

TIPPING POINT PROJECT: REPORT OF THE BASELINE STUDY FINDINGS FROM BANGLADESH

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Acknowledgements

First, we would like to acknowledge and thank the population of *Pirgacha upazila* in Rangpur district who participated in Tipping Point study. This study would not be possible without the dedication, commitment, and hard work of the field staff. We thank our partners CARE Bangladesh and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK) for supporting us throughout fieldwork and beyond. We are thankful to Rawnak Jahan, Mahmud Rahman Khan, Suraiya Sultana, Mohammed Rafiqul Islam from CARE Bangladesh for their tremendous support throughout. We also thank Tirzah Brown from CARE USA. Thanks also go to CARE USA for providing funding support and guidance in social norms investigation. icddr,b thanks its core donors for their continuous support.

List of Acronyms

BDHS = Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey

CPA = Community Participatory Analysis

CRCT = Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial

FGD = Focus Group Discussions

FTP= Full Tipping Point

GBV = Gender Based Violence

GED = Gender Equity and Diversity

IDI = In-depth Interviews

KII = Key Informant Interviews

KMO= Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

LTP= Light Tipping Point

MDGs = Millennium Development Goals

MoWCA = Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

PDA = Personal Digital Assistant

SAA = Social Analysis and Action

SDGs = Sustainable Development goals

SNAP =Social Norms Analysis Plot

SRH = Sexual and Reproductive Health

SRHR = Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

STI = Sexually Transmitted Infection

TOC = Theory of Change

VSLAs = Village Savings and Loans Associations

Executive summary

Introduction

Despite numerous adverse consequences of child marriage on the girls' and their subsequent generations' development, health and well-being worldwide, an estimated 14 million girls aged under 18 are married every year with little or no say in the matter. South Asia has the highest rate of child marriage globally with 46% of girls married before 18 years of age. With highest rate of child marriage in South Asia, Bangladesh contributes largely to the pool of child marriage worldwide. About 59% of married women aged 20–24 reporting being married before the age of 18. Rapid changes in the socioeconomic fabric of Bangladesh have had little impact on reduction of child marriage. Thus, its rate of decline is very low in Bangladesh. Over two decades from 1993-4 to 2017, the median age at first marriage in this country has risen from 14.1 to 16.0 only.

The legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 for women, but enforcement is weak. Under the new law (Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (Act No. 6 of 2017), the minimum age of marriage apparently remained 18, with an exception for marriage at the ages of 16 to 17 with parental and court consent under special circumstances. According to official statements in the media, special circumstances seem to refer to premarital pregnancy and elopement, for which the government is providing certain allowances. This legalization of child marriage under “special circumstances” may actually increase child marriage demanding more active exploration and implementation of solutions to prevent child marriage.

Prevention of child marriage has been a global agenda and one of the major goals of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development goals (SDGs). To date several promising interventions have been designed and implemented in different high prevalence countries around the world including: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Malawi. According to a review by Lee-Rife et al. the main program approaches for reducing child marriage are: (1) Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks; (2) Educating and mobilizing parents and community members; (3) Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; (4) Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and, (5) Fostering and enabling legal and policy framework. Empowerment programs are most commonly implemented.

Although the body of evidence on how to prevent child marriage is growing, its rate did not decline at a desirable pace. Previous interventions targeted many of the root causes of child marriage. However, despite wide recognition of the need to change pro-child marriage social norms, attempt to study the impact of social norms change in addressing child marriage was rarely investigated or not investigated well. Lack of understanding of social norms and how to change them effectively impedes development of effective and sustainable child marriage prevention programs. Moreover, for most of the interventions, there were no rigorous evaluations. Furthermore, the interventions that had strong evaluation designs did not necessarily focus on social norms change. It is against this background that the current research employs a cluster randomized controlled trial (CRCT) to evaluate Tipping Point (TP), an integrated social norms intervention designed by CARE to address child marriage in Bangladesh. This report presents findings from the baseline survey. The report focuses on assessing the rates of child marriage in TP study areas and decision making ability of the adolescent girls.

The Tipping Point Initiative

CARE's Tipping Point initiative focuses on addressing the root causes of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), by promoting the rights of adolescent girls through community level programming and evidence generation in Nepal and Bangladesh, and multi-level advocacy and cross-learning efforts across the globe. Phase 1 (2013-2017) of this three-phase project used participatory feminist and developmental evaluation approaches to engage in research, which informed innovative program activities and supported locally-driven social norms shifting activities. Additionally, Phase 1 supported local, national, and global advocacy efforts to broaden the discourse among policy makers, funders, and practitioners on gender transformative approaches to addressing CEFM and measuring progress. Principle to this advocacy has been a focus on acknowledging fear and control of adolescent girls' sexuality as a driver of CEFM. For Phase 2 (2017-2020), the Tipping Point initiative has utilized learnings from Phase 1 to develop and test a holistic and replicable implementation package. Tipping Point's approach uses synchronized engagement with different participant groups (e.g. girls, boys, parents, community leaders), around key programmatic topics, and creates public spaces for all community members to be part of the dialogue. Tipping Point's approach is rooted in challenging social expectations and repressive norms and promoting girl-driven movement building and activism. These components are designed to help adolescent girls find and collectively step into spaces to reflect on and tackle inequality. Our overall intervention package in Nepal and Bangladesh spans 18 months.

Methods

Study site

This study is being implemented in 51 villages, in *Pirgacha upazila* (sub-district) from Rangpur district of Bangladesh. Rangpur division was chosen by CARE for implementation of Tipping Point as prevalence of child marriage was the highest in this division (85.4%) and *Pirgacha upazila* was selected purposively. The villages are considered as the clusters or the primary sampling units in this study. The required number of clusters (i.e 51 villages) was derived sample size calculation. The clusters were formed allowing for buffer zones. The clusters were then randomly assigned to three study arms (17 per arm) described below.

Study design

A mixed method study has been employed for evaluating Tipping Point. The study employs a three-arm Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial (CRCT) design. The arms are as follows:

- Arm 1: Full TP intervention including emphasized social norms change
- Arm 2: Light TP intervention without emphasized social norms change
- Arm 3: Control

The study consisted of three distinct data collection activities at baseline:

- Qualitative data collection in purposively selected villages in Arm 1 and Arm 2
- A longitudinal survey with a cohort of 25 unmarried adolescent girls aged 12 to under-16 in each cluster in all three arms.
- A cross-sectional survey with 12 (6 males and 6 females) adult community members aged 25 or more in each cluster in all three arms

Household enumeration was conducted in study clusters between January – February, 2019 mainly for obtaining the sampling frame for randomly selecting 29 girls (considering that some of the girls may not be interested or their parents may not allow them to participate, 16% were oversampled to make sure we can start with 25) and 6 adult community males and 6 females from each cluster. The purpose of Household Enumeration was to calculate the rate of child marriage in these villages. Using the list of the randomly selected 29 girls from each cluster the implementing organization formed the adolescent

girls' groups. Baseline surveys with this cohort of girls and with the community members were conducted between February and April, 2019. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using pre-designed questionnaires.

The qualitative data at baseline were collected between February and March, 2019 from four villages (two villages in each arm; village A and B in Arm 1 and village C and D in Arm 2) using four Key Informant Interviews (KII); 10 In-depth Interviews (IDI) with adolescent girls and five IDIs with adolescent boys; two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with adolescent girls and two with boys; two FGDs with adult women and two with adult men in the community. The same qualitative method will be followed at endline.

Results and Discussion

The findings show that the study arms are more or less balanced except for in terms of religion. Thus, the analysis of impact will involve controlling for this factor. In line with divisional statistics on child marriage our baseline survey finds very high rates of child marriage in the study sites. Thus, 25% of the women aged 20 to 24 got married before reaching 15, while 67% got married before the age of 18. Median age at marriage by age categories suggest a slow increase in this indicator both among women and men, which is in line with national statistics.

The girls reported high aspirations for education. Thus, according to the survey 85% of them aspired to study beyond Grade 12. Almost no girls (<1%) wished to marry before 18. These aspirations are not in tandem with the current levels of education of young women; According to BBS 2016, upper secondary school completion rate is just 26% . This gap suggests a huge unmet need for education.

Qualitative data suggest aspiration to delay marriage is linked to high educational aspiration. Most of the girls wanted to complete education before getting married. As they considered it unrealistic to expect permission from the marital family to continue education, the only way to achieve their aspiration regarding education was to delay marriage. Despite this understanding, girls rarely negotiate marriage timing with their family as talking about own marriage is stigmatized in the community and takes a toll in the form of criticism by the community members and rebuke by the family members. On rare occasions, a girl may win over the parents' support in delaying marriage by negotiating higher education if the girl is good academically; has no romantic relationship; does not interact with males much; and during negotiation focuses on pursuing higher education rather than delaying marriage.

About one in ten girls earned an income and a similar proportion owned assets that could generate an income, while one in five had savings. Despite low participation in income earning about eight girls in ten reported that their opinions were considered in household financial decisions. This is surprising given the tradition of not much involvement of women in household financial decision making. According to 2014 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) approximately 41% of the currently-married women aged 15-19 years participated in decision making regarding major household purchases.

