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**NOBO JATRA-NEW BEGINNING**  
**USAID's Development Food Security Activity**

**Impact of Male Engagement for Gender Equality**  
**'Sustained impact and changes in south west Bangladesh'**



**Shared with USAID/Food for Peace 25 February 2020**  
**Revised on 1 April 2020**

This study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of World Vision, Inc. and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



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## Acronym

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
DU	Dhaka University
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ID	Identity Document
IDI	In-depth Interview
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health & Nutrition
MDD-W	The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women
ME	Male Engagement
MIS	Management Information System
MNCH	Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NJP	Nobo Jatra Project
PG	Parental Guidance
PPS	Probability Proportional to the Size
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UP	Upazila Parishad
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WV	World Vision
WVB	World Vision Bangladesh



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## Acknowledgement

The survey team would like to thank the team of data collectors, the team of data analysts, officials of World Vision and Shushilan. We also thank the team of project volunteers and particularly the beneficiaries of Nobo Jatra Male Engagement Program, who have come forward to share their information and sometimes recommendations to complete the impact and sustainability study of Nobo Jatra's male engagement approach.

We would also like to express thanks and profound gratitude to World Vision colleagues Mohammed Norul Alam, Director Programme, Policy and Advocacy, Rubayat Ahsan for overall coordination and for providing their assistance and advice on various steps of conducting the study within limited timeline.

We are particularly grateful to the beneficiaries who took part in the quantitative survey, their family members, and community people who came forward to share their own stories during the field visits.

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## Executive Summary

Bangladesh has made great progress in poverty reduction, economic growth, and improvements around maternal and neonatal health. However, this growth does not always translate into economic gains across both genders. This is particularly true in southwest Bangladesh – where the average age of marriage for girls is 15.2 and 80.9% of women have to seek permission to visit certain locales.<sup>1</sup> Building on the success of male involvement in changing attitudes and reducing violence against women, USAID’s ‘Nobo Jatra – new beginning’ project implemented by World Vision Bangladesh, developed and implemented a deeply contextualized Male Engagement for Gender Equality module in four sub districts in south west Bangladesh. Through 5 thematic modules and 12 sessions staggered over nine months, the male engagement sessions cover key concepts such as: i) shared decision making, ii) fair division of domestic and caregiving tasks, iii) improving and supporting healthy relationships within families, iv) supporting gender equity, nonviolence and discouraging child marriage, v) improving understanding of gender equity and the impact it has on relationships between men and women.

9,814 couples (husbands and wives) have graduated through male engagement for gender equality sessions. Evidence of positive changes in perceptions, as captured through this study, shows remarkable changes - 77% of decisions were taken jointly by couples, including decisions on larger investments such as buying land or livestock, deciding on children’s education and health treatments. Over 90% of couples agreed that child marriage is harmful and a punishable offense. The study also found that husbands appreciated women’s engagement in income generating activities as this has a positive impact on the household economic status. For example, 2,181 women have participated in both male engagement sessions and the ultra-poor graduation activity – and husbands have been supporting their wives and even helping with livelihoods such as making bamboo products or paper boxes.

Positive changes in perceptions related to gender equitable practices at the household level is evident as 89.35% of men think women should be consulted on household budgeting and purchases in comparison to 43.30% at baseline. Furthermore, 44.16% of men think women should be able to access markets, health care services, and other public locations without restrictions or prior consultation in comparison to 18.30% at baseline. For shared division of labor, 92.65% of men think that men and women should share household tasks, such as cleaning, cooking and taking care of children in comparison to 8.3% at baseline.

Given that Nobo Jatra is currently in its fifth year (with an upcoming cost extension phase from 2020-2022 focusing on sustaining outcomes) it was critical to investigate to what extent the project has managed to change attitudes, perceptions and behaviours on gender equality; and to further understand how to sustain the impact of the male engagement approach. It was key to understand to what extent the behaviour and practices will persist within communities and also identify and sensitize the local stakeholders who could potentially be the drivers in sustaining

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<sup>1</sup> Nobo Jatra Baseline 2015



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the impact of male engagement during the cost extension and beyond. This study was undertaken to capture evidence of impact, challenges and also put forth specific recommendations on how to sustain the impact of male engagement by working in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh. Specific objectives of the study were:

- To understand impact of male engagement intervention in improving gender equity in a household
- To develop a strategic plan on how the male engagement approach can be sustainable with regard to sustained change in perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and practices of men and boys.
- To enhance the effectiveness and quality of male engagement through learning and adaptation

### Method

Considering the complexity and sensitivity of the study, a mixed method using quantitative as well as qualitative research components were applied. The study used a participant based sampling survey, which is a descriptive two stage cluster design. The first stage is the male engagement groups and second stage is the sample couple from the group. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire from 210 couples under treatment/case groups and 70 couples under control/comparison groups. Qualitative information was collected through FGDs (10), Key Informants Interviews (25), case stories (3) and consultations (10). Researchers also interviewed representatives of standing committees and Union Parishad members, local government institutions, civil society actors at local and national level, academic, and representatives of development agencies.

### Findings

As a positive outcome of male engagement, couples acknowledged that they jointly take decisions on many issues which were previously decided by husbands alone. For small expenditures such as food, clothing, doctor visits, household appliances, 77% of decisions were taken by both husbands and wives. Equally, for larger investments such as buying assets, or land, livestock, agriculture and fisheries, 78% of decisions were taken by the couples jointly. 83.8% couples decided together on when to invite or visit friends and family members, 74.1% jointly decided on children's education and 87.3% took health and treatment decisions together. Husbands also appreciated wives participating in income generating activities as this contributes to household incomes and family savings.



Participation in male engagement has also had a positive impact on household division of labour. The study found that in the treatment/case group 71% of men are doing household work such in comparison to baseline where only 38.2% men helped with household tasks. A key shift has

	Male Engagement study 2019	Baseline data of the project
Men are doing household work	71%	38.2%

been men acknowledging that household work is not shameful – rather, this is important work that contributes to the

overall family wellbeing and dynamics between a husband and wife. Remarkably, 90.2% of husbands are spending up to 6 hours per day with their children – recognizing that this interaction is critical to guide and develop children. 52.8% of husbands are also feeding children (in comparison to 37.1% in control areas.) This has also had a positive impact on attitudes towards children’s education. 95.2% male and 96.7% female among case couples consider educating their daughters as an important investment – and that with education girls are an equally important resource in families. In the comparison group, it is found that 92.9% men and 90.5% women opined that investment for girl’s education is not a loss. According to Gender Analysis Report 2016, Survey results showed higher rates of pre-literate and semi-literate populations among males. Female children appeared to be more likely to attend primary school than their male counterparts but were also more likely to end their education at primary school rather than continuing on to high school.

The table shows survey data of 2016; it is evident from the data that percentage of girls’ education from HSC and above was very low.

Highest Level of Education Attained	Percent Women	Percent Men
No schooling (Pre-literate)	23	28
No schooling (Semi-literate)	0	19
Primary	28	7
High school	38	20
Secondary School Certif.	6	18
Higher Sec. School Certif.	4	3
Bachelors/ Honors	1	2
Masters	0	3

Source: Gender Analysis Report 2016

Perception has significantly changed as reflected in the study in 2019 comparing with the survey of 2016 because 27.8% female and 19.3% male participants in the recent survey noted that girls





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should study up to HSC before marriage. 14.4% female and 15.5% male participants expressed that girls should study up to honours level. It is quite positive that 34.4% female and 33.8% male participants think that girls can study as long as they wish (up to master level).

Child marriage is a pervasive practice in Nobo Jatra working areas – project baseline data<sup>2</sup> showed the average age of marriage for girls was 15.2. As such, one of the major focus areas in the male engagement activity was to shift attitudes and mind-sets around child marriage. The study found that the majority of participants (male 98.1% and female 94.7%) agreed that child marriage is harmful for adolescent girls and that it is a punishable offence. 93.6% men and 93.3% women in case couples know where to report incidences of child marriage, which is 7.9% (male) and 12.2% (female) higher than control couples. Male engagement participants also mentioned that awareness on the dangers of child marriage were also provided through other project activities – therefore not just limited to male engagement sessions – and this has contributed to reduce the incidences of child marriage in the community. The Nobo Jatra baseline (conducted by an external party funded by USAID) showed that the mean age of marriage for girls was 15.2 and the age of first pregnancy was 16.9. According to Gender Analysis Report 2016, marriage at a young age was common for both boys and girls in the program areas though girls were married at a younger age than boys, with the average of marriage for females at age 15 in Khulna district. Evidence showed that women who marry early also became pregnant earlier in life, facing acute and chronic sexual and reproductive health problems as a result. Child marriage remained common in the target areas.

Another major outcome of male engagement has been the increased communications between husbands and wives when it comes to conflict resolution. 97% (husbands) and 96.7% (wives) from case couples are taking joint decisions to resolve disputes within the family. Increased communication between couples has helped change this dynamic and participants felt this was one of the major contributing factors to reducing conflict and even violence within the household.

## Recommendations

To sustain the positive impact of the male engagement activity, this study puts forth a number of critical recommendations:

- The male engagement approach or certain key sessions/messages can be embedded in existing Government structures (steering/ protection committees) at Union Parishad, Upazila, and District level; and in the existing programs of the Department of Women Affairs. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs are important allies and local stakeholders who can actualize these recommendations. For example, 'Multi sectoral program to stop violence against women' could adapt the 'male engagement' approach, or relevant modules from the approach, as it is a proven method for conflict resolution at family level.

