Mardon Wali Baat* (Shekharan, 2019), it is clear that men and male identities cannot be reduced to a set of rigid norms. Doing so would be a disservice both to social sciences and to the society that such research is meant to serve.



Policy Recommendations

The preceding chapters suggested that while there have been significant strides forward in GEWE policies in the country, there have also been major inconsistencies and large gaps. Foremost is the lack of any policy or scheme that directly targets the engagement of men and boys in reducing gender inequalities, violence against women, and redefining dominant masculinities to support GEWE. This should be addressed and strategic, gender-transformative programs should be incorporated across ministries. Gender Responsive Budgeting has ensured that a proportion of the national government's budget goes towards supporting GEWE. However, more is required and it seems pertinent that engaging men and boys should also be a requisite component of all new GEWE efforts. And yet, even if this were to happen, unless the mechanisms of enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation are improved there will likely continue to be issues. Just as the massive increase in

GRB has unfortunately led to less-than ideal returns on investments, future efforts will also fall short unless enforcement and monitoring of these policies are made more effective.

This requires that police forces and other law enforcement agencies, larger legal and criminal justice systems, especially district, block, and regional office level governance, be purposefully engaged in these issues. Gender sensitization, social and emotional training, and other similar interventions are needed that improve the capacities of such officials (who are mostly men) for supporting GEWE policies and programs. Having the support of these government leaders, especially at the local level, will have a tremendous impact on their communities, as women could become more confident and will report instances of violence and claim public services, and men could then ideally take protecting women and the laws supporting their protection more seriously.



Stakeholder Spotlight: Miss Charu Sinha, IPS Officer & People for Parity

One example of a successful attempt at improving law enforcement for women's safety has been demonstrated in the pilot study spearheaded and championed by Miss Charu Sinha, one of the top IPS officers in the country and the first woman appointed as Inspector General of CRPF in a conflict zone. The 2017 project, "Pukar: Gender Fellowship for Police Constables" was co-implemented by Sinha along with the Delhi-based NGO, People for Parity (<http://peopleforparity.org/>) and it provided gender sensitization training and capacity building for preventing gender-based violence to police officers in Mahabubnagar district in Telangana, followed by community outreach efforts (The Indian Express, 2017). The results were largely positive and they found positive shifts in community attitudes towards women, increased willingness to discuss gender inequalities, and profound introspection by the male officers about their privileges and struggles as men and the unfair obstacles faced by women.

This pilot's success inspired Sinha to launch a similar project, also with People for Parity, to train CRPF jawans in Bihar and Jammu and provide similar sensitization and support. Within this population, it was found that suicide rates were significantly higher than among the general population and that a primary instigator for this was stress at home. The gender sensitization training linked emotional trauma and stress to the burden of patriarchy and the need for women's empowerment and personal well-being. The results showed that when men felt that gender equality improved their happiness and well-being, they were ready to consider alternative gender norms. Further pilot studies in other locations are planned, and if successful, this model will be useful for all police forces, paramilitary, and other peace-keeping units.

Such efforts demonstrate that policy enforcement requires community buy-in, especially with local-level officers who directly interact with victims, survivors, and perpetrators. Knowledge about how to successfully engage with such populations can be found in numerous small-scale, local NGOs and charitable institutions that are already working in these spaces. Policy design and implementation could benefit from a stronger inclusion of best practices from NGOs which work with target populations.

Stakeholder Recommendations

Just as with the academic and socio-cultural change efforts, stakeholders' overall impact can be improved with strategic cooperation and convergence efforts. Fortunately, existing infrastructure can be leveraged to make this a stronger process. UNESCO, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and other large-scale organizations can act as platforms for knowledge and resource sharing and unifying approaches and bringing about greater convergence and cooperation between shareholders from different sectors. This will also help stakeholders identify and acknowledge their limitations and find other stakeholders (potentially from other sectors) to complement and strengthen their efforts for the betterment of the overall effort.

Open Access Sharing of Lessons Learned

In addition to the recommendation of producing more academic research, it is equally important that all non-academic stakeholders share best practices and lessons learned publicly to inform new approaches and methodologies. This will highlight areas of saturation and neglect across dimensions and geographies making it easy to identify areas that are not receiving sufficient attention. All this together will help potential funding agencies to better understand what is needed the most.

In the same vein, there is a lack of educational material and publicly accessible training guides for engaging with men and boys. Although there are some processes that are necessarily proprietary for organizations that earn a profit through their programs, developing open-access educational material, training guides, measurement scales, interview question banks, and other such material will benefit the greater national efforts immensely. Programs like *Yaari Dosti* have done an excellent job of developing and contextualizing its open-access training manual on working with men and boys on HIV/AIDS and gender violence.