Majority of the girls perceive menstruation as something shameful and embarrassing. There are many superstitions linked to menstruation impeding girls' mobility. All girls use safe absorbents and dispose the absorbents safely. Knowledge on safe period, STI, and sources of RH services was particularly low among the girls. Qualitative data support these survey findings and reveal that overall, it is not acceptable to openly talk about reproductive and sexual health and particularly with opposite sex.

About 39-47% of the girl sample has high gender inequitable attitudes regarding gender roles, while about one-fourth had low gender-inequitable attitudes. Majority of the girls (65-69%) accepted control by family regarding mobility, dress code and who she can talk to. Acceptance and support of girl-beating was higher among community men than among girls. Support of gender discrimination was lower among men compared to women sample, which may be treated as counter-intuitive. This may be due to higher social desirability bias among men.

A high proportion of the girls (70%) reported that they can visit friends/relatives in another village/town. Among the girls who could visit a friend/relative, about 73% required permission during the last visit and 83% out of those were accompanied by an adult. Three in five girls can visit market with permission and with an adult chaperon. In terms of visiting health facility/provider and fair/park, three in five girls reported that they were able to visit those places. Majority of them required permission during the last visit and were accompanied mostly by an adult. A little less than a half of the girls were able to visit a distant *para* (neighborhood) in village with permission and with an adult. The qualitative study substantiates these findings.

Education related mobility of the girls has radically increased due to special relaxation of restrictions, which allows girls to attend school and/or coaching in group or alone, inside or outside the village. Returning from coaching classes in the evening with a chaperon is largely accepted now. While a girl

going to the village, shop or market alone was something unheard of previously, it is now accepted in some villages to allow the girls to obtain supplies for school (and 10% of girls went to market alone for any purpose). Despite increase in girls' mobility over time, there remain many areas for improvement. The girls' options of public gatherings to attend have also widened. Approximately 61% of the girls attend such gatherings with a chaperon. Mobility without any concrete purpose or for pleasure without a chaperon is strictly denied to a girl.

Social norm around a girl walking in and around the village alone

Among the five girls interviewed in each village, one to three girls walk in and around the village alone for pleasure. A girl walking alone within and around the village is highly criticized by the villagers and labelled as a bad girl. They may try to discipline her by rebuking. They also lodge complains to her parents. They demand that the parents take necessary measures for stopping such bad behavior. Most of the parents scold, rebuke, and even beat the girls for transgressing the mobility norms for the girls. Belief that these girls are either involved in a romantic relationship or seeking to get involved underlies such strict dealing with the girls who walk alone for pleasure. This is a strong social norm and most people abide by it.

Social norm regarding a girl's interaction with opposite sex

Increase in educational attainment among girls and studying in mixed-sex schools have created many opportunities for unmarried adolescent girls to interact with males. Most of the girls do interact with males, usually keeping within the boundaries set by the community. Generally speaking girls' interaction with opposite sex is perceived as something risky. Still, such interaction is approved under certain conditions. The girls are allowed to interact with male relatives, male classmates, and schoolmates. Interaction with the two latter categories is permissible only if it relates to academics. Interaction with males cannot be frequent, lengthy or in private. Both the family and the community members are vigilant about interaction of the girls with opposite sex. The sanctions are imposed by the family, community members, and peers. The sanctions by community members include, gossiping, criticizing, rebuking, stigmatizing, the girl and the family, putting pressure on the family to discipline the girl and getting her married, hampering marriage prospect by telling the potential groom's side of the girl's bad behavior.

Sanctions by the family members include scolding and beating the girl, increasing vigilance and restrictions on her, and marrying her off quickly for protecting family honor.

Social norm around bicycle riding and playing by girls

Most of the girls do not ride a bicycle and do not play games considered to be only appropriate for boys (like football and cricket) as most of the villagers do not endorse any of these. Sanctions against these activities of the girls include gossip, criticism, stigmatizing them as transgender etc. These sanctions are imposed mostly by the villagers and especially by the elders, family members, and adolescent boys. Riding bicycle by a girl is a relatively new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The data suggest that social norm against adolescent girls riding the cycle has been relaxed in some villages as indicated by the data. A main reason for such relaxation seems to enable girls to access secondary schools. Thus, for example such relaxation was the strongest in village D, where girls had to leave the village to access secondary school. In this village one in two girls rides a cycle. In contrast, no girls do that in village C, which has its own secondary school, not requiring girls to go a long distance for schooling. The strongest reference group for girls riding cycle is the parents. The role of positive deviants in demonstrating the benefits of cycling to school and coaching leading to improvement in access to education was strong. There is evidence that parents in such a girl's neighborhood started seriously considering buying bicycles for their daughters.

While the current norm is against allowing 14-16 year old girls or girls who had menarche to play both traditionally feminine and masculine games, these girls are allowed to play both types of games in the yard or in the school playground. They are essentially forbidden to play in an open place. According to the government's education policy the schools allow these female students up to Grade 6 (ages 12-13) to play. The fathers expressed their readiness to accept that the older girls will play boys' games inside the school.

Social norm regarding participation of a girl in decision making regarding own marriage

Most girls do not participate in decision making regarding her marriage. Talking about own marriage is considered as a mark of shamelessness, impudence and disobedience. The family and the community members do not allow such dialogue. Such girls are criticized and rebuked by the villagers. Her opinion is usually disregarded by the family. If otherwise, the family is criticized by the villagers for failing to

conform to the norm. Marriage negotiation by a girl makes the family and villagers assume that she has a romantic relationship, which gives rise to gossip, labeling the girl as 'bad', and speeding up of her marriage. Therefore, girls rarely discuss their marriage with their guardians. Only girls actually having a relationship or desperate to delay marriage in the interest of higher studies may try to negotiate marriage in this non-conducive environment. The outcomes of such negotiations depend on whether the boyfriend is approved by the family; and whether the parents are also invested in daughter's education, believe in her potential to successfully pursue higher education instead of getting involved in a romantic relationship.

Social norm regarding collective efficacy of girls

The girls reported surprisingly high self-efficacy in reaching their goals. An overwhelmingly high proportion of the girls reported high connectedness with their parents (93-97%). Nine in ten girls reported good communication and negotiation skills and a similar proportion of girls claimed strong cohesion among adolescent girls. About one in ten girls participated in any event related to girls' rights. A very high proportion of them reported high efficacy in undertaking collective action. Judging by the quantitative data it may seem that there is hardly much room for improvement in these indicators. However, our qualitative data do not **completely** support these findings. Indeed, an overwhelming majority informants of qualitative study had neither seen girls taking collective action **(and don't perceive it to be common/typical behavior)**, nor think that the community at large expects them to take any collective action, nor considers it appropriate. A total of two instances of collective action by adolescent girls were found from one village, and one of these attempting to prevent early marriage of an adolescent girl failed making the girls not **take** any more initiatives. It was found that parents of adolescent girls and socially powerful adult members of the society may be more successful in preventing child marriages and protecting rights of the girls. Positive outcomes may be achieved if they join forces with the girls.

1. Introduction

Worldwide, an estimated 14 million girls aged under 18 are married every year with little or no say in the matter (UNFPA, 2009). In middle adolescence (15 to 17 years), physical and cognitive readiness still varies widely, depending on the onset and pace of puberty, cognitive maturation, and the risks and responsibilities encountered at the time of marriage and childbearing (Dixon-Mueller, 2008). Before age 15, girls are not physically or cognitively ready to make safe and consensual decisions about marriage, sexual relations, or reproduction (Dixon-Mueller, 2008). Marrying while physically and cognitively immature may limit a girl's educational opportunities, her social and emotional development, her health, and that of her children (Goli, 2015; Innocenti Research Centre, 2001; Raj & Boehmer, 2013; Santhya, 2011). Women who marry in childhood more often are underweight (Goli, 2015), report unintended pregnancy, experience obstetric complications and maternal death (Santhya, 2011; Fisher, 2011), have preterm or low birth weight babies (Santhya, 2011; Banerjee, 2009; Edirne, 2010; Kurth, 2010), and exhibit postnatal depression (Fisher, 2011). These girls are more vulnerable to spousal physical violence (Kidman, 2016; Oshiro, 2011; Yount, 2016). It is imperative to ensure human rights, development, health and well-being not only for the girls', but also for generations to come by addressing child marriage.

Poverty, and norms that value girls and women primarily for their reproductive roles and expectations about girls' future roles that lead parents not to invest in their schooling, make girls vulnerable to child marriage (ICRW, 2013; International Women's Health Coalition, 2015; UNESCO, 2015; UNFPA, 2012).

1.1 Child marriage in South Asia

Marriage in South Asia is nearly universal (Nirantar Trust, 2014; Ghimire & Samuels, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2015). Literature on child marriage shows that poverty, social norms, insecurity, lack of opportunities for adolescent girls and environmental factors are the major drivers of child marriage (CARE, 2016; Naved et al., 2017; Amin & Bajracharya, 2011).

Deeply entrenched gender inequalities position boys as highly valued for continuing family lineage and providing parents' old age security. In contrast, girls are commonly viewed as economic burdens

(Nirantar Trust, 2014; Greene, 2014; Lee-Rife 2012). Dowry exchanged in marriage functions as an incentive for families to marry their daughters early before they are obliged to pay a higher price (Geirbo, 2006). Marrying girls at younger ages keeps dowry costs lower and at the same time increases the likelihood that the girls remain virgins, which is an important value in the eyes of their families, communities and potential in-laws. Girls' sexuality is linked to family honor and protecting this honor becomes a sacred responsibility of the girl, her family and community (Naved & Khan, 2019). The subordinate status of the girls, in combination with concern about their virginity and limited economic roles, contribute to the tendency to pull them out of school. In general, girls and boys possess virtually no decision-making power regarding whom to marry and when (Caldwell, 2005).