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<sup>2</sup> Nobo Jatra Baseline 2015



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- A simplified version of the male engagement module could be adapted by the Union Parishad Standing Committees particularly those working for women's empowerment, gender issues and combating child marriage.
- Government structures such as Youth Clubs could also be important entry points to spread messages on gender equality. A simplified version of the male engagement module could also be shared and adapted in Youth Club strategies.
- Couples who have graduated through male engagement can serve as important community based advocates on the subject. These couples can be invited to join in relevant meetings and events led by the Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and divisional level structures. One option will also be for couples that have graduated from male engagement activity to sensitize other couples. However, as Nobo Jatra is in the final year of the current phase of the project and phasing out direct service delivery – a more realistic option will be to have couples share messages through platforms like Village Savings and Lending Association (VSLA) Groups which are intended to sustain beyond the project. Nobo Jatra is scaling up VSLA's and this messaging can be embedded into the Standard Operating Procedures for VSLA's. Nobo Jatra will finalize this modality during the PREP FY21 process.
- Further advocacy is essential for inclusion of male engagement approach in articles/ section of The National Women's Development Policy 2011, Education and child protection policies.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this study found evidence of positive changes brought on through male engagement. However, the priority is to ensure mechanisms to sustain these positive changes. Local stakeholders such as the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Divisional level administration, Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad are important allies that can play a role in adopting elements of the male engagement module into existing processes and systems. Going forward, the aim is to work collaboratively and in close partnership to agree on how to actualize these recommendations – in order to achieve gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience for vulnerable families in south west Bangladesh.



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## Specific Objective of the Impact Study

The specific objectives of the study are,

- To understand impact of male engagement intervention in improving gender relations within households
- To develop strategic plan on how male engagement approach can be sustainable with regard to sustained change in perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and practices of men and boys.
- To enhance the effectiveness and quality of male engagement through learning and adaptation

## Background

In September 2015, World Vision Bangladesh (WVB), together with the World Food Programme (WFP), Winrock International and three local partner NGOs undertook a 5-year USAID Food For Peace Title II Development Food Assistance Program. The program, titled 'Nobo Jatra – New Beginning' seeks to improve gender equitable food security, water access, maternal child health and nutrition in southwest Bangladesh. These interventions are coupled with cross-cutting approaches in disaster risk reduction, governance and gender. To achieve its objectives Nobo Jatra is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the Government of Bangladesh in four upazilas under two districts – Dacope and Koyra Upazilas in Khulna and Shyamnagar and Kaliganj Upazilas in Satkhira and seeks to reach 856,116 direct beneficiaries.

Through a successful Male Engagement (ME) pilot, also acknowledged in the Mid Term Evaluation and scaled up based on the results and validation, Nobo Jatra intends to now assess the impact of the Male Engagement approach from a sustainability perspective. This research will help enhance evidence and learning on the impact of the approach and delineate pathway for sustainability of male engagement outcomes.

According to World Bank<sup>3</sup>, poverty hardcore ratio in Khulna and Satkhira is 31.5% and percentage of underweight children is 34.4%. Southwest Bangladesh is ravaged by chronic poverty, malnutrition, salinity and natural disasters. According to baseline data, 26.7% of people live on less than USD 1.9 per day; 42% households have sanitation facilities and 61% households do not maintain soap and water for hand washing. Prevalence of underweight (30.2%), stunted (26.8%) and wasted (17.4%) children under five years of age in the program area is quite alarming.<sup>4</sup>

Percentage of women who make decisions alone about the use of self-earned cash is only 16.1%. Percentage of married women (aged below 30) needs to seek permission to visit certain locales is 80.9%. And only 38.2% husbands of married women (aged 15-49) help at household tasks.

<sup>3</sup> For detail see, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2016/11/10/bangladesh-poverty-maps>

<sup>4</sup> Nobo Jatra Baseline Survey Fact Sheet.



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Prevalence of underweight women is 21%. Women of reproductive age who are consuming a minimum dietary diversity (MDD-W) are 49.9%. Bangladesh continues to have one of the highest child marriage rates worldwide and the highest rate of marriage involving girls under 15. 52% of girls are married by their 18th birthday, and 18% by the age of 15.<sup>5</sup> The data indicates the pervasive socio-cultural norms that compound patriarchy and compromise women's empowerment.

The 2017-18 Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey found that 59% of women age 20–24 were married before age 18. One-third (31%) of women aged 20–49 reported that they had married at age 15.

Given this reality, and also based on the recommendation of a Gender Analysis undertaken in the first year of the project, Nobo Jatra initially piloted and then scaled a deeply contextualized ME approach with the objective to promote inclusive change and transformational shifts in gender norms and the practice of in child marriage.

In programmatic efforts to prevent violence against women and girls, USAID, the largest bilateral donor, recognized the conventional wisdom that strategies to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) must include engagement with men and boys as part of a larger strategy towards achieving gender equality.<sup>6</sup> USAID research has shown that outside of improved Family Planning outcomes, addressing dynamics such as improved couple communication, healthy decision-making, more equitable attitudes toward health and more supportive father-child relationships may contribute to improved outcomes in other development areas (e.g., eliminating gender-based violence (GBV), improving education outcomes).<sup>7</sup>

Within Nobo Jatra, the first formative research<sup>8</sup> was conducted in June 2016 to understand context on gender dynamics. This report reaffirmed the ubiquitous need to increase the engagement of men in activities that have a direct impact on maternal, child health and nutrition. Subsequently, a further piece of formative research was undertaken to understand men's perception regarding masculinity and femininity, gender discrimination at household level and identify support strategies to build gender equitable relationships.

According to findings of the second formative research<sup>9</sup>, change in gender relations at the household-level with respect to women's position at home, access to and use of resources and in some degree decision-making have not been matched by a similar change in men's role and contribution to the unpaid household related work and care for children at home. While the

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<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Essential Considerations for Engaging Men and Boys for Improved Family Planning Outcomes, 2018, Mubeen Siddiqui, USAID.

<sup>8</sup> Gender Analysis Report 2016, Gender and Water Alliance (GWA).

<sup>9</sup> Formative research: The process, Nobo Jatra Project area, Bangladesh, Piotr Pawlak, Gender Consultant, June 11-17, 2017.



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ideal of who does care at home and who does work outside has changed, the practice has shifted only slightly.

The results from the formative study provided critical insight into the current context around gender and avenues for 'male engagement' in the southwest region of Bangladesh. Interestingly, the complex dynamics surrounding income and financial status indicated that high expectations for men to be able to provide sufficiently for their families were embedded across many other aspects of family life<sup>10</sup>, such as support; love and caring for other family members; providing security and a sense of belonging; open communication; making each person within the family feel important, valued, respected and esteemed.

Collaborative, Learning and Adaptation exercises took place between pilot and scale up of male engagement. The manual used in Nobo Jatra's male engagement sessions were analyzed and critiqued between pilot and scale up came through series of pause and reflection activities, a learning workshop, and Training of Trainers, and pilot testing in the field. These findings helped refine and develop a deeply contextualized module for male engagement which was reflective of local context, the needs of husbands and wives and also incorporated feedback from field teams who actually implemented the activity. The interactive and participatory module is designed to engage men's groups to reexamine rigid gender roles and their consequences while also focusing on harmful practices such as early marriage.<sup>11</sup>

The interactive and participatory ME module is designed to engage men's groups to reexamine rigid gender roles and their consequences while also focusing on harmful practices such as early marriage. As part of efforts to mainstream gender across all components, ME participants are intentionally encompassing husbands of female project participants across Maternal Child Health and Nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, Agriculture and Alternative Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction, Good Governance and Social Accountability and Gender components.

Through 5 thematic modules and 12 sessions staggered over nine months, the ME module titled, Family Well-Being and Family Prosperity is being implemented and couples have successfully graduated through the module. Sannashi (28) and Shuchitra (22) are the program participants in Syamnagar upazila, Satkhira district, and they attended all the sessions of male engagement approach. Sannashi is a fisherman and Suchitra manages livestock. While interviewed, the couple expressed their satisfaction about the training module; they also noted their key learning, "Respect should be given to both male and female to bring harmony in a family, mutually taken decisions bring better results, and open communication and dialogue between husband and wife solves all problems." After attending sessions, male participants now understand that financial ability of family improves when wives earn. Children of program participants are getting better environment and care from parents particularly from fathers. As women participants of the program noted that their workload is now lesser than before as men help them in household tasks; after being sensitized, men help women in carrying water, cooking and cleaning latrines

<sup>10</sup> Component brief on Male engagement 2018, Nobo Jatra Program.

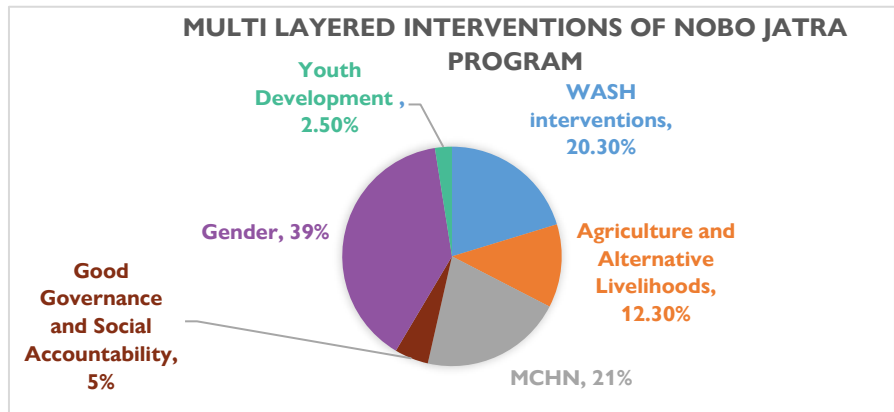
<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



Respondents, in the group discussions and interviews, affirmed that training on ‘male engagement’ approach has created positive impact in their families; and helped to shift traditional mindsets of male participants.

The intentional layering of activities – also a recommendation in the Midterm Evaluation – further permeates messages on gender equality to participants who are involved in multiple thematic activities. Male engagement participants are also involved in various cross purpose activities implemented by Nobo Jatra; 20.3% (2,378 households) are involved in WASH

interventions, 12.3% (1,439 households) in Agriculture and Alternative Livelihoods, 21% (2,447 households) in MCHN, 5% (570 households) in Good Governance and Social Accountability, 39% (4,520 households) in Gender and 2.5% (292 households) in Youth Development.<sup>12</sup>



Multi layered interventions of Nobo Jatra program is depicted in the pie chart.