One excellent resource that has been published and is available publicly is the ICRW Framework (2007) mentioned briefly in Chapter 2. This framework, although brief, gives an overview of the key issues at play in engaging men and boys in GEWE efforts. It includes a snapshot of the foundational conditions,

the programming strategies, and the multi-sectoral, intersectional, long-term program and policy efforts needed at the individual, community, institutional, and policy levels to affect gender transformative change towards sustainable gender equality. It also includes general best practices for engaging men and boys and specific best practices at each level (ibid). Ideally, such frameworks can be regularly updated and adapted for multiple contexts so that others can easily apply them. Results from other impact assessments in other contexts will only serve to improve the frameworks, creating a positive cycle.

Beyond encouraging more and varied reports, rigorous research, and sharing peer-reviewed articles on masculinities in India and their relation to GEWE, there is also a need to help stakeholders discover new and existing publications. UNESCO can contribute to this effort by creating an online repository of such articles and resources and issuing calls to stakeholders to participate in Partner Dialogues, international conferences, edited book series, and other means of promoting and disseminating valuable information. Indian universities and research centers can play an important role in ensuring quality, relevance, and in keeping the dialogue at the cutting edge.

Faith Based Organizations' Engagement

Another suggestion for stakeholders that is too often ignored is engaging regularly with FBOs. Although largely avoided by both academia and development workers, religious organizations play an integral part in society and, in turn, in sustainable development. FBOs, under the auspices of the religions they are affiliated to, contribute to charity, resources, counselling, and other services to alleviate social problems. While this is commendable, religions (as social institutions) are often associated with more conservative moral values and as partially responsible for the historical marginalization of some groups over others. The historical (and current) role that religion has played in conflict and war and in the friction between and across religious people has made FBOs

potentially controversial for donors and global agencies to work with. Despite these issues, FBOs play an undeniable role in the lives of many people around the world, especially in India where religion is still a dominant social force. If FBOs can become champions of gender equality, such an influence on the values, attitudes, behaviors, and choices of people can be of huge service in achieving SDG5's goals. GEWE is, after all, a social process and requires large-scale cultural changes.

There are three key ways in which FBOs can contribute: Community leadership, value-based work, and encouraging self-reflection. Effective engagement with community leadership is of utmost importance for successful changes to take place for GEWE. Although different faiths have different community leadership models, each one plays an influential role in shaping public opinion and in influencing the values of the general population. A leader who can champion GEWE will be able to mobilize a strong network of resources and support for achieving SDG5.

Value-based work is an interesting intersection of policy and/or activism and religion/faith that many may view with skepticism. However, as Narayan (2013) notes, there are important values that frame key development issues and guide decision makers in how they approach them. While Narayan's (2013) work is on sustainable development and how religions can reframe and address unsustainable economic development through their philosophical world-views, it also extends to gender equality goals. The concepts of respect, kindness, compassion, and empathy can be found in all religions and faiths, and also underpin the human rights approach, which is at the heart of SDG5. FBOs have the capacity to articulate the SDGs in the language and value systems of their traditions, thereby gaining the support of their followers. Stakeholders who recognize this and are willing to work with such groups to align with the values that a community is built on have the potential to be much more effective.

The last key way in which FBOs can contribute to sustainable development in general, and be specifically relevant for GEWE issues, is through encouraging self-reflection in individuals and the community. Inherent in “empowerment” is self-reflection and self-awareness, and not only individual but even communal and group reflections are powerful tools for change. These processes are beneficial for everyone. Women can be encouraged to embrace their inherent strengths, acknowledge their challenges, and move forward. Men can be encouraged to acknowledge their privileges, their own obstacles, and the negative effects of certain actions, attitudes, and behaviors that they may participate in. They can be encouraged to reflect on their roles in promoting social justice, community development, and the future health of their community. This will help promote a social transformation where a gradual balance of gendered-power dynamics is reached that is also aligned with personal beliefs. The tools that faith and religion provide for self-reflection can be leveraged to encourage these types of concepts and may also prove to be useful in secular applications.

Youth Engagement

Although this report repeatedly states that it is essential to engage men and boys, it may be that it is most important to engage young boys in GEWE efforts. Most cultural psychologists and early-childhood development experts agree that personal values, attitudes, and behaviors are mostly shaped at a younger age (Cefai et al., 2018; Shweder et al., 2007). Effective policies for children are those that promote gender equality in schools by involving young boys in discussions around respecting girls and women, the wrongness of violence and sexual misconduct, and (importantly) providing accurate sexual health education. Education on safe usage of the internet is also a promising strategy that has been found effective (Quilt.AI, 2020). These changes can be enacted at the national and state levels by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and include experts from relevant fields. Although working with young

boys is crucial, it should be acknowledged that there is evidence in India that parents are critical in gender values being formed in young children (Dhar et al., 2019), so it is important to simultaneously work with parents as well.