Child marriage has recently received a great deal of attention in South Asia. The Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) is an initiative of the region's key inter-governmental body, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), whose membership includes eight countries in the region, including Bangladesh. SAIEVAC issued a Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia (SAIEVAC, 2014), which defines very specific activities, partners and indicators that include increasing the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 for boys and girls, promoting access to quality education and increasing mobilization of religious and community leaders.

1. 2 Child marriage in Bangladesh

It is estimated that South Asia has the highest rate of child marriage globally with 46% of girls married before 18 years of age (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013). Within the South Asian region, child marriage rates vary considerably. Analysis of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data presented in Figure. 1.1 shows that Bangladesh has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the region, with 59% of married women aged 20–24 reporting being married before the age of 18 (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates and ICF International, 2016; Ministry of Health, Nepal, New ERA, and ICF, 2017; IIPS and ICF, 2017; DCS and MoHNIML, 2017; NIPS and ICF International, 2013). Bangladesh is followed by Nepal and India where prevalence of child marriage for the same age group is 40% and 27%, respectively. Bangladesh also has the highest prevalence of very early marriage—that is, by age 15 (Figure 1.1). Within Bangladesh, Rangpur has the lowest median age at first marriage (15.3 years) among married women aged 20-49 years in all divisions (Figure 1.2) (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates and ICF International, 2016).

Figure 1.1. Prevalence of child marriage in South Asian countries

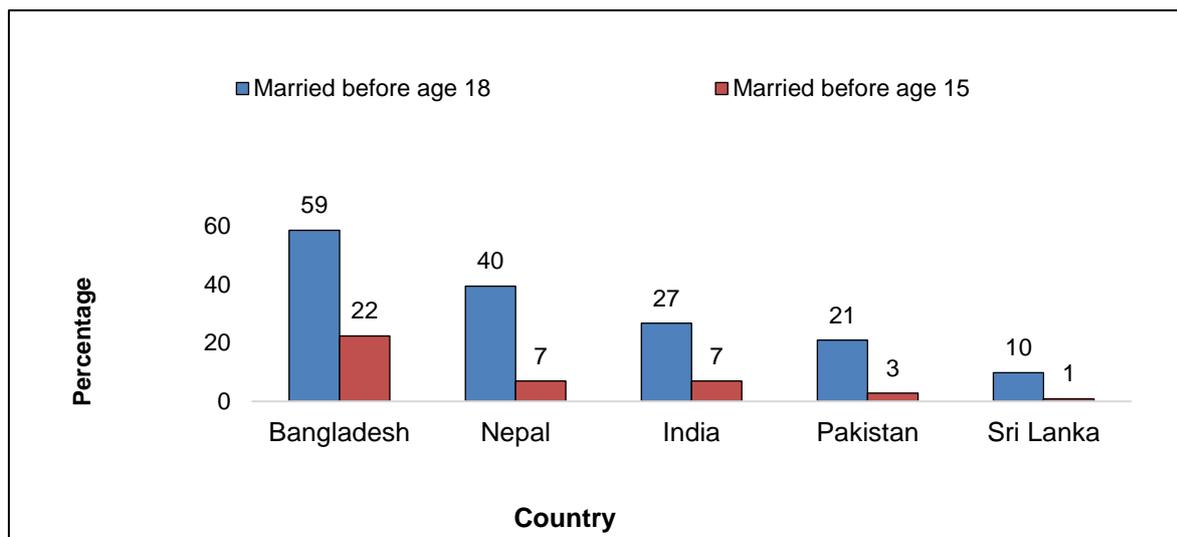
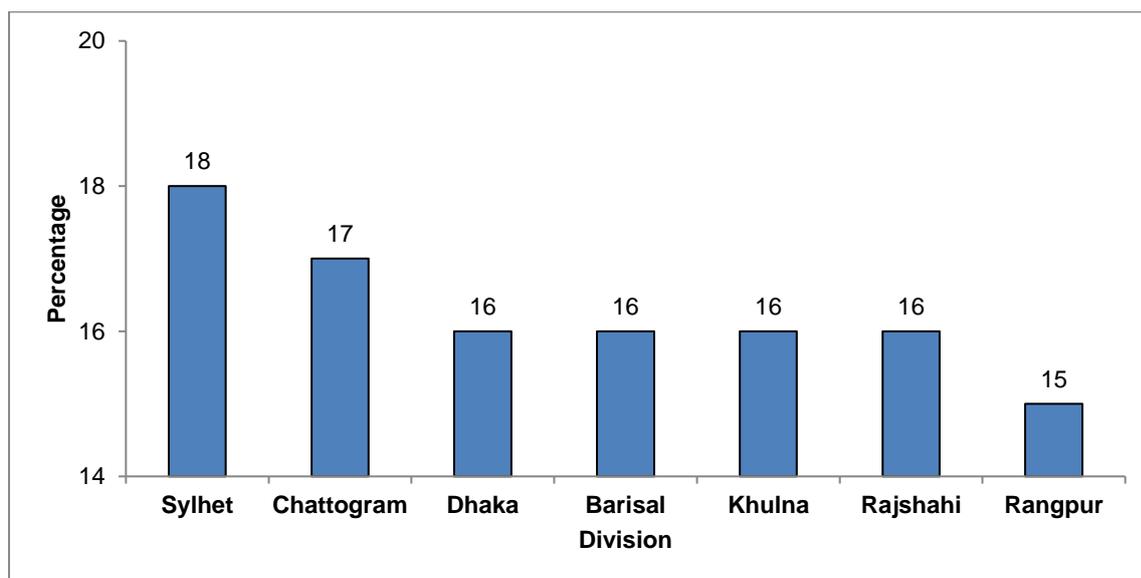


Figure 1.2. Median age at first marriage in divisions of Bangladesh



*Source: BDHS 2016

Rapid changes in the socioeconomic fabric of Bangladesh have had little impact on reduction of child marriage. Thus, its rate of decline is very low in Bangladesh. Over two decades from 1993 to 2017, the median age at first marriage in this country has risen from 14.1 to 16.0 only. (Mitra et al., 1994; NIPORT and ICF International, 2019). Change in prevalence of child marriage in women aged 20 to 24 between 1991 and 2007 in Bangladesh was the smallest among the South Asian countries. The data suggest that this small change was mainly attributable to a reduction in marriage among girls aged

below 14 years, while marriage in age categories 14 to 15 and 16 to 17 increased. Despite recent declines, very early marriage among girls aged below 14 in 2005-2007 in Bangladesh was still several times higher than in other countries in the region-18.5% vs., 6.3% in India, 3.8% in Nepal, and 2.5% in Pakistan. In the same period, Bangladesh had highest prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 14 to 15 in the region (Mahapatra et al., 2017).

A higher proportion of Bangladeshi girls married before reaching 18 years had poorer nutritional status, poorer access to contraceptives, higher number of children and unwanted pregnancy, inadequate antenatal care, and child mortality compared to their peers who remained unmarried (Mahapatra et al., 2017).

As elsewhere, the drivers of child marriage in Bangladesh include deeply entrenched social norms in favor of males, worries about family reputation and the opinion of others if a girl remains unmarried, dowry, poverty, parents' desires to secure economic well-being for their daughter and a perceived need to protect girls from harm, like sexual harassment and abuse (Mahapatra et al., 2017).

The legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 for women and 21 for men, but enforcement is weak. Under the new law (Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (Act No. 6 of 2017), the minimum age of marriage apparently remained 18, with an exception for marriage with parental and court consent under special circumstances. According to official statements in the media, special circumstances seem to refer to premarital pregnancy and elopement, for which the government is providing certain allowances (MoWCA, 2017). This legalization of child marriage under "special circumstances" may actually increase child marriage demanding more active exploration and implementation of solutions to prevent child marriage.

1.3 Interventions addressing child marriage and the gaps

Preventing child marriage has been a global agenda and one of the major goals of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development goals (SDGs). In line with MDGs and SDGs Governments, NGOs and research organizations in different countries have attempted to tackle child marriage through different programs. Most of the interventions included girls' education, livelihoods/conditional cash transfer, empowerment, and community mobilization (Gulemetova-Swan,

2009; Angrist et al., 2002; Pande et al., 2006; Amin, 2011, Amin et al., 2016; Chae & Ngo, 2017). Unfortunately, the majority of these interventions have not been evaluated rigorously (Jain and Kurz 2007; Mukherjee et al. 2008; Hervish and Feldman-Jacobs, 2011). This has resulted in missed opportunities to learn what actually works in reducing child marriage and what does not.

To date several promising interventions have been designed and implemented in different high prevalence countries around the world including: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Malawi. According to a review by Lee-Rife et al. (2012) the main program approaches for reducing child marriage are: (1) Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks; (2) Educating and mobilizing parents and community members; (3) Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; (4) Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and, (5) Fostering and enabling legal and policy framework. Empowerment programs are most commonly implemented.