As a seven years’ project (5 years originally, with a two year cost extension from 2020-2022 focused on sustaining outcomes from the first 5 years), currently in the fourth year of implementation, it is critical to capture/investigate to what extent the project has managed to engage and change men and boys; and to further understand how to sustain the outcomes, and factors associated with sustainability of these. Whilst, ME groups are not intended to continue long-term, it is key to understand to what extent the behavior and practices will potentially continue within the community. Hence, the study was undertaken to capture evidence of impact, existing and upcoming challenges, and learning from the experience. Mainstreaming the Male Engagement approach into existing Government programs could potentially be a challenge due to limited resources, staff capacities and competing budget priorities. However, a key intention in undertaking this study is to disseminate findings to decision makers at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and other relevant Ministries – to advocate for the update of the Male Engagement approach.

The findings of this study sheds light on effectiveness of male engagement interventions of the program with regard to add the areas planned for increased male engagement, i.e. in caregiving and promotion of gender equality/female empowerment. In addition, this piece of research will provide valuable lessons on experiences of participants in male engagement and strategies to improve way forward about prospect and sustainability of male engagement results initiatives of

<sup>12</sup> Annual Results Report FY-19.



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NJP. This provides both qualitative and quantitative evidence about the impact of the ‘male engagement’ approach.

## Methodology

Mixed methods with quantitative as well as qualitative research components have been applied for this study. Qualitative tools were utilized to gather information on gender sensitive aspects. The combination of methods and tools assisted the study team to capture perceptions, attitudes and practices of both men and women with regard to gender based inequalities and magnitude of changes.

## Quantitative Study Design

The study was conducted through a sample based survey, which is a descriptive two stage cluster design. The first stage was the male engagement groups and second stage was the sample couple from the group. Nobo Jatra has been maintaining a comprehensive database and tracking each and every participant with a pre-defined unique ID. Through this MIS, Nobo Jatra is tracking participants who are continuously participating in the sessions, graduating from the male engagement process, and who are dropping out at any stage of the program implementation. A number of men dropped out due to seasonal migration, which is a livelihood option for households that are poor and extreme poor. Those participants, who are have dropped out, were not considered in the sampling frame. Nobo Jatra has comprehensive, complete and up-to-date information related to male engagement groups and participants of the specific groups.

## Sample Population

There are 520 male engagement groups in 400 villages of 40 unions. Therefore, a sample size as case area was selected among these groups. Quantitative questionnaires were developed for both male and female participants in the selected households.

## Sample Frame

This study included participants of male engagement sessions as ‘Case sample’ (husbands and wives who are beneficiaries on any/multiple aspects of Nobo Jatra’s components, including but not limited to – Ultra Poor Graduation (UPG) participants, CCT mothers, agriculture farmers, Water Management Committee members, etc.). In order to ascertain any relationship or changes in behavior/attitudes due to participation in male engagement sessions, a ‘comparison sample’ (additional study participants) was selected from other beneficiaries of Nobo Jatra project who are not included in the male engagement sessions. This comparison helped understanding difference between case sample and control sample with regard to knowledge, attitude and practice on ‘male engagement’ as well as ‘gender sensitivity’.

## Sample Size Calculation

The value of the indicators was measured basically with two outcomes of the information i.e. success or failure, increase or decrease, negative or positive etc. Therefore, the sample size estimation below formula is used for calculating sample size. Following is the procedure, which



has been applied to sample size calculation to obtain point estimation for two-stage cluster sampling:

**Initial sample size:** 
$$n_0 = \frac{z_{\alpha}^2 \times p(1-p)}{\epsilon^2}$$

**Final adjusted sample size:** 
$$= d \times f_{pc} \times n_r \times \frac{z_{\alpha}^2 \times p(1-p)}{\epsilon^2}$$

Where,

N	= Total number of households	<b>3265</b>
D	= Design effect <sup>13</sup>	2
P	= Estimated prevalence of an indicator	0.50
E	= Relative precision required (margin of error 10%)	0.1
n <sub>r</sub>	= Non-response rate (5%)	.05
<b>n<sub>0</sub></b>	<b>= Initial sample size</b>	<b>96</b>
Z <sub>95%</sub>	= Z value corresponding to 95% confidence level for two-tailed test	<b>1.96</b>
f <sub>pc</sub>	= Finite population correction factor: 1/ (1+n <sub>0</sub> /N)	0.93
	<b>= Adjusted sample size (design effect, non-response, finite population correction)</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>correction)</b>	<b>≈210</b>
n <sub>c</sub>	= Sample size per cluster (men engagement group)	6
k	= Number of cluster to be selected	35

Number of case and control respondents according to village, union and upazila

Case couples: Sample Beneficiary Distribution						
Upazila	Union	Village	# of Case	# of Control	Total Sample	
					Case	Control
Dacope	2	8	(M-47, F-46)	(M-18, F-15)	93	33
Kaliganj	3	11	(M-64, F-67)	(M-22, F-22)	131	44
Koyra	2	6	(M-35, F-36)	(M-12, F-13)	71	25
Shyamnagar	3	10	(M-61, F-60)	(M-18, F-24)	121	42
Total	10	35	(M-207, F-209)	(M-70, F-74)	416	144

M=Male, F= Female

**For Case couple:** Case couples have received training on male engagement. Through 5 thematic modules and 12 sessions staggered over nine months, Nobo Jatra conducts a deeply contextualized male engagement activity, Family Well-Being and Family Prosperity and 8,526 (m-4,180, f- 4,346) participants have graduated in FY19. 416 sample is selected from participants who received this training.

<sup>13</sup> The loss of effectiveness by the use of cluster sampling, instead of simple random sampling, is the design effect. The design effect is basically the ratio of the actual variance, under the sampling method actually used, to the variance computed under the assumption of simple random sampling. The design effect 1.5 is used for a two-stage cluster sampling procedure.





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**For control couple:** By adopting a multi-sector approach to achieve sustainable food security for poor and extreme poor families, Nobo Jatra reached a total of 121,212 households with layered and sequenced activities in FY19 and till date 812,751 including participants of Maternal Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Gender, Agriculture and Alternate Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and Good Governance and Social Accountability (GGSA)<sup>14</sup>. 144 sample for control area is selected from the program participants of Nobo Jatra project who received services from components such as MCHN, WASH, Agriculture and livelihood, DRR and GGSA. These control couples did not receive training on male engagement. The purpose of such selection is to see the difference between program participants of 'Control groups' and 'Case groups' with regard to gender sensitivity.

The impact study was conducted taking  $n = 208$  case couples (selected from beneficiaries of male engagement program),  $n = 72$  control couples. The ratio between case and control couple is roughly 3:1 as was agreed in advance with World Vision due to time and resource constraints.

### Sample Selection

Probability Proportional to Size (PPS19) of the clusters (Men engagement groups) sampling procedure. The research team has followed the process of selecting sample cluster and survey respondent, which has been clearly as defined in section-9.4 of Participant-Based Survey Sampling Guide for, Feed the Future Annual Monitoring Indicators.<sup>15</sup>

The general steps of the sample household selection and data collection process are –

### Selection of Cluster

The male engagement groups of different Upazillas were considered as one sampling frame. Equal number of cluster (6) were selected from each frame, using Probability Proportional to the Size (PPS) procedure.

### Selection of Survey respondent

Initially fractional interval systematic sampling was designed. However, locations of samples were so distant from one another that it was not practical to cover within the time and resources. Villages from Unions were identified, which were geographically adjacent and have at least one male engagement group. Then six couples from each group were selected randomly and based on their availability.

The sampling frame was constructed from the Nobo Jatra's online MIS system. The MIS database has been designed to identify households by beneficiary type with unique identifiers for both households and individuals in those households. The research team (having support from a statistician and M&E Manager of Nobo Jatra) prepared the sampling plan and sampling frame. The research team deployed two survey teams in line with the field data collection schedule

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/Sampling-Guide-Participant-Based-Surveys-Sep2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/Sampling-Guide-Participant-Based-Surveys-Sep2018_0.pdf). Viewed Dec 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



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and number of survey locations. Movement from one Upazilla to another was also considered during the survey planning. The M&E and Knowledge Management team monitored data collection process and conducted a data quality assessment throughout the survey period.

### **Qualitative Study Design**

This study also used qualitative methods. Qualitative method was applied to explore attitudes and experiences of male and female beneficiaries relating to male engagement. Focus group discussions were useful for exploring community norms, perceptions and expectations. Key informant interviews were useful for gathering information based on particular knowledge and experience and perspective of program implementers about appropriateness and effectiveness of the male engagement approach.

### **Sample**

Purposeful sampling was applied to select respondents for FGDs, interviews, case success stories, studies and consultations with regard to qualitative data collection. Individuals or groups, knowledgeable about 'male engagement', were selected. Availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner was considered for selecting respondents of qualitative inquiry. This study included participants of male engagement sessions (husbands and wives who are beneficiaries). Both elderly and youth men and women, who participated male engagement sessions, was selected for FGDs. Boys and girls of the beneficiaries' families was included for group discussion. The study purposefully selected field facilitators, staff, people's representatives, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders for interviews. Consultation with representatives of relevant government departments and senior leaders of implementing partner was arranged to enrich this research.

### **Qualitative tools**

FGD, KII and other participatory tools were developed and qualitative data was collected in consideration with the following plan, which enabled to explore attitudes and experiences of male and female beneficiaries relating to male engagement at household level. Focus group discussions were conducted for exploring community norms, perceptions and expectations. Key informant interviews were conducted with different stakeholders for gathering information of particular knowledge and experience and perspective of program implementers about appropriateness and effectiveness of the 'male engagement' approach. Participatory discussion was conducted to understand the social norms.