One approach to working with youth that has a large amount of supporting evidence is after-school programs and sports clubs that integrate gender equality values with play. One example that has garnered a lot of attention is the Parivarthan Program in Mumbai. ICRW, along with the US-based Futures Without Violence Group, adapted the existing Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) program to the Indian context and conducted a study on its effectiveness in reducing gender-based violence among young boys. The Mumbai-based project was called “Parivarthan” (or transformation) and engaged cricket coaches and mentors in schools and the community to teach boys lessons in controlling aggression, preventing violence and hate speech, and promoting respect. The results were positive and the project has inspired similar programs across the country (Das et al., 2012). Such research studies and programs can be scaled further and improved through collaborative efforts across education and other dimensions.

Promoting mental health

As this report mentioned earlier, mental health is an issue in India that is deeply stigmatized as well as under-represented within the medical and clinical professions. It is only in the last five years that the Indian government has started a systematic evaluation of India’s national mental health picture (Pradeep et al., 2018) through the National Mental Health Survey (2015-16), which revealed an 85 percent treatment gap in terms of common mental health issues (Duffy and Kelly, 2019). As has been discussed previously, violent behavior, depression, and other mental health disorders are closely interconnected with gender-based violence (Patel et al., 2016). Although the focus of this report is on men and boys, it is worth mentioning that there are significant associated mental health risks for women who must exist in a gender unequal society,

especially for those who are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault (Devries et al., 2011). The existing gap in treatment in combination with the social stigma and shame associated with mental illness and seeking treatment call for comprehensive, creative, and compassionate mental health programming in conjunction with engaging men and boys in GEWE. Further, this is another area that will benefit from increased collaboration between sectors.

The Rural Sector and Environment Dimension Engagement

This section draws attention to two of the most glaring gaps identified in the stakeholder analysis: Lack of rural programming and lack of environmental focus. This report would like to encourage all stakeholders to begin incorporating an environmental component in their programs,

including engaging men and boys in the environmental sector in the context of GEWE efforts. This is arguably one of the most foundational aspects of sustainable development, and men, women, girls, and boys should be equally engaged in caring for their natural resources and conservation of nature. Such efforts could potentially be leveraged into gender transformative programming.

Similarly, there are very few rural-focused stakeholders working on engaging men and boys but given that 65 percent of the population lives in rural India, it bears repeating that a more pointed targeting of rural men and boys is needed. In actuality, the rural sector and environmental dimension go hand-in-hand because it is generally the rural populations which are the most disadvantaged and who are also the most negatively impacted by climate change,



Effective policies for children are those that promote gender equality in schools by involving young boys in discussions around respecting girls and women, the wrongness of violence and sexual misconduct, and (importantly) providing accurate sexual health education.

natural resource depletion, and land mismanagement. As Gandhiji famously said, “Villages are the backbone of India.” As such, support and services should be generously given in all areas of sustainable development including gender equality.

One phrase that has been repeated in this report is “increase collaborations and convergence.” If there could be a motto for the Roadmap to Transform ‘Men’talities in India, it would certainly be this. In every challenge documented here, collaboration between stakeholders and a convergence of efforts into a more unified intervention offers a solution. India’s wealth lies largely in its diversity and innovative minds. Just as sunlight when condensed in a magnifying glass can start a fire or several small streams when converged can create a river, the unification of GEWE efforts to engage men and boys in India can lead to a revolution of positive values and set a global example.

UNESCO has the unique ability to leverage this collective strength through its vast and highly regarded network and ability to influence decision makers. In India, UNESCO has previously hosted many Stakeholder Partner Dialogues and Forums where thought leaders can gather together and share their work. There are also a number of UNESCO Chairs who are global experts in their fields. One way of achieving stakeholder recommendations mentioned previously is to increase the number of such Partner Dialogues, strategically aligned to the role of men and boys in GEWE. With central support, the UNESCO Chairs can help organize thematic dialogues between certain strategic stakeholders, especially among those groups who do not often have a voice in such programs. Faith-based groups, small grassroots organizations, and other experts can be brought together along with other stakeholders to collaborate on practical solutions in the given themes.



Contextual Awareness and Human Rights

This section draws attention to the fact that GEWE is a matter of achieving human rights. However, as has been mentioned many times previously in this report, the spectrum of diversity within the Indian population must be accounted for in designing any approaches to sustainable development. While still honoring the universal goals enshrined in the UN 2030 Agenda for achieving the SDGs, the particularities of the Indian context should act as a lens through which theory, policy, and organizational efforts are made and not the other way around. By highlighting and bolstering those elements already present in Indian culture that support the SDGs, rather than grafting more foreign concepts into traditional communities, one is more likely to find local support.