A cluster randomized controlled trial (CRCT) conducted in Bangladesh by Buchman et al. (2018) shows that girls eligible for financial incentive to delay marriage were 25% less likely to be married before 18. A combination of financial incentive and empowerment or empowerment alone, however, did not show an effect on child marriage. Another CRCT conducted in the south of the country by Amin et al. (2016) finds that support in education, promotion of livelihood skills, and gender sensitization interventions implemented separately were effective in reducing child marriage. Reviewing the evidence on effective interventions to reduce child marriage Lee-Rife et al. (2012) conclude that integrated programs combining girls' empowerment and offering incentives were effective in achieving child marriage reduction.

Although the body of evidence on how to prevent child marriage is growing, its rate has not declined at a desirable pace. Previous interventions targeted many of the root causes of child marriage. However, despite wide recognition of the need to change social norms that favor child marriage, attempt to study the impact of social norms change in addressing child marriage was rarely investigated or not investigated well. Lack of understanding of social norms and how to change them effectively impedes development of effective and sustainable child marriage prevention programs. Moreover, for most of the interventions, there were no rigorous evaluations (Kalamar 2016; Lee-Rife et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the interventions that had strong evaluation designs did not necessarily focus on social norms change (Amin 2016; Angrist, 2002; Handa 2015).

It is against this background that the current research employs a cluster randomized controlled trial (CRCT) to evaluate Tipping Point (TP), an integrated social norms intervention designed by CARE to address child marriage in Bangladesh. This report presents findings from the baseline survey.

2. Tipping Point Program

The TP project was established with the intention of innovating strategies for tackling the root causes of child marriage in two countries in South Asia with highest rates of child marriage and engaging in advocacy on the issue across global platforms of funders, researchers and key decision makers. Within Nepal and Bangladesh, the project aspired to weaken the communities' social norms that restrict the lives and roles of girls (and boys) and uphold the practice of child marriage. The project is now in its second phase. In Phase I, the project has made great investments in understanding the local context using participatory approaches and has come a long way in using the theory of social norm change (Bicchieri 2014; Bicchieri 2010; Bicchieri 2009) for developing and testing different intervention components in remote rural areas of Bangladesh. According to this theory, community norm change requires: (1) A core target group; (2) Engagement in sustained deliberation; (3) Organizing diffusion of deliberation out of core group; and (4) Coordinating abandonment when a sizable majority (tipping point) is attained. Phase II was built on the experience of Phase I and a theory of change.

CARE Tipping Point Program Theory of Change

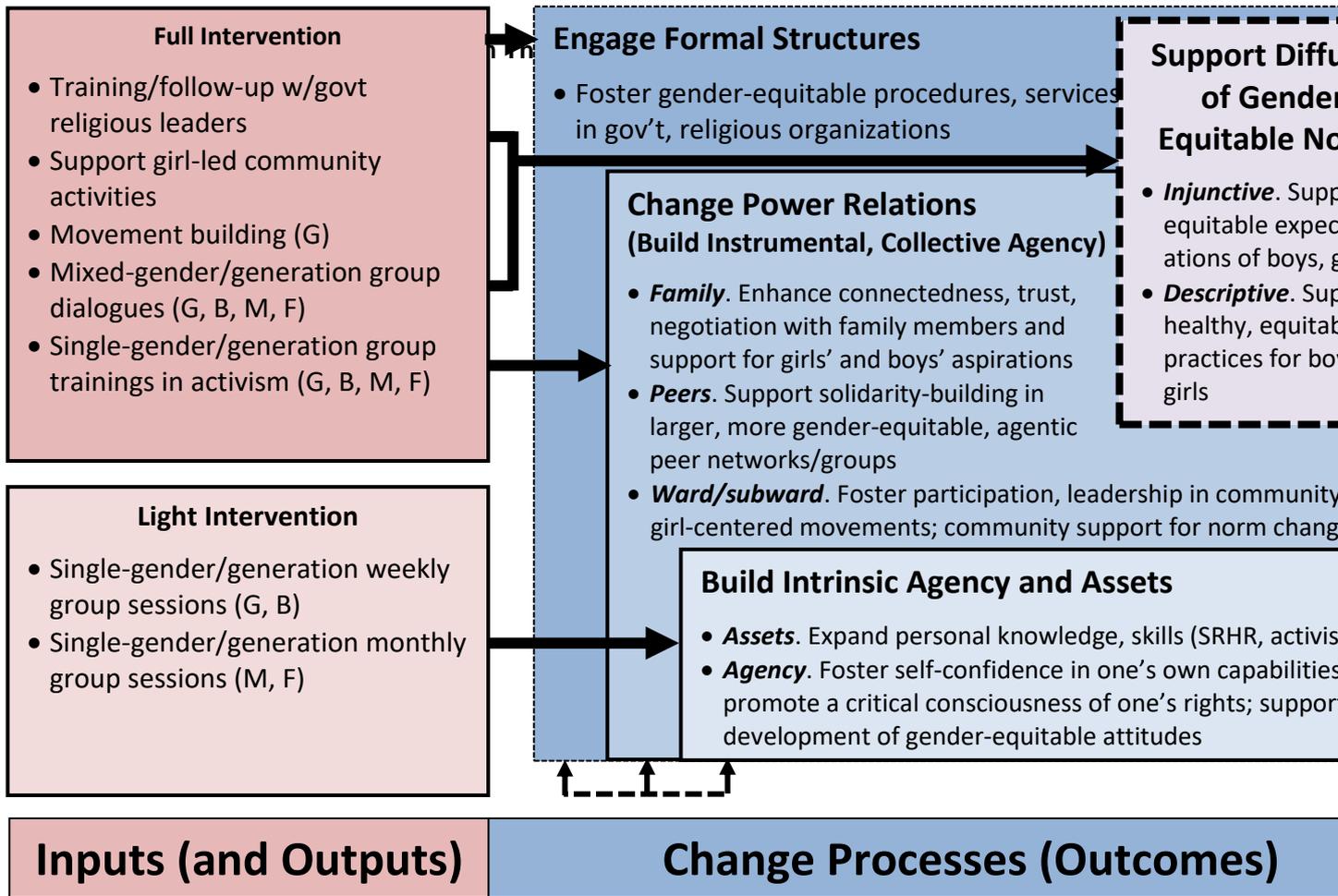


Figure 2 depicts the CARE Tipping Point Program Impact Evaluation Theory of Change . Boxes in orange to the far left summarize the basic components of the CARE Tipping Point 'Light' intervention and the CARE Tipping Point 'Full' intervention. Boxes in blue adapt the CARE "GEWV Framework focusing on Agency, Structures and Relations"² to clarify the mechanisms or change processes by which TP 'light' and TP 'full' are expected to operate. First, the Full TP program's work with community leaders is expected to engage formal structures in the community to foster gender-equitable procedures and services and to facilitate social-norms shifts among key reference groups, by holding quarterly sessions with religious leaders and government officials. Second, the TP light and TP full interventions are expected to change inter-personal power relations by enhancing girls' connectedness, trust, and capacity for negotiation with family members; solidarity and movement building among peers; and participation among community members to support norm change. Third, TP light and TP full interventions are expected to build individual *assets* by expanding each adolescent girl's knowledge (e.g., of sexual and reproductive rights) and skills (e.g., with respect to leadership and activism). Both programs also are expected to build individual *agency* by expanding each girl's self-confidence in her capabilities, critical consciousness of her rights, and gender-equitable attitudes. Fourth, TP light and TP full are expected to support the diffusion of gender-equitable norms regarding what community members believe girls *ought to do* (injunctive norms) and *actually do* (descriptive norms). Facilitated diffusion of gender-equitable norms is emphasized in TP full, through girl-centered movement building and its four related community-level activities, social norms activities, engaging key stakeholders, and intergroup dialogues. Thus, the TP full intervention package has an additional 'Social norms programming' component that will be tested. This programmatic distinction will be tested. Overall, these structural, relational, intrinsic, and normative change processes are expected to support the decline in child, early, and forced marriage.¹

2.2 Overview of Intervention Package

The Tipping Point initiative utilized lessons learned from Phase 1 to develop a holistic and replicable implementation package for Phase 2 (2017-2020) (Figure 3). Tipping Point's approach focuses on synchronized engagement with different participant groups around key programmatic topics in public spaces to ensure that all community members can be part of the dialogue. Tipping Point's synchronized approach is rooted in challenging social expectations and repressive norms and promoting girl-driven movement-building and activism, components designed to help adolescent girls find and collectively step into spaces to engage with and tackle inequality. The Phase 2 package includes the following key components in both "Full Social Norms Package" and "Social Norms Light Package" Intervention areas:

¹ This Theory of Change was developed by Emory University, CARE Tipping Point's research partners in Nepal.

- Social norms [all participant groups]: child rights, gender and sexuality, patriarchy, power and privileges, puberty, sex and love, honor, dowry, gender division of labor, gender-based violence, child early and forced marriage (CEFM).
- Access to Alternatives [girls' groups only]: financial literacy and an opportunity to join a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA).
- Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) [all core participants' groups]: sexual and reproductive rights, menstruation; masculinities; female sexuality; contraception; HIV/AIDS.
- Girls-centered movement building [girls' groups only]: leadership; empowerment dialogues; collective action; civic participation.