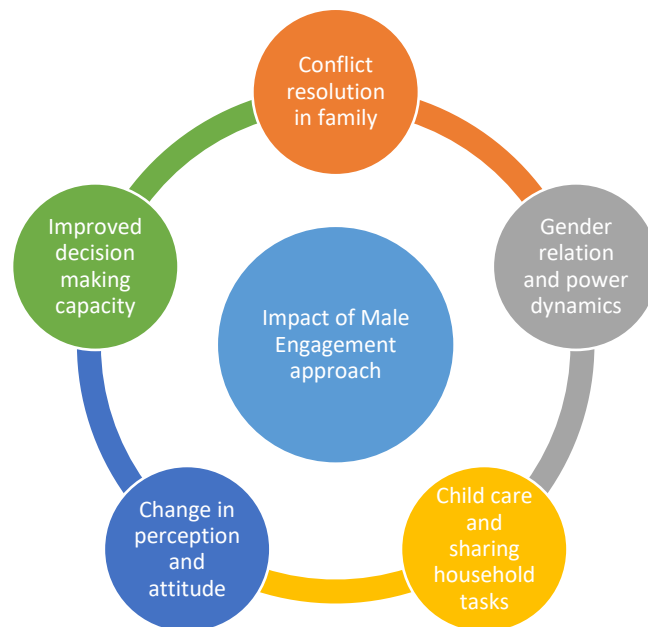
**Table:** Tools, respondents and sample size

Tools	Respondents/ stakeholder	Sample size	Remarks
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Male participants (youth) - Male participants (elderly including in-laws/ grandparents) -Women participants (youth) - Women participants (elderly in-laws/ grandparents)	4 FGDs at 4 Unions in 4 Upazillas	Separate FGDs for men's group and women's group - Minimum 8 and maximum 12 persons participated in FGDs.
Group Discussions using participatory tools	-Male participants -Women participants -boys groups and girls groups	-4 FGDs at 4 Unions in 4 Upazillas – Total=4  2 FGD one with boys group and one with girls group from one Upazila	Participatory tools was selected for each group and researchers received orientation about how to collect data using that tool - Separate FGDs for men's group and women's group
<b>Total FGDs</b>		<b>10</b>	
Key Informants Interviews (KII)	volunteers/ field facilitators (opinions of youth and older men and women who might be in laws/grandparents)	-Total 4 at 4 unions in 4 Upazilla	
	Women members of UP	-2 members at 2 union	- Women members were selected who were aware about NJP and male engagement issue
	NJP staff (including partner organizations) at Upazilla office Civil society actors/ gender activists	4 actors in 4 Upazillas. 4 actors in 4 Upazillas	
	Key NJP staff at regional and national office involved in gender component	6	Component heads closely working on male engagement issue -Managers and senior leaders of NJP involved on the issue
	Civil society actors at national level  Academic/ researchers  Focal persons of Peer INGOs	2  2  3	-Actors very much and eminent on Gender/male engagement issue  -academics who are very much popular at national level on the issue  -INGOs working on Man Engagement issue
<b>Total KIIs</b>		<b>25</b>	
Case story-1 (700 words) Promoting gender equity	-A household, group and community in an UP	1	discussion and observation by field researchers
Case story-2 (700 words) Using Male motivators to change patriarchic mindset	-selected male motivators	1	-interviews -testimonies -opinions/ comments

<b>Total case stories</b>		<b>2</b>	
Consultations for exploring sustainability of government institutions	relevant standing committees at UP level	4 Unions in 4 Upazilas	This an inquiry about how these institutions contributed when Nobo Jatra project is phased out
	office of women and children affair focal person in Ministry of women and child affair at national level	4 Upazilas 1 at national level	
Consultation with implementing partner	representatives of Shushilon	1	-Executive Director, senior leaders and focal of NJP
<b>Total consultations</b>		<b>10</b>	

### Analytical framework

Analytical framework is drawn from the formative research<sup>16</sup> on ‘Male engagement’, which was the basis for developing training module and range of tools applied to sensitize selected couples in the Nobo Jatra program area. Each aspect of the framework is further reflected in the findings and analysis section.



*Gender relation and power dynamics:* Before initiating Nobo Jatra project, it was observed that changes in gender relations at the household level—especially concerning women’s position at home, access to and use of resources, and to some extent decision-making—have not been matched by similar changes in men’s roles and their contributions towards unpaid household work and childcare. While some gender norms, like who works outside the house, have changed in comparison to previous generations, overall, these practices have only shifted slightly. Hence, expected outcome of ‘male engagement’ approach is to bring significant shift in this regard.

<sup>16</sup> Formative Research, June 11-17, 2017, Piotr Pawlak, Gender Consultant, Nobo Jatra Project area, Bangladesh.



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*Childcare and sharing household tasks:* Nearly all household-related work, such as cooking, washing (dishes, clothes, latrines), and caring for livestock, was considered to be a woman's responsibility. Activities like grocery shopping, home repair, and other heavy-duty, home-based physical labor were frequently reported to fall under men's responsibilities, especially given men's perceived physical strength. Male engagement approach envisioned to bring changes in the division of household and childcare responsibility.

*Change in perception and attitude:* For men, financial independence and stability earned through gainful employment remains a traditional marker of manhood. In men's eyes, women must be soft, patient, and caring towards her children, her husband, and the elderly. According to pre-project context analysis, wives and mothers were expected keep the house clean and "pure." Men felt strongly that women should do the inside, household work and look after the children. A change in perception is expected among participants of the project about men's and women's roles in family as well as in society.

*Improved decision-making capacity:* In addition to the prevalent "breadwinning masculinity," traditional conceptions of what it means to be a man also entailed the dominance of men. The man is viewed as the principle decision-maker at the household level. It is expected that through male engagement approach husbands of female participants of Nobo Jatra project would demonstrate a better understanding of the importance of shared decision-making.

*Conflict resolution in family:* The conflicts ranged from verbal disagreements and spousal arguments, misunderstandings and miscommunication, and the use of offensive language. In some cases, disagreements would escalate and turn into physical violence against a female spouse. Family conflicts often stem from attempts to re-establish or maintain traditional gender norms. Male engagement approach of Nobo Jatra program expected to reduce conflicts and violence in the participants' household besides stopping child marriage cases.

## **Ethical Consideration and Consent**

The informed consent process has been followed so that potential respondents can make a voluntary decision, free of coercion, regarding their participation in data collection efforts. Selected study participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study on 'Male Engagement' and permission sought for discussions and interviews. A prepared consent statement highlighting the objective of the study, target population, benefits, choice to freely participate, and assurance of confidentiality have been read to each respondent before being interviewed. Only individuals aged 18 years and above provided consent to participate in the study. Parents/ guardians consent were obtained for interviewing girls and boys below 18 years old.

## **Findings and analysis**

It is evident from the Focus Group Discussions with men and women's groups that participation of women has increased. Women now engage themselves with income generating activities such as livestock, agriculture cultivation and tailoring. As women go outside for working, they do have



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their husband's support. In some cases before small purchases, husbands are nowadays taking opinions from their wives. (E.g. How much to buy? Or which one to buy?)

According to respondents, men have become more empathetic. If wives are unable to work, husbands help them to accomplish tasks; now husbands willingly help women to accomplish household tasks on daily basis. Women can go to the market for buying utensils; they can provide opinions for buying assets such as land, pond, domestic animals etc. for the household. Previously women used to serve nutritious food only to men in the house. Now they have an understanding that nutritious food is necessary for both men and women and also mandatory for children as well as elderly in the home.

There was a campaign named "Marriage not before 18"; 250-300 girls and boys from school participated in that program. Slogan of the campaign was "We do not want to marry now, give us book; we want to go to school." This event demonstrated greater impact of the project that women are no longer vulnerable.

While interviewed, Khodeja Khatun, Member, Union Parishad, noted that, women are attending courtyard meetings at village level and meetings at union parishad level. They are involved in income generating activities such as poultry, day labor, and homestead gardening. Husbands are supporting wives in the household work, taking care of children, collecting drinking water and so on. She opined that if men and women share workload at home, it would bring peace by reducing violence.

Md. Shamimuzzaman Sheikh, secretary, Pankhali Union Parishad, during interview noted that, this project has a great impact on everyone's life both male and female. Significant change in terms of attitude and behavior of program participants is observed. Moreover, this has long term impact in their lives. Men are now engaging themselves in household chores to reduce burden of their partners. They are trying to share works and responsibilities equally.

While researchers asked about male engagement approach of Nobo Jatra project and its sustainability, Syed Mehdi, Upazila Parishad Chairman, Kaliganj, noted, "I am more than willing to get involved in such great initiative. If we do not empower the women of our nation then we cannot develop our country. We can arrange awareness meetings and linkage community people NGOs and institutions."

Officer, Upazila Women Affairs, noted that Government and NGOs are working to empower women, which has increased women's mobility to some extent. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) offers training for women e.g. tailoring, block, boutique and beautician courses. We need to explore what else can be done in the local context. Both GO-NGOs need to find better options for women. Women in the community want to work and support their families but we cannot create any scope for them. An officer said while interviewed, "It is difficult for us to implement male engagement component unless and until we have program/instruction from our central office."

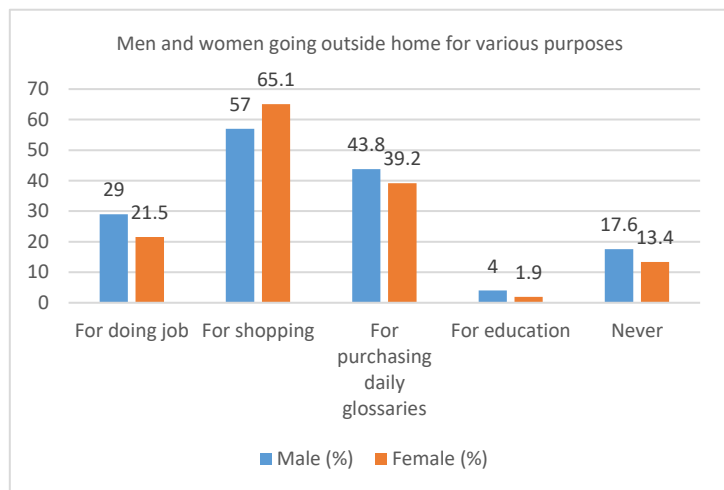


A government officer in Kaliganj emphasized that many service providers lack sufficient knowledge on male engagement approach. Government needs to take an initiative to ensure that all service providers are on the same page and are working in harmony to bring equity and equality in the society. An Upazilla chairman said that doctors, teachers, government officials, religious leaders, and police officers need training on male engagement approach; if they are aware, impact will be greater. Therefore, systematic collaboration between government agencies is required to incorporate ‘male engagement’ approach in the programs of local government institutions.