To achieve this in GEWE, the voices and perspectives of a diverse population must be given an opportunity to represent themselves and share their existing values. Through this

we may find that there is more alignment between traditional values and SDGs than was previously understood. Doing so will also accord them the human right of maintaining social and cultural practices that they align with and avoiding any neo-colonial pressures to force cultural changes. This entails an inherent respect for the various religions and other groups’ perspectives on GEWE, as many of them have strong women’s empowerment elements already built into their beliefs. This can serve as the foundation for achieving the SDGs and universal human rights, as it can encourage mutual respect, understanding, compassion, and empathy among all. Once this is well established, a more critical reflection on the values and principles of each community can be done whereby stakeholders can align such beliefs with the SDGs and promote a more unified effort for achieving a positive transformation of masculinities and support for gender equality.

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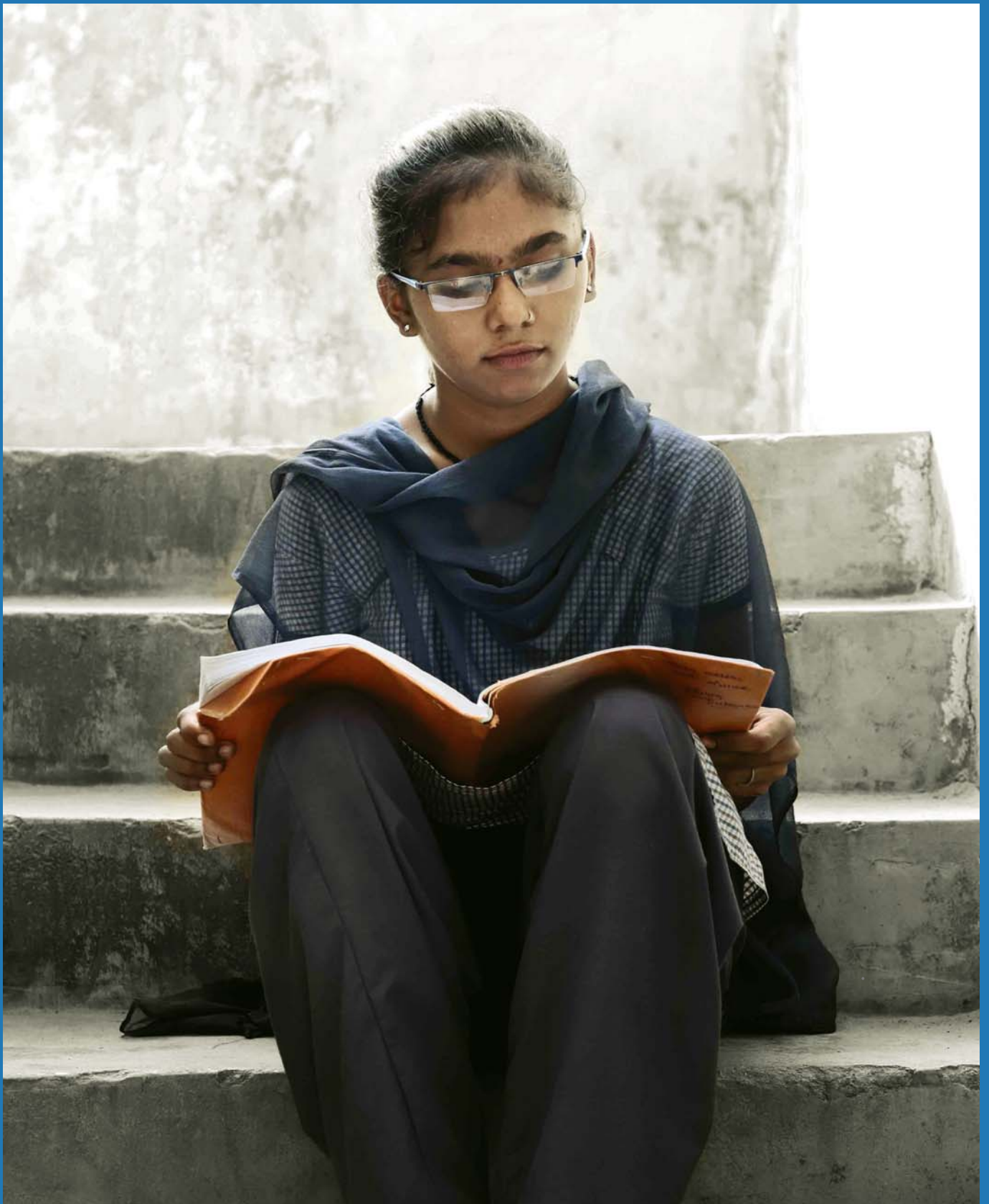
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