The following components will be added to the above to complete the Full Social Norms Package:

- Intergroup Dialogues: held between core participant groups, i.e. girls with boys, girls with mothers, mothers with fathers, and finally girls with boys, mothers and fathers.
- Girls' Activist training [selected girl leaders]: girl leaders receive training on campaigning and activism, are linked to other girls' groups and networks, and have access to a budget and mentorship to execute community-level activities
- Activist training for allies [selected champion boys, fathers, mothers]: trainings and meetings to support adolescent girls' activism.
- Other Participant Groups: religious leaders, local government, school personnel in Nepal, and religious leaders and Union Parishad and community-level influencers in Bangladesh will be engaged in quarterly discussion and dialogues
- Girl-led activities: Organized and led by adolescent girls' groups on mobility, menstruation, dowry, gendered division of labor, family honor, sexual harassment, and girls' aspirations
- Community Activities: The network of girl leaders elected across villages will organize and execute 4 activities of their choice in each of their communities, using a budget.

Figure 3. Tipping point intervention

	PARTICIPANTS' GROUPS	SESSIONS	CORE SESSIONS/TRAININGS	GIRL-LED ACTIVITIES	JOINT SESSIONS	
CORE PARTICIPANTS' GROUPS	Adolescent GIRLS	Weekly 45 sessions	Social norms [all participant groups]: equity and equality; rights and duties; gender; patriarchy; power and privileges; puberty; sex and love; honor; GBV; child marriage.	6 Community level social norms activities Organized and lead by adolescent girls' groups on following themes: Mobility Menstruation Gender Division of Labor Dowry Family Honor/ Sexual Harassment Girls Aspirations	6 Intergroup Dialogues Facilitated dialogues between core participant groups in the following combinations: Adolescent Girls with Boys Adolescent Girls with Mothers Mothers with Fathers Adolescent Girls, Adolescent Boys, Mothers, and Fathers	
	Adolescent BOYS	Weekly 45 sessions	Access to Alternatives [girls' groups only]: financial literacy and girls from the group who are interested participate in <i>Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)</i> (starting in the 7 th month). ASRRH [all core participants' groups]: menstruation; masculinities; female sexuality; contraception; HIV/AIDs.			
	MOTHERS Group	Monthly 18 sessions	Girls-centered movement building [girls' groups only]: (starting in the 7 th month): leadership; empowerment dialogues; collective action; civic participation.			
	FATHERS Group	Monthly 18 sessions	Activist training [select champion boys, fathers, mothers]: (starting in the 7 th month): trainings and meetings to support adolescent girls' activism. Activist training [select girl leaders]: girl leaders receive training on campaigning and activism, linked to other girls groups & networks, and given access to a budget and mentorship to execute 4 community level activities.			
OTHER PARTICIPANTS	RELIGIOUS LEADERS	Intensive Trainings* Follow-up Meetings*	* # of trainings/meetings are not yet finalized	4 Activist-led activities Created, organized, and lead by network of activist girls The network of girl leaders elected across villages will organize and execute 4 activities of their own choice in each of their communities, using their own budget.	DURATION = 18 months CORE FACILITATION APPROACHES A mix of facilitation approaches designed to maximize empowerment, critical thinking and action [didactic, participatory teaching, reflective analysis, and facilitation for action].	
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Union Parishads)					
	INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE					
PROJECT STAFF CORE CAPACITIES			Gender Equity and Diversity (GED) Social Analysis and Action (SAA)	VSLA Social Norms	Participatory and Reflective Techniques Movement Building	Facilitation Skills

■ Indicates components that are part of the full package and are not present in the light package

3. Design of the Tipping Point program evaluation in Bangladesh

3.1 Primary research questions

There are three primary research questions for TP evaluation research.

1. Whether the full package of Tipping Point (TP) intervention (with emphasized social norms component) is effective in reducing child marriage and promote adolescent girls' decision making compared to the control group?

2. Whether the light package of TP intervention (without emphasized social norms) is effective in reducing child marriage and promote adolescent girls' decision making compared to the control group?
3. Whether the full package of TP intervention will have higher impact in reducing child marriage compared to the light package of TP?

3.2 Study site

This study is being implemented in 51 villages, in *Pirgacha upazila* (sub-district) from Rangpur district of Bangladesh. Rangpur district was chosen by CARE for implementation of Tipping Point as prevalence of child marriage was the highest in this division (85.4%) during project inception (Islam et al., 2016). The median age at marriage in this district is the lowest (15 years among women aged 20-49) in the country. According to a study by Islam et al. (2016) a girl in Rangpur was almost 5 times more likely to be married as a child compared to Sylhet, the lowest prevalent division in Bangladesh. Rangpur is located in the north of Bangladesh and known as economically most disadvantaged (BDHS, 2016). Until the recent past *monga* (famine) was a regular phenomenon in Rangpur. A myriad of non-governmental organizations (NGO) operate in Rangpur. The *Pirgacha upazila* was selected purposively.

3.3 Study design

A mixed method study has been employed for evaluating Tipping Point. Figure 4 presents the Tipping Point evaluation design. This study employs a three arm Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial (CRCT) design. The arms are as follows:

- Arm 1: Full TP (FTP) intervention including emphasized social norms change
- Arm 2: Light TP (LTP) intervention without emphasized social norms change
- Arm 3: Control

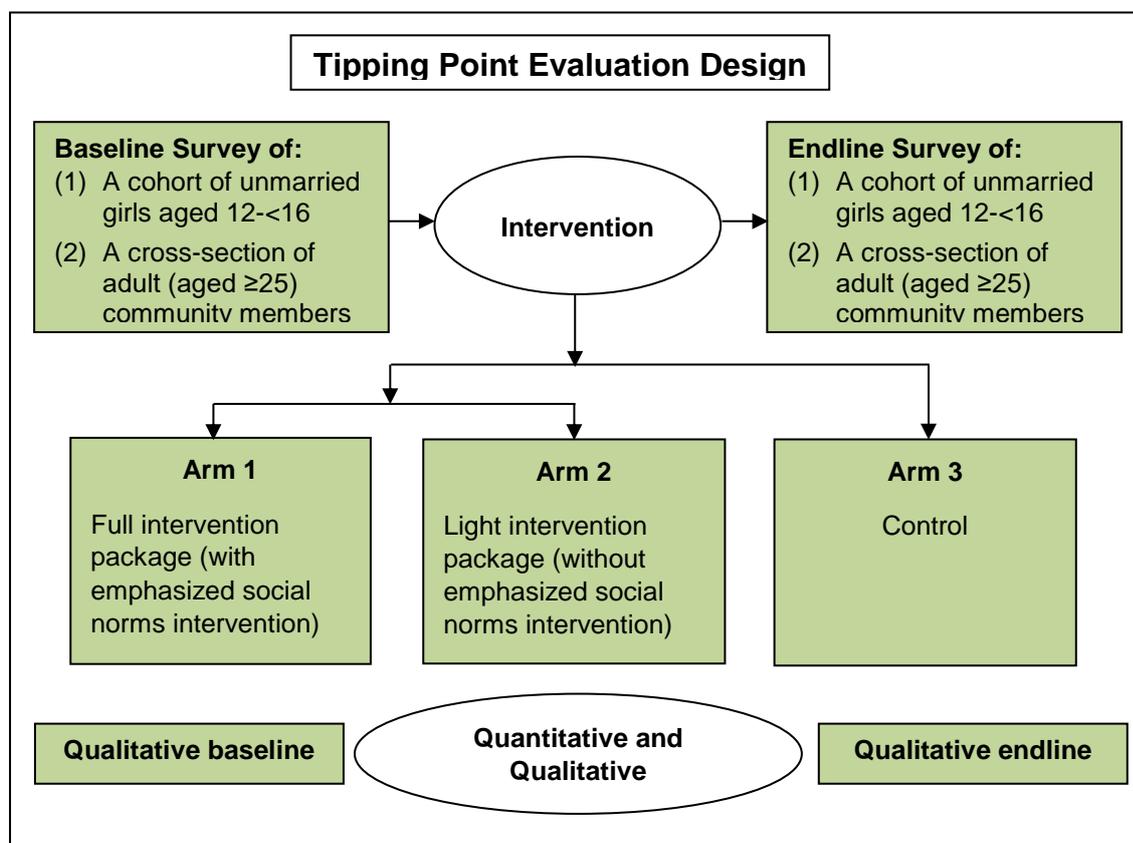
The villages are considered as the clusters or the primary sampling units in this study. The required 51 villages (17 per arm) were selected through a two-stage approach – identification of clusters and randomization to study arms. First, an initial village was selected at random from the list of all villages within *Pirgacha upazila*. All villages sharing borders with the first selected village were considered

'buffer' villages. We then selected the next village in the north-western direction moving anti-clockwise avoiding the buffer villages. In addition to the buffer villages any village consisting of less than 150 households was also excluded to ensure the cluster had enough number of adolescent girls and boys required to form TP intervention groups. Furthermore, the flood affected and *char* villages (*i.e.*, *river islands*) were excluded considering difficulties in program implementation in such areas. This procedure was followed until the required number of clusters (51) was achieved. At the second stage, each selected villages was randomly assigned to one of the three study arms.