Hence, policy level advocacy is required to engage government ministries and departments to embed male engagement approach in the programs and activities at community level.

### Decision making by women at household level

The study shows that women’s decision-making ability at household level has increased, particularly for groceries (39.2%), shopping for household (65.1%), and income generating activities (21.5 %). Decision making ability to go out for recreation etc. has increased as well.



Before initiating Nobo Jatra project, it had been observed that there was restriction on women speaking up, to go outside, to take part in decision making, and so on. In Shatkhira, the mobility of women outside the house has increased significantly. Women can now attend meetings, work in organizations and can go to market place for shopping. After initiating the male engagement approach, decision making capacity of women has increased. Women can now go to market place freely and there is no social restriction. Group of women go to the market to buy seeds, which was rare in the past. Women compete for membership in Union Parishad and in other committees at community level.

Some men are encouraging women to go outside of the home to engage in income generating activities while they are taking care of the child at home. Families are benefiting from the increased income their wives are bringing by utilizing previously ‘un-utilized’ yard through planting or rearing cows. Men among case couple appreciated women engagement in income generating activities as it impacts positively on their household income and both now contribute to their family savings.



Women's mobility	Male Engagement Study 2019		Baseline data of the project
	Case	Control	
Women below 30 years still need male permission for their mobility and participation in external environment	50.5%	65.9%	80.9%
Women above 30 need to seek permission to visit certain locales	58.6%	68%	66.3%

50.5% (case women), 65.9% (control women) below 30 years still need male permission for their mobility and participation in external environment against 80.9% (women at baseline). Male engagement approach has contributed

to create a difference of 30.4% for case women from baseline value regarding mobility of women. And difference is 15.4% for control women; where participants of Nobo Jatra program did not receive explicit training and skill on male engagement approach.

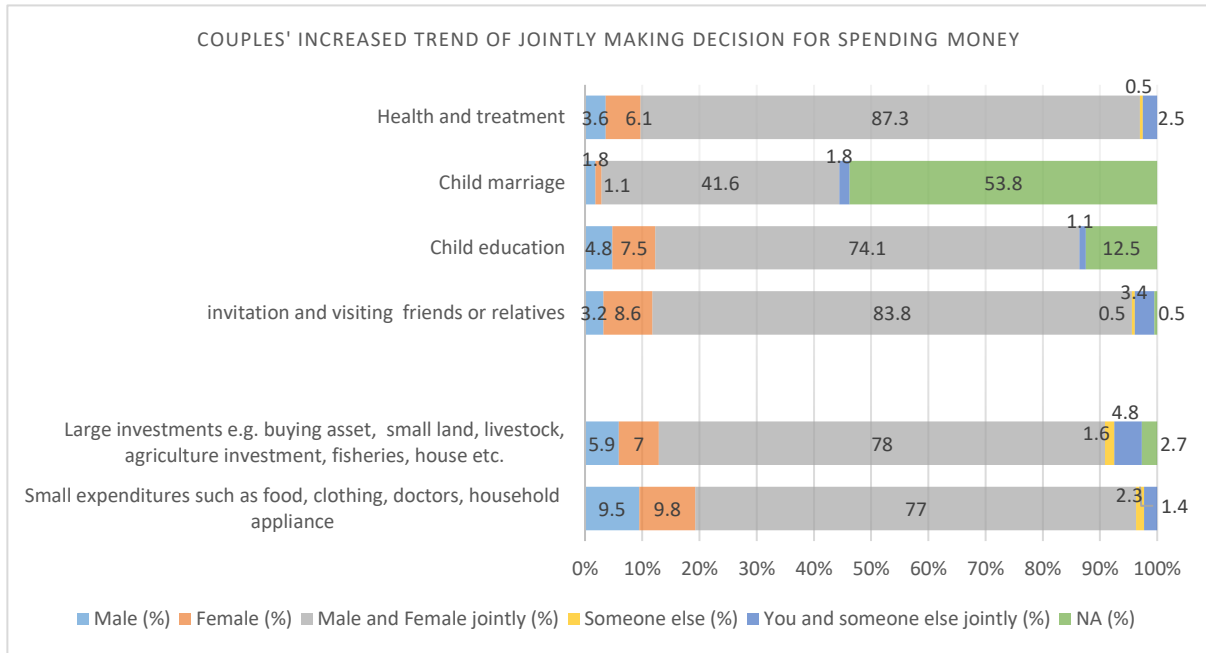
During focus group discussion, respondents noted that after participating in the training on male engagement, both male and female have now starting thinking differently. They have learnt that both male and female are human being and they need to move freely for their better mental and physical development. As a human being, liberty is one of the basic rights, which cannot be snatched away from women. This learning changes men's perception; earlier before being trained, men said, *"My permission is mandatory for my wife and daughters to move outside home"*, now after being sensitized men say, *"They can go outside of the home according to their will. But it's better to inform me so that I need not be worry about their whereabouts"*.

### Shared decision-making and changed perception of men about women's role

It is observed that most of the cases both male and female together take the decision. 77% decisions were taken by both the couples for small expenditure such as food, clothing, doctor visit, household appliance. 78% decisions were taken by both couples for large investments such as buying asset, or a small land, livestock, agriculture investment, fisheries, and house.

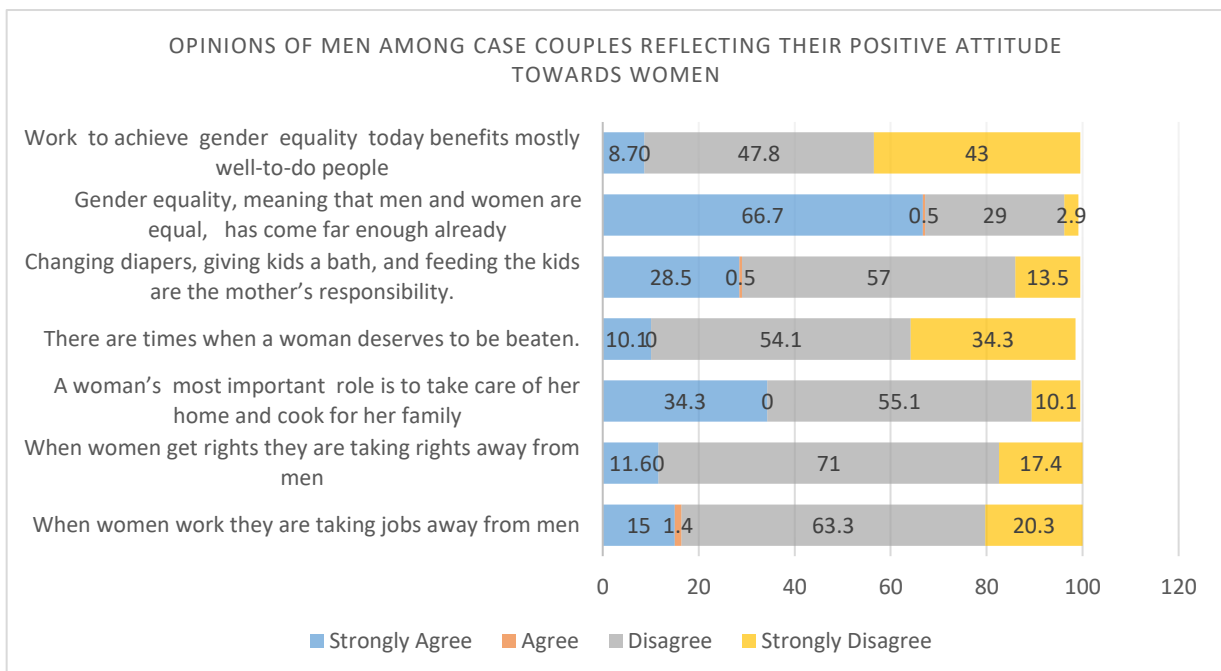
Female contribution in decision-making was higher only for cases where they have made financial contribution, which indicate a different kind of positive change. 83.8% couples both decides inviting or visiting friends and family members. 74.1% couples taken the decision for children's education. 87.3% couples both have taken the decision for health and treatment. It is interesting that decision regarding household matters i.e. guest, child education, health and treatment related issues, female rate is higher than male. It cannot be ignored about the increased rate of women involvement in decision-making process, which is a contribution of male engagement approach. A male participant stated during FGD, *"Now I can depend on the suggestions given by my wife. Because, I found that her suggestions are fruitful, which help to increase our family income"*.





During group discussions, respondents noted that, women are now able to decide on household matters. Their opinions are highly valued, for example, their opinions are highly regarded about which school the kid should be sent to, how much of land should be purchased, what kind of livestock should be purchased and so on.