The study consists of three distinct data collection activities at baseline:

- Qualitative data collection in purposively selected villages in Arm 1 and Arm 2
- A longitudinal survey with a cohort of 25 unmarried adolescent girls aged 12 to under-16 in each cluster in all three arms
- A cross-sectional survey with 12 (6 males and 6 females) adult community members aged 25 or more in each cluster in all three arms

Figure 4. Study design



3.4 Sample size for quantitative data collection

Girls' survey

Villages were treated as clusters or the primary sampling units in this study and we considered that each cluster will consist of a cohort of 22 adolescent girls. The sample size was calculated based on two primary outcomes: i) child marriage, and ii) decision making ability of the target group (girls aged 12 to below 16). The rates of child marriage and the decision making ability of the girls were unknown. Thus, we assumed the prevalence rates as 50% for each outcome. A life skills intervention in Maharashtra, achieved a 19% reduction in child marriage in the community (Pande et al., 2006). Based on this literature we are assuming 15% effect size. The Intra-cluster correlation (ICC) differs for different outcomes. The ICC was found to be 0.05 for child marriage in one icddr,b conducted nationally representative study (unpublished) and information on ICC for decision making was.

Considering 5% significance level and 80% power we required 17 clusters per arm making the total number of clusters 51. Considering a 15% non-response/dropout rate the group size increased to 25 and total sample size increased to 1,275 girls.

Community survey

For assessing social norms change we considered child marriage related social norms among the adult community members aged 25 or more as the primary outcome. Assuming 50% prevalence of child marriage related norms (as it is unknown for the target group), 15% effect size, 5% significance level, 80% power and 5% non-response rate, we required 540 community members in total from 51 clusters. To ensure participation of both males and females and equally distributing among the clusters we required six adult males and six adult females from each cluster.

3.5 Sample size for qualitative data collection

Once each village was assigned to a treatment arm, two villages from each intervention arm were purposively selected for qualitative data collection exercise (Village A and B in Arm 1 and village C and D in Arm 2). Please see details of these villages in Annex A. Four Key Informant Interviews (KII); 10 In-depth Interviews (IDI) with adolescent girls and five IDIs with adolescent boys; two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with adolescent girls and two with boys; two FGDs with adult women and two with adult men in the community were completed in each arm. The sample distribution by participant categories and by arms have been presented in Table 1. During endline the same sample distribution will be followed to select endline qualitative participants. Use of three different qualitative techniques of data collection will allow data triangulation. While KIIs and FGDs will provide data on social norms and general practices, IDIs will give us access to in-depth data on individual perceptions, practices and experiences.

Table 1: Number of Focus group discussion, Key informant interviews, and In-depth interviews by participant category and by arm in Rangpur

SI	Tools and participant category	Arm 1	Arm 2	Total
		(Study villages A & B)	(Study villages C & D)	
1.	KIIs with men	2 (1 A + 1 B)	2 (1 C + 1 D)	4
2.	KIIs with women	2 (1 A + 1 B)	2 (1 C + 1 D)	4
1.	IDIs with adolescent girls (Group members)	10 (5 A + 5 B)	10 (5 C + 5 D)	20
2.	IDIs with adolescent boys (Group members)	5 (3 A + 2 B)	5 (3 C + 2 D)	10
3.	FGDs with adolescent girls (Group members)	2 (1 A + 1 B)	2 (1 C + 1 D)	4
4.	FGDs with adolescent boys (Group members)	2 (1 A + 1 B)	2 (1 C + 1 D)	4
5.	FGDs with adult women/mother (Group members)	1 A	1 C	2
6.	FGDs with adult women/mother (Non-group members)	1 A	1 C	2
7.	FGDs with adult men/father (Group members)	1 B	1 D	2
8.	FGDs with adult men/father (Non-group members)	1 B	1 D	2
Total		27	27	54

3.5 Baseline qualitative study

3.5.1 Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data were collected during 26 February – 31 March, 2019. A team of four researchers collected qualitative data under the supervision and guidance of icddr,b staff. All the researchers held Masters degrees in Anthropology and had previous experience conducting qualitative research. They received a 12-day participatory training during 8-29 January, 2019 on gender, research ethics, qualitative research methods, current study and qualitative guides.

Interviews and discussions with participants were conducted in Bengali by gender-matched interviewers. Data were audio recorded upon receipt of verbal approval from the participants and

guardians (in case of adolescent participants). All participants agreed to follow-up visits. In some cases, follow-ups were conducted, either face to face or over the phone to fill gaps in the data. Recruitment processes of the participants and general observations of each interview were documented by all the interviewers. The researchers used to take part in a compulsory daily debriefing session at the end of each working day for discussing interesting findings, reviewing field notes and experiences. This process helped the team to scrutinize interesting findings which facilitated an iterative process of data collection. It also helped the researchers to resolve issues or challenges related to the data collection.

Qualitative data were collected using IDI, FGD and KII guide. IDIs with adolescent girls and boys incorporated comprehensive narrative on individual perceptions, practices, and experiences of gender roles and responsibilities, aspirations regarding education, employment and age at marriage, decision-making around marriage, girls' mobility, and girls' safety and security. FGDs with adolescents and parents were conducted based on CARE's SNAP framework. It provided data concerning social norms regarding girls' mobility, gender roles and responsibilities, education, decision-making regarding marriage, interactions with boys, reproductive health and girl-centric collective movement. KIIs with local influential community members (e.g., school teachers, health providers and local government officials) covered social norms and practices around marriage, work, education, and employment, changes in the prevalence of child marriage, reproductive health, collective action, and girls' safety and security.

3.5.2 Qualitative data processing and analyses

The recorded data were transcribed verbatim in Bengali and translated into English. Transcripts were anonymized by removing any information that could identify the participant such as: names of people, their address and those were replaced with the type of information removed (i.e. [person's name], [village's name]). This kind of information were kept in a separate excel file. The accuracy and completeness of the transcripts were examined by listening to a random sample of 20% of the audio-files of the IDIs, KIIs, and FGDs. Researchers always went back to the audio files to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the transcripts and translation for all the interviews.

Bengali transcripts were entered into MAXQDA 18 software package for qualitative data analysis

(VERBI 2018) in order to facilitate coding and data analysis. Two members of the research team coded the transcripts. Once coding was completed the data were retrieved by codes for further analyses by themes. Repeated discussion took place among the researchers allowing enough scope for examining the data critically, enhancing the rigour of analysis, and reflecting upon the findings.

Qualitative data analyses have been guided by CARE's social norms analysis plot (SNAP) framework (Stefanik & Hwang, 2017). The analyses were organized around the five central norms which TP targets to shift. These are: (1) walk around her village alone; (2) ride bicycles or play sports; (3) give input into decisions about her marriage; (4) take collective action for girls' rights; (5) talk with an adolescent boy. The analyses sought to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the nature of the norms which Tipping Point is trying to shift?

In response to this question we tried to identify **empirical and normative, expectations; sanctions; sensitivity to sanctions; as well as exceptions** for each of these norms.

(2) How have the prioritized norms weakened over the course of the project?

TP results' framework has two indicators to measure "weakening" of the 5 selected social norms.

- One is the community people thinking that others in the community would approve or disapprove social norms change. (Normative Expectation)
- Another indicator is to assess if adults in the community would think that parents specifically would approve of the social norms change. (Empirical Expectation)

Using these 2 indicators above, does the data show a difference over time between perceived approval/disapproval by community members and specifically by the parents of adolescents?

(3) How are norms affected by context?

The same norm can differ across different contexts. Which norms exist in each context and how they differ from each other? For example, did we see the sensitivity to a norm regarding mobility different for a particular group of adolescent girls, for example, living in an urban cluster, having good educational status, parents' heightened support may be due to parents' high educational status etc.?

(4) Who is most affected by each norm?

Are there areas or groups for which norms seem to be stronger/more rigid/more influential?

(5) Who enforces each norm?

Who do people think about when they think about influential/powerful sanctions?

(6) What is the 'degree' of sanctions and sensitivity to sanctions?

What is the level of anticipation of social approvals?

For example: in one community, fathers might not "fear" disapproval because the direct impact of a religious leader might be not as much as in another community. Does our data show this difference? Here, the sanction has a "face", a religious leader. Lesser degree of sanctions could be in a scenario when a norm is seen as distant, which does not have a "face" (Cislaghi and Heise 2018).

(7) What are the reference groups for different participant groups?

Are reference groups different for different groups?

(8) What are the exceptions when it is considered more appropriate or acceptable to deviate from the norm?

- What are the traits of a person identified as 'exception' that differs her or him from others?
- Are there commonalities/shared basis for the exceptions that can tell us something about how the norm operates, and when it might open, that we can take advantage of in program design?

3.6 Baseline quantitative study

3.6.1 Household enumeration

Household enumeration in each study village was conducted to collect information on the household members' socio-demographic information (e.g., sex, age, education, religion, marital status, age at marriage, and occupation) to form the sampling frame for both girls' and community surveys. A trained team of data collectors conducted this enumeration using a pre-designed household enumeration form during 9 January – 18 February, 2019. The team received a 3-day participatory training on the enumeration form and field procedure. Special care was taken to provide training on how to collect and check information on age and age at marriage of listed individuals. Special attention was paid to ensure that accurate age is recorded during enumeration. To do so, the interviewers cross checked the date of birth with the birth registration card/national ID card of the listed individuals if available. Any adult person was eligible to provide information for the enumeration. However, in most of the cases the key informants were adult female household members (either the household head or wife of household head). The enumeration data provides us with an estimation of child marriage in each cluster and with a sampling frame for eligible adolescent girls and community adults for the girl and community surveys. The girls aged between 12 and under 16 years and currently living in the study village were considered as eligible for inclusion in the Girls' Survey. Adult males and females aged 25 or more and currently living in the study village were considered eligible for the Community Survey.