Nargis Fatema Zamin of Children and Women Affairs from Khulna district said that in this male dominated society, male perception and mentality should be changed towards women. And to



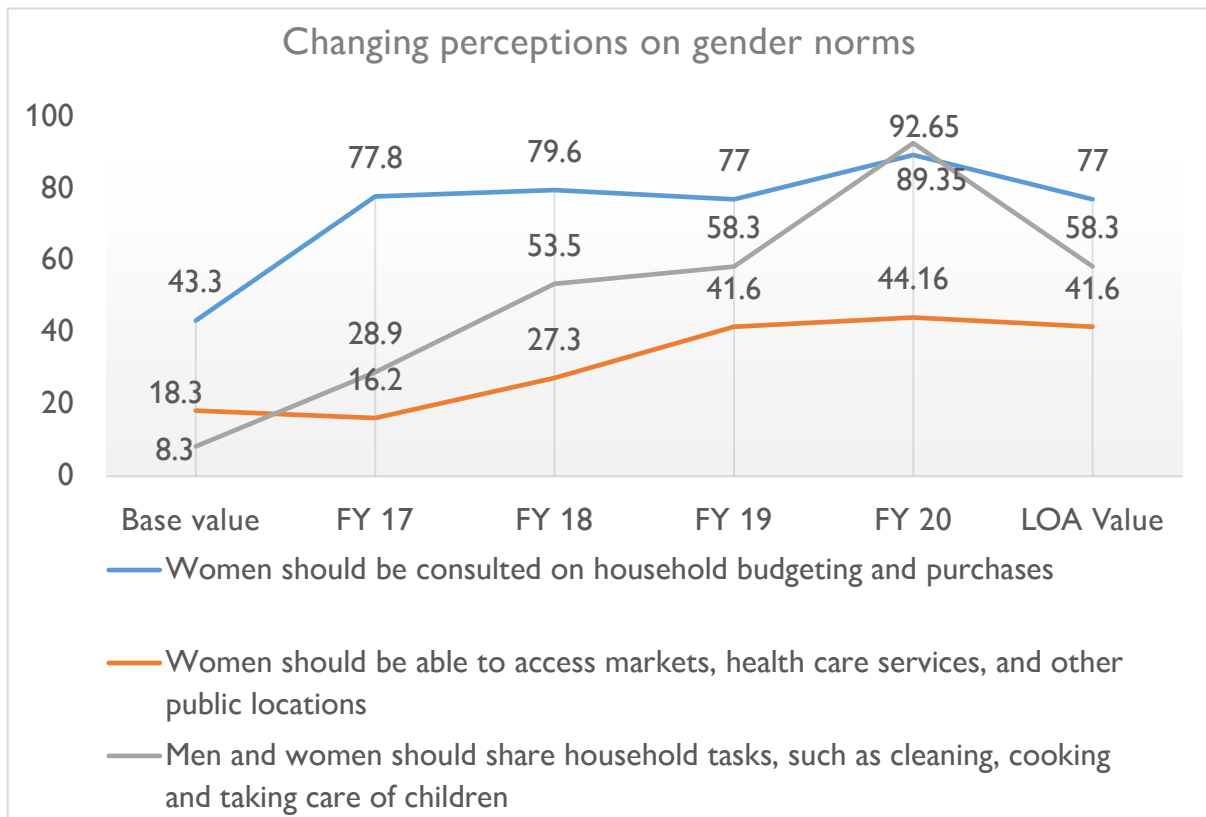
bring such change training is very necessary. Therefore, she thinks this male engagement approach of Nobo Jatra project is very helpful to bring a change in the society.



During the survey, men’s opinions were assessed about women’s role. The result suggests that men among case couples have gained knowledge, information and attitude to respect women’s role as depicted in the graph below. In the range of questions, majority men among case couples agreed for respecting women’s roles at household, their rights and about gender equality; on the contrary, majority respondents disagreed about violence and inhuman treatment against women.

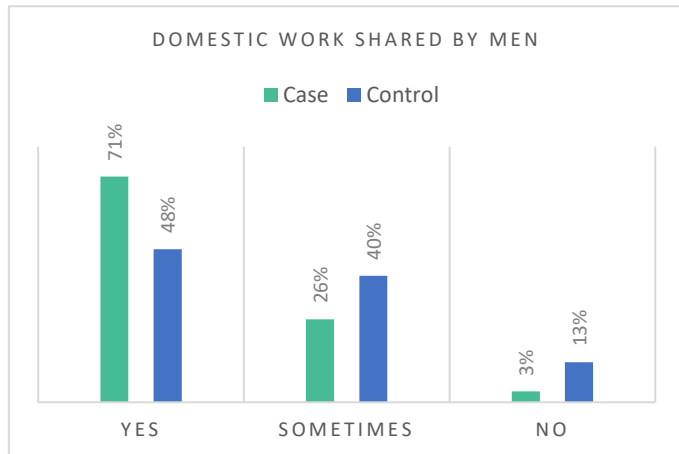
Shapan Kumar Mohaldar, Head Teacher, Botbunia Secondary School, Tildanga, Dacope, said, “Now men’s attitude towards women has changed. Men help women in cooking and cleaning. There was time when women were unacceptable in the market place but now women go to the market and can go outside their home. Women go to the bank for transactions.”

In the backdrop of gender relation and power dynamics, masculinity, decision making at household level, division of household and childcare responsibility, marriage and conflict in the family, changing perception had been the most difficult task. It is evidence from comparative data that there are some significant changes in the perception level of men in the program area.



## Shared domestic work and livestock management

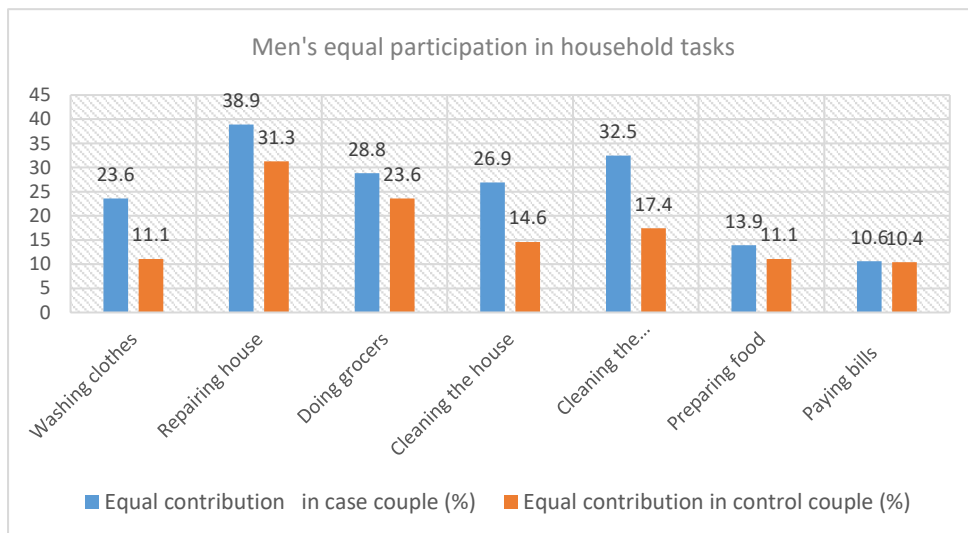
In treatment/case group 71% men are doing household work all the time and 26% sometime. In baseline husband of 38.2% women helped with household tasks.



Men realise that learning and doing household works is not a shameful work, instead it makes them self-reliant. Previously men were usually spending their time in tea stalls or fields

engaged in 'adda' (gossiping). Now they are spending more time with their family. They are willing to talk to their wives and know about their thoughts. However, unless and until there are concerted efforts from all stakeholders and absence of initiatives targeting younger generation this change may not last long. This will also be a consideration when disseminating findings from this study to decision makers in Government and other local stakeholders including the Union Parishad and Upazila Administrations.

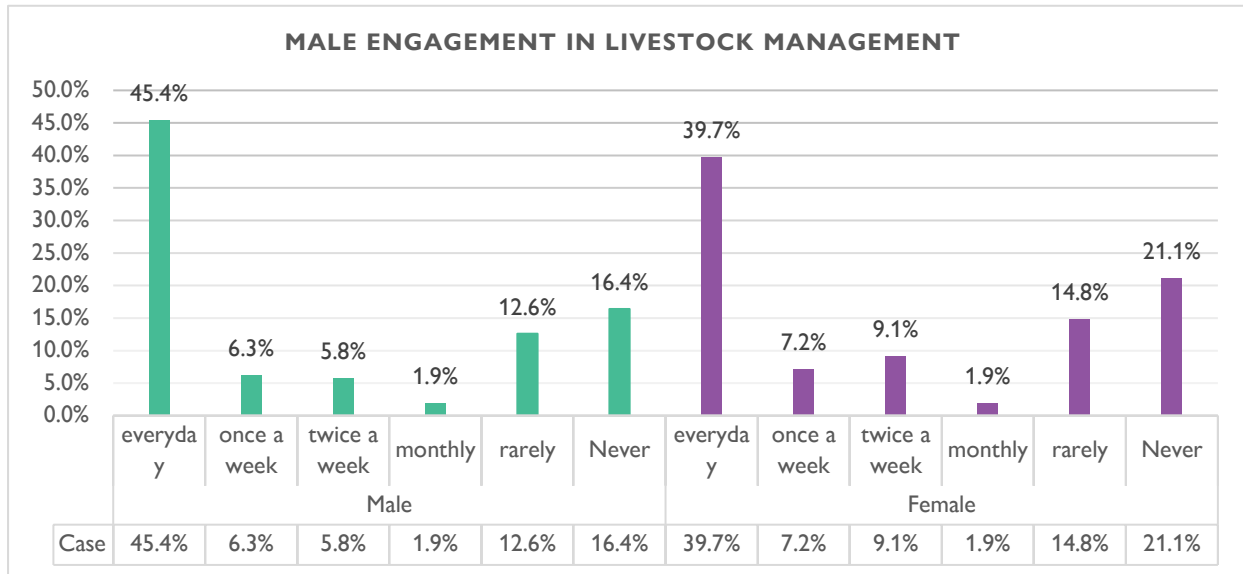
Men's involvement in household work have increased. They are now contributing equally with their wives to do the household chores. Male partners in case couple are 16.6% more supportive to their female partner to do household work than control couple. A comparison of different household work in project areas and control areas is explicitly shown in the graph.



Male engagement approach has brought clear change in men's participation in household works. In comparison of control areas, men are 12.5% more engaged in washing clothes, 7.6% in house repairs, 5.2% in doing groceries, 12.3% in cleaning house, 15.1% in cleaning bathroom/toilet. Safe water needs to be collected from distant places in Satkhira due to scarcity of drinking water



because of salinity. Earlier, it was women’s responsibility but now, men are taking that role to reduce the workload of their partners.

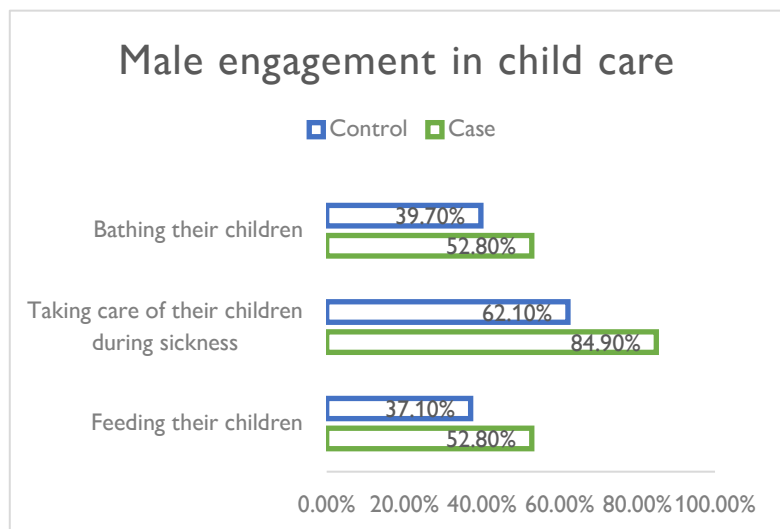


In the above graph, 45.4% men among case couples are engaged in livestock management on daily basis. They understand by attending training sessions about the labour division and discrimination in wage between men and women. They exercised daily workload of male and female, which helps them to realise the difference between male and female in daily work. Male participants have understood that their female partners are heavily burdened with household work and livestock. Thus, men are now assisting their female partner by taking care of livestock.

Before being sensitized through male engagement training, when wives asked husbands to help in the household chores, husbands would reply, “go back to your father’s house.” After being aware, they have stopped being rude. Consequently, husbands assist wives in the tasks from feeding the livestock to fetching water and cleaning washroom.

### Men in childcare

Men, who received male engagement training, spend time playing with their children. They think it helps their sons to learn and guide him properly. In the project areas 90.2% male are spending up to 6 hours per day with their children. Participants in the FGDs and KIIs, inform that now men are more passionate about their caregiving role.





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52.8% men in the project areas said that they are now feeding their children where it is 37.1% in control areas. 84.9% men in project areas said that they are now taking care of their children during sickness where it is 62.1% in control areas. 52.8% men in project areas said that they are now bathing their children where it is 39.7% in control areas. All these figures indicate much higher values compared against the men covered under 'control' criteria.

Even fathers are now engaged washing their toddler children after toilet. Earlier husbands used to say, "You are a woman, so this is your responsibility to take care of the children". Now such patriarchal attitude is changed among project participants through such male engagement approach.

Abu Sayed, Nalta Chaawmohoni Jame Mosque, Kaliganj, said that, "I have observed the session organized by Nobo Jatra project. I talked to beneficiaries and found that men's perception is changed; now they realize that they should be more responsible. They are taking care of children while wives are engaged with other household works. Pregnant women have been taken care of by their husbands, which is very positive for society. I talk about this male engagement issue in the Mosque during Friday prayer referring Quran and hadith. "

### **Discouragement of child marriage**

Almost all the participants (male 98.1% and female 94.7%) agreed that child marriage is harmful for adolescent girls and were aware that child marriage is a punishable offence. Participants mentioned that due to the interventions of other project components of Nobo Jatra, particularly different conditions based supports have contributed to reduce incidences of child marriages within the beneficiary families. Key informant interviews with various other stakeholders also suggest reduction of child marriage in the communities. Awareness of school girls to use the 999 helpline to stop child marriage is also evident at community level.

Moktar Hossain, Program Manager, Shushilon, noted that this project provides training to the teachers so that they can teach their students about negative aspects of child marriage and violence against women. These sessions are important for the students for increasing mental ability. Union Parishad is trying to ensure child protection and reduce gender violence in the local level. Union Parishads arrange meetings and gatherings for raising awareness in this connection.

Participants understood through male engagement training about the negative impact of child marriage. Now as they take spontaneous response against child marriage and they will continue this practice beyond project phase. Among couples 99.5% male and 99% female know that 'child marriage' is a punishable offence ) and have negative impact in the lives of girls. 93.6% male and 93.3% female in case couples know where to report if they observe any child marriage, which is 7.9% (male) and 12.2% (female) higher than control couples are. The reason of this difference is case couples have been oriented on the issue in a systematic way in the sessions on male engagement approach. They have discussed with their partners after such learning. However, addressing child marriage is a critical area that needs further attention

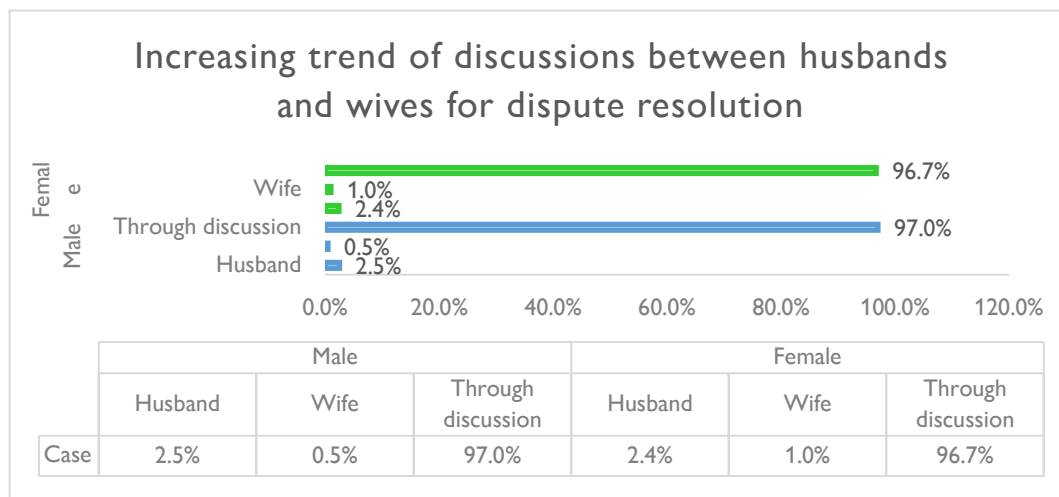


by all stakeholders – particularly district, division, sub district and local level Government authorities – to ensure that the messages and awareness permeate at the household level.

Among case groups, 6% informed proper authority, 93.4% of the participant have knowledge about where to report in case of the incident of child marriage, and 96% knows that there are laws in relation to it. In control areas, 79% just observed the child marriage, 21% tried to talk with the parents for discouraging them and 0% informed proper authority.

### Violence against women, conflict in family and dispute resolution

The training on male engagement has some role-plays and commitment sessions, which reflect daily life with regard to couple’s perception. These role-plays and commitment sessions helped to realize other’s feelings. After being trained up, participants are able to resolve conflict in their families. A Gender Organizer in Kaliganj said that, *“The first four sessions were with only male participants, where we motivated and convinced them about how to behave during conflict with wives. With such discussions, perception of husbands started to change gradually. They try to resolve family problems discussing with each other and realize men’s and women’s role in family.”*



In the graph, it has been observed that now 97% (male) and 96.7% (female) of case couples are taking decision through discussion for dispute resolution in the households. After being oriented about male engagement approach, they understand the benefit to take decision together. They realise that women in the families can give better ideas.

*“This is an incident before joining in the program, I had lost some money. When I informed my husband that, he had beaten me badly. I was upset and shocked for a long time after this incident.”*  
– A woman participant, 35 years old, Pankhali Village of Dacope Upazila, Khulna.

The rate of violent incidents is reducing gradually. Through male engagement training, participants were oriented on types of

*“Earlier I used to hit my wife a lot. Whenever she would even open her mouth, I would hit her. After attending classes here I have stopped hitting her and help her with household chores.”* – A ‘case’ male participant of Shyamnagar, Satkhira



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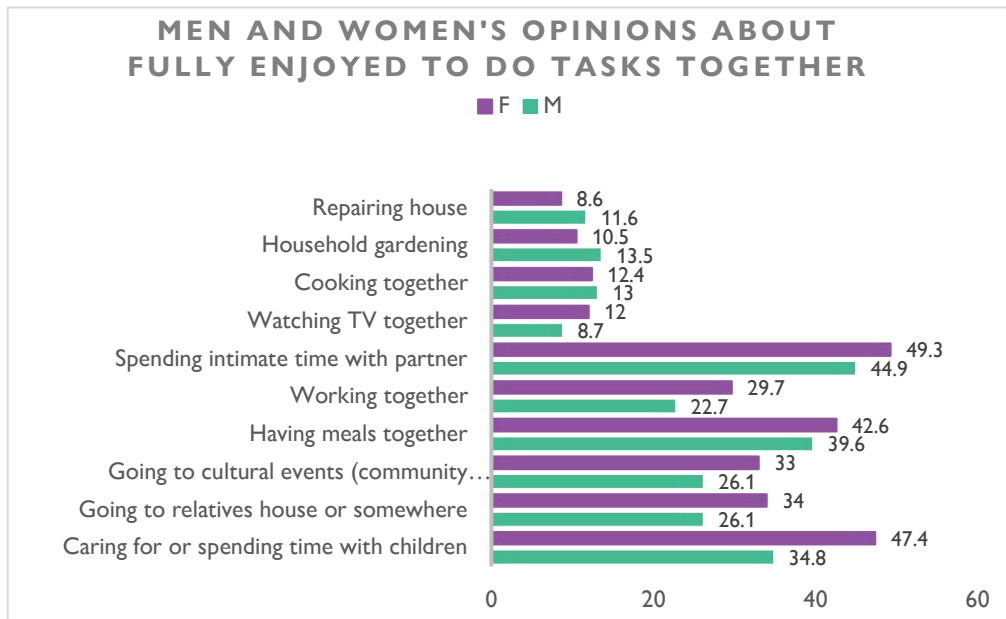
violence, reasons of violent behaviour, communication gap, power relation, and so on. They were taught about positive communication, respect for others' opinion and anger management. Hence, they can manage their rage and can respect opinion of partner, think logically and prioritize family wellbeing and peace. In addition to male engagement sessions, awareness through courtyard sessions and street drama were useful to raise awareness for stopping family conflicts and violence. Men are now more aware about laws and women are aware where to report in case of violence against women. Community based organizations such as Village Development Committees have awareness initiatives to stop violence and conflicts at family level. In male engagement program, facilitators discussed about conflict between husband and wife and eventually provided advices to counsel them. Couples, during interviews, confessed that earlier disputes were there in families on daily basis but things have been changed gradually under the influence of male engagement sessions.