3.6.2 Survey data collection

Once the household enumeration was complete, the sampling frames were available and eligibility was established, three simple random samples of 29 eligible girls (considering that some of the girls may not be interested or their parents may not allow them to participate 16% were oversampled to make sure we can start with 25), six eligible males and six eligible females were selected from each village. The list of these randomly selected 29 participants from each cluster was provided to the implementing organization, which then, sought consent from each of these selected girls and their parent(s) to join the Tipping Point research and intervention and formed the final cohort with them who agreed to participate. Baseline surveys with the finally recruited adolescent girls and community members (adult men and women) were then conducted during 2 February – 9 April, 2019 using pre-designed

questionnaires. Data were collected in Bangla using face-to-face interviews upon receipt of oral assent of adolescent girls and oral consent of their parents in the girls' survey and oral consent of the participants in the community survey, in private in a location convenient for the participants, conducted by gender-matched interviewers using Tablets. A survey team of 14 female data collectors, two male data collectors, four supervisors, two quality control officers (QCO) and one survey coordinator for the girls' and community survey was employed. The QCOs were responsible for rechecking collected data and providing feedback to the interviewers and the supervisors. The survey coordinator was responsible for coordinating survey implementation in the field. Under the guidance of the researchers he developed field plan and ensured its implementation. The survey team received a 12-day participatory training during 8-29 January, 2019 on gender, child marriage, and empowerment of adolescent girls, research ethics, survey methods, the questionnaire, and use of tablets for error-free data entry.

The first level monitoring was performed by the supervisors by observing the quality of the interviews, keeping notes and discussing any problems at review sessions. A daily team meeting was mandatory for the survey team. Five percent of the study participants were revisited by the supervisors who administered a short questionnaire consisting of 12 questions for the girls' survey and 11 questions for the community survey focused mainly on identifying any problems in adhering to ethical guidelines and administering questions on particular topics. The second level of monitoring involved cross-checking of completed questionnaires. Each completed questionnaire was rechecked by the QCO on a daily basis, kept notes, provided feedback to the interviewers and supervisors, made corrections where possible, where necessary, guided the interviewer to make a phone call to the respondent to collect any missing data and to correct errors if possible, and sent the interviewer to revisit the respondent if it was necessary. They communicated with the researchers if the problems could not be resolved by themselves and communicated decisions back to the interviewers.

At the third level, the researchers from icddr,b made frequent field visits, randomly checked filled-out questionnaires, observed interviews where possible and provided feedback to the survey team. Further, a computer-based data checking routine was developed by the icddr,b research team. The data were uploaded to the server every day after the data collection was completed for that day. Due to the efficiency of this system, inconsistencies in the data were identified within a short period of time. The

research officer cleaned the data two days before the completion of the data collection in each study area. Problems identified in the data were communicated to the supervisors through the survey coordinator. The supervisor resolved the problems through discussion with the interviewer if possible. If necessary, the interviewer revisited the respondent and solved the issues consulting her. This actually enhanced prompt correction of the data by the QCO based on information received from the field. If the problems could not be resolved using this strategy the researchers were informed and the researchers suggested ways of resolving the issue depending on the nature of the problems. One programmer was available during the survey period for necessary trouble shooting and data uploading.

3.6.3 Study forms

The baseline survey included 15 modules for girls, which measured five constructs: intrinsic agency, instrumental agency, collective agency, social norms, and discrimination as barriers to change (Table 2). Adult community members over 25 years of age completed a total of four modules relating to intrinsic agency, social norms, and discrimination and violence as barriers to change. Adult community members did not receive any modules relating to instrumental agency or collective agency.

Table 2. Questionnaire modules, construct measured and samples interviewed

Questionnaire module	Construct Measured	Samples interviewed	
		Girls	Adults
1. Self-efficacy	Intrinsic agency	✓	-
2. Aspiration about marriage and education		✓	-
3. Attitudes about gender		✓	✓
4. Menstruation knowledge, attitudes, and practices		✓	-
5. Knowledge/attitudes about SRH		✓	✓ (attitude only)
6. Mobility or freedom of movement	Instrumental agency	✓	-
7. Negotiation on education, marriage, mobility		✓	-
8. Communication and negotiation with parents		✓	-
9. Participation in financial activities		✓	-

10. Group membership		✓	-
11. Cohesion, solidarity, and mobilization skills	Collective agency	✓	-
12. Participation in events		✓	-
13. Connectedness		✓	-
14. Social norms	Social norms	✓	✓
15. Differential treatment of sister	Discrimination as barriers to change	✓	-
16. Awareness regarding laws/policies regarding women's and child rights		-	✓

3.6.4 Analysis

Items in the survey questionnaires were recoded so that all are anchored at 0. For example, for gender norms and attitudes, each item scored 1-4 in the questionnaire was recoded to 0–3. The scales were validated using exploratory factor analysis. This allowed us to validate the tools for the target population and at the same time enabled us to reduce the number of items in the scales. The rotated factor loading of an item against all the suggested factors was checked for non-loading and cross loading. The cut-off for item loading was set at 0.35. An item was considered as cross loaded if it loaded under two or more factors. The analysis was rerun excluding the non-loaded and cross loaded items one by one. This process continued until no non-loaded or cross loaded items were left.

Any factor with less than 3 items was dropped. Internal consistency (or reliability) of a scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha. A scale with alpha equal to 0.60 or more was considered acceptable. Scale validity was measured using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, where KMO equal to 0.60 or more was considered acceptable. We have reported both alpha and KMO coefficients in the results section. Once the final scale was constructed, a summative score was obtained for each scale, and the score was divided into tertiles. For any scale, to keep the directions of all the items same, all negative statements were reversely coded.

The basic background characteristics (e.g., age, education, religion, ethnic group) of the girl and community samples were compared by arm (control, LTP and FTP) to check the arm balance. The

arms were considered balanced if there were no or few significant differences in background characteristics.

Enumeration data on individual household members were used to estimate the proportion of child marriage among males (married before age 21) and females (married before age 18). Results from univariate analysis of all items of the scales were presented for the full sample, and a summative score was presented by arm. The data from community samples were presented for females and males separately. The sample was not powered to detect change in the community sample disaggregated by gender and so results should be interpreted with caution. All group differences were assessed using χ^2 tests of independence for categorical variables and t-tests for continuous variables. Significance level was set at $p < .05$ for all bi-variate analyses.

No weighting was applied to present the results as the girls' sample was representative of the population. The proportion of male and female community members was 50:50 in our sample, while it was 40:60 in the population. We assume that over representation of female in the population was due to inclusion of married females, who are daughters of the household but not a regular member of that household.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This study follows the WHO ethical recommendations for researching violence against women (WHO, 2001) and the CIOMS International Guidelines for Ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies (2002) for both quantitative and qualitative component. The participants were interviewed in private and were informed orally of the purpose and nature of the study, its expected benefits, and voluntary nature of participation. As part of the consent procedure, the participants were informed that the data collected will be held in strict confidence. To ensure that the participants are aware that the survey includes questions on highly personal and sensitive topics, the interviewers forewarned the participants that some of the topics are difficult to talk about. The participants were free to terminate the interview at any point, and to skip any questions that she does not wish to respond to. Because of the low levels of literacy and concerns regarding confidentiality, verbal consent was obtained from the participants prior to conducting the interviews.

In order to interview minors (aged below 18) assent from guardians was sought. Oral consent from a guardian was sought first introducing the study as a study of health and life experiences of adolescent girls. Then the full consent procedure (assent) was followed with the selected girls. The interviewers then recorded on the consent form that the consent procedure had been administered, and noted whether permission to conduct the interview had been granted.

To maintain confidentiality, interviews were conducted in private. No interviewer conducted interview in their own community. No name was recorded on the PDAs. Instead, all the study participants were given a unique code and all the identifying information were kept in a separate file. The data file is exclusively accessed by the researchers and will only be used for identifying the participants during endline using their unique codes. The de-identified data are being analyzed and care is taken to present the research findings in sufficiently aggregated form to ensure that no study participant can be identified and avoid possibilities of backlash.

3.8 Limitations and Challenges

- (1) Collecting correct information on age is always a challenge in countries like Bangladesh where most people do not usually keep track of age and birth registration is a recent phenomenon. In these circumstances, it is likely that the participants in household enumeration were not always able to provide correct information on age. Thus, some of the randomly selected eligible respondents from enumeration data were found ineligible when we checked their age at the time of survey interview leading to replacement for them. Sometimes, the birth registration card/national ID card was found to be unavailable precluding any opportunities for cross-check of age.
- (2) Reporting of age at marriage may be biased because of the tradition of not tracking age. Also, some participants may have reported higher age of girls at marriage in order to avoid reporting child marriage, which is illegal in normal circumstances.
- (3) Reporting of usual residence status of the household members may be biased, which was one of the eligibility criteria. Some of the selected sample of girls and community members were found not to be usual residents of the household during enumeration, while they were found not to be usual residence at the time of survey interview. They had to be replaced by other randomly selected sample.