Therefore, it can be said that one of the most significant change brought by the male engagement approach is the reduction of domestic violence. After the training, patience and awareness among male participants have been increased. Thus, they try to solve the family dispute peacefully and mutually. During key informant's interview, a Shakha (White Bangle) seller told that nowadays sale of Shakha is decreasing because there is less violence in families, thus, there are lesser incidences of shaka breakage.

95.5% participants in the project areas know that there are laws for violence against children. If any violence is taking place in front of them, 57.7% of them have asked the participants to stop or protest but in the control areas, 39.3% of them have asked the participants to stop or protest. Participants have general idea about who are the authorities and how to communicate with them. For example, during FGDs, they mentioned hotline number i.e. 109 and 999, and about Village Court, UP member and chairman and police.

Most women earlier used to believe that *'it was okay to be beaten up by their husbands'*. They did not perceive domestic violence as violation of rights. Male engagement approach challenged this norm by developing understanding between the partners, by creating attitude to share burdens, and by promoting improved communication between the couples. Open communication between husband and wife has helped to reduce violence and family conflicts. Some male are giving more emphasis on family bonding and mutual respect, which reduces the rate of domestic violence.

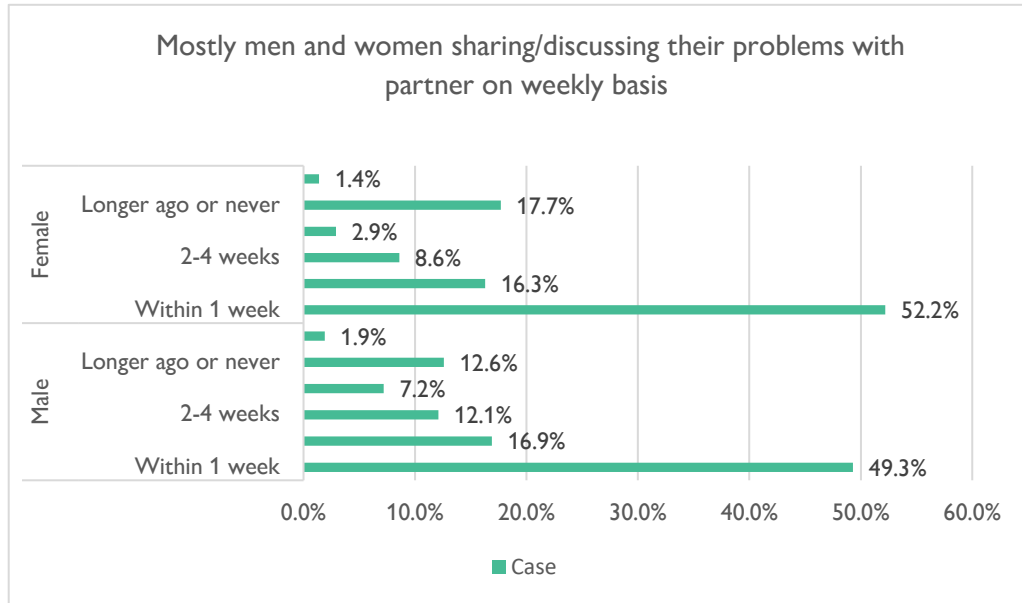
Another reason for decreasing domestic violence against women is that interaction between husband and wife has increased. They are spending time together and trying to enjoy it. They are discussing with their partner about problems and such sharing reduces misunderstanding.



In the above graph, it is evident that case couples are enjoying doing work together. Male engagement approach motivates couples doing work together for developing a space for mutual understanding.

During group discussions, men noted that there is better understanding at home nowadays, there is almost no disputes at home; as a result children get better atmosphere to grow up. Children are also learning by seeing their fathers' changed attitudes, which helps the new generation to lead a better life. In the beginning male were embarrassed to attend male engagement sessions, they made excuses for not attending training. After attending first few sessions, men willingly started attending subsequent sessions. They found content of the training is helpful in their daily lives; the sessions were interactive and unique – unlike any training they had ever attended in the past. During FGD, men noted that they would practice what they have learnt and spread knowledge to others in the community. They are confident that they can teach villagers who did not attend such training sessions.



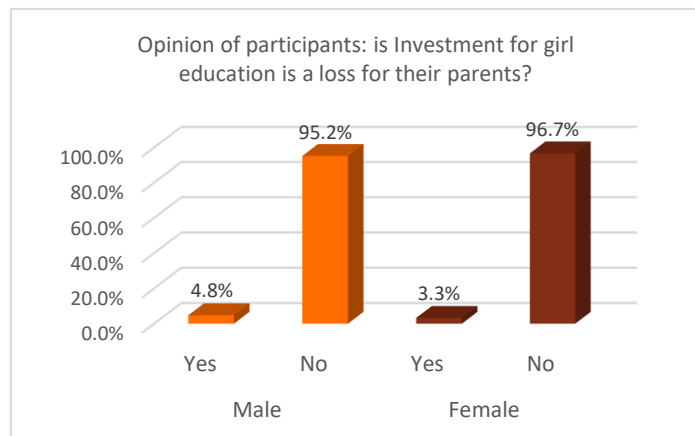


The ‘Male engagement approach’ has sensitized participants for focusing on skills to listen to others, conflict resolution, tolerance to differences, risk assessment, self-consciousness, decision-making, negotiation, feeling for others, and for the inter-personal communication. This has enriched participants about types of violence and its negative impact; and how to address violent behaviour, reduce communication gap, and understand power balance. These have contributed to reduce gender-based domestic violence and conflicts. They are spending more time together. Some of them started discussing about personal problems and try to find way out of the problem together peacefully through consultation, which reduces misunderstanding and increases respect for the other.

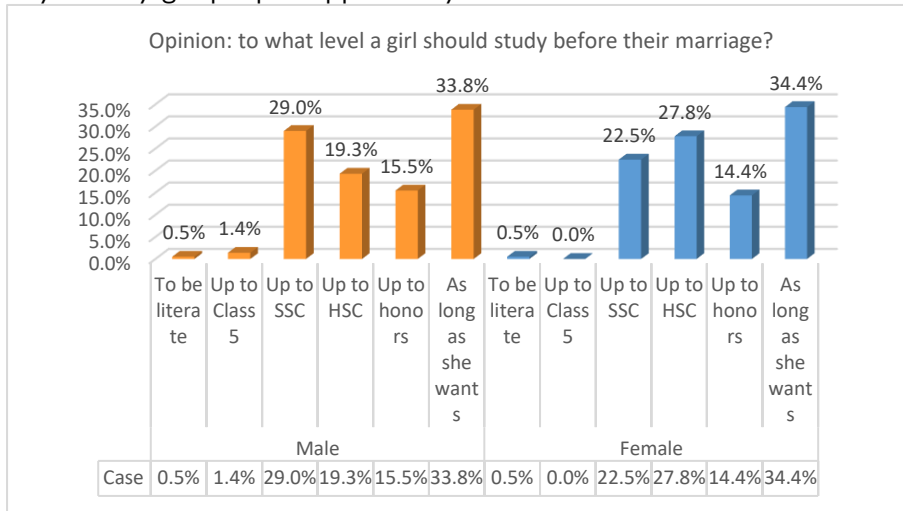
### Knowledge and attitude about Girls’ Education

Case couples now perceive that investment in education in girls/women is not wastage of money and time. Men think that girls should study up to Higher Secondary level. It came out from group discussions that men are now more liberal about girls’ education. Because after training on male engagement approach, they realise that education is required for both boys and girls. It is necessary to get rid of the cycle of poverty.

After receiving training and information about male engagement approach participants believe that investment for girls’ education is no longer a waste of money and time. 95.2% male and 96.7% female among case couples are thinking that investing for girl’s education is no longer a waste. Men and women during FGDs notes that case couples,



through “Male engagement” sessions, have learnt that girls can be a resource for a family like boys if they get proper opportunity.



34% men and women among case couples think that girls should study as long as they want. Opinions of most of the respondents are in favour of girls’ education, which is a positive trend towards shifting

knowledge and attitude of the program participants.

## Recommendations

To sustain the positive impact of the male engagement activity, the recommendations listed below are critical;

- The Male Engagement approach or certain key sessions/messages can be embedded in existing Government structures (steering/ protection committees) at Union Parishad, Upazila, and District level; and in the existing programs of the Department of Women Affairs. The Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs are important allies and local stakeholders who can actualize these recommendations.
- A simplified version of the male engagement module could be adapted by the Union Parishad Standing Committees particularly those working for women empowerment, gender issues and combating child marriage.
- Government structures such as Youth Clubs could also be important entry points to spread messages on gender equality. A simplified version of the male engagement module could also be shared and adapted in Youth Club strategies.
- Need more concerted efforts from all stakeholders to take initiatives particularly targeting younger generation through proper training and orientation sessions.
- Life Skill Based Education (LSBE) appeared effective way and boys and girls in schools are being sensitized about gender issues. There are adolescent groups in the schools in four sub-districts. LSBE sessions provide messages about mental health, reproductive health, sexual harassment and gender sensitivity issues. The project has also trained teachers, so that, they can teach their students. Advocacy with Department of education and other NGOs in the program area will be required for continuation of such education beyond project phase.

Currently we do not have any programme involving men to contribute to gender development. I know that it is necessary to engage men to empower women, but it is not possible for me to act upon as our decision-making is very much centralized. It is necessary for World Vision and similar organizations to take this issue to the policy level to include this aspect in the programmes.  
--- Officer of women and children affair



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- Couples who have graduated through male engagement can serve as important community based advocates on the subject. These couples can be invited to join in relevant meetings and events led by the Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and divisional level structures.
- Further advocacy is essential for inclusion of “male engagement approach” in articles/ section of The National Women's Development Policy 2011, Education and child protection policies.

### **Concluding remarks**

The study found evidence of positive changes brought on through Male Engagement. However, the priority is to ensure mechanisms to sustain these positive changes. Local stakeholders such as the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Divisional level administration, Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad are important allies that can play a role in adopting elements of the Male Engagement module into existing processes and systems. Going forward, the aim is to work collaboratively and in close partnership to agree on how to actualize these recommendations – in order to achieve gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience for vulnerable families in south west Bangladesh.



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