- (4) Reaching the girls was extremely difficult as they were busy the whole day with school, tuition and coaching. Therefore, the interviews had to be taken either in early morning or in evening. Some adolescent girls were interviewed in school with the permission of the authority as it was not possible to access them otherwise. It was harvest season and thus, some community members had to be interviewed in the field. Obviously, these were not ideal location or timing for conducting interviews. However, maximum effort was provided to maintain privacy and confidentiality. No interview was conducted in front of others, rather the privacy and confidentiality was ensured by requesting participants to take a break for few moments.
- (5) The family/community members were curious to know about what we are talking about with the girls and we had to stall the interview until they left and the interviews were lengthened. This caused difficulties in ending many interviews timely and lengthened the workday for data collectors.
- (6) Adolescent girls felt shy to answer some of the questions, particularly, about reproductive and sexual health.
- (7) Discrepancies were found in number of households in the clusters provided by the program implementing organization and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, and actual number of households derived from household enumeration conducted by icddr,b. We had inadequate number of eligible girls in seven clusters that we had to replace with newly formed clusters. Thus, extra time and resources was required to complete household enumeration.
- (8) Qualitative study was conducted in 4 villages only. Therefore, the results are not generalizable which may contribute to the differences in the quantitative and qualitative findings in this report

4. Results

Findings from the HH enumeration data

4.1 Child marriage in the study sites

The household enumeration data were used to report child marriage in the study villages. The enumerated population was 82,297, which included 34,585 males and 47,712 females. The reason for having larger number of females in the population was the inclusion of females, who are daughters of the households but got married and left the house. Calculation of age at first marriage and rate of child marriage included all listed household members irrespective of their current residence status. Information on marital status and age at marriage was collected for anyone aged 8 years or above. Nearly 76% of the female and 63% of the male population was currently married (Figure 5). Around 12% of the male population got married before they reached 18 years and 31% got married before they were 21 years old. As expected, a much higher proportion of the females (46%) were married before they were 15 years old and 35% got married before they reached 18 years making child marriage rate in the overall female population 81% (Figure 6). On the other hand, only 2% of the males were married before 15 and 10% before 18 years.

Figure 5. Current marital status of male and female population in the study villages, Rangpur, 2019 (N=82,297)

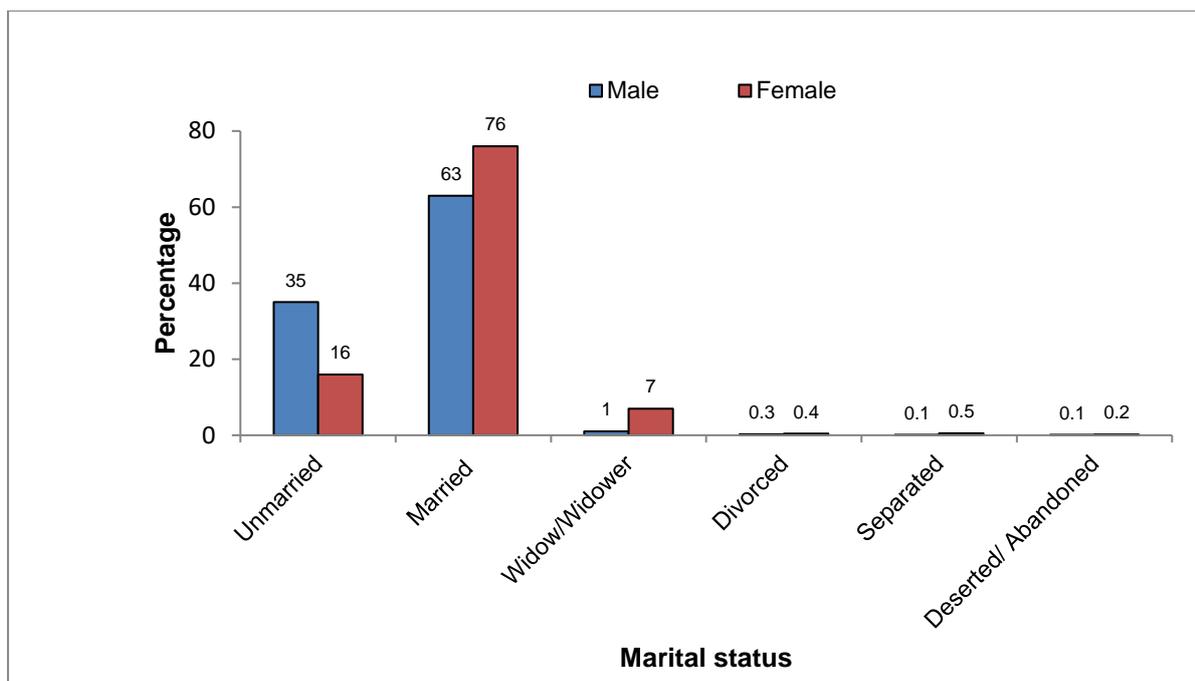
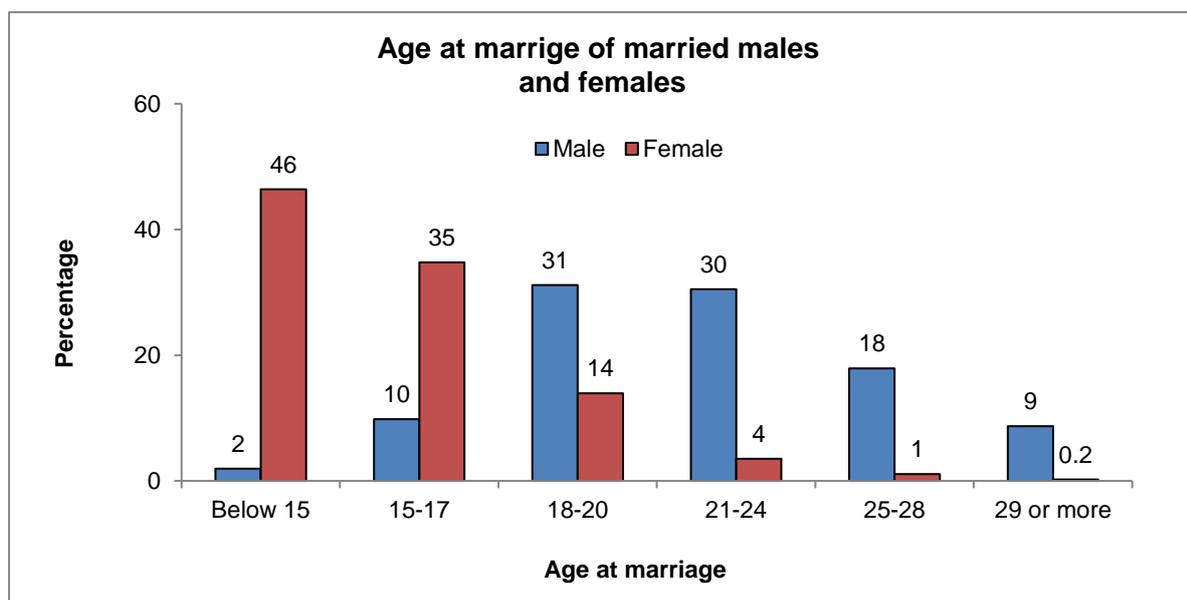


Figure 6. Age at marriage among married male and female population in the study villages, Rangpur, 2019, (N=55,458)



4.2.1 Estimates of child marriage among women and men in study villages

In the study villages, the rate of never married females among women aged 15-19 years was 40% while the rate among men of same age group was 97%. The median age at marriage for this age group was 16 and 17 for females and males respectively. The median age of marriage for females was lower than

men across all age groups (Tables 3 and 4). The median age at first marriage for women aged 20-24 years was 16 while it was 20 for men. The median age at marriage was 15 and 21 for women and men aged 20-49 years respectively.

Less than one percent of the girls aged 12-14 were married by the age 12 and the median age at first marriage for this group was 14. Among girls aged 15-19 years, 18% girls were married by the age of 15 with median age at marriage 16. Around 60% of the girls aged 15-19 years were married. Approximately 63% of the women aged 20-24 years were married by the age of 18. The median age at first marriage for women aged 15-29 years was 16. The findings show that there is an increase in median age at marriage over time. The median age at marriage for women aged 45-49 years was 14 while it was 16 for women aged 20-24 years.

About, 6% of the men aged 20-24 years were married before they reached 18, and 29% men aged 25-29 years were married by the age of 21. The median age at marriage was 22 for men aged 25-29 years. The median age at marriage was lower among higher age groups which indicate an increase in age at first marriage of the males.

Table 3. Percentage of female aged 12-49 years who were first married by specific exact ages and median age at first marriage, according to current age , Rangpur 2019 (N=47,712)

Current age	Percentage first married by exact age						Percentage never married	Median age at first marriage
	12	15	18	20	22	25		
12-14 years	0.33	na	na	na	na	na	94.90	14
15-19 years	0.86	18.48	na	na	na	Na	40.37	16.0
20-24 years	1.45	24.90	62.62	81.44	na	na	7.75	16.0
25-29 years	1.98	31.93	69.30	83.96	90.73	95.92	1.85	16.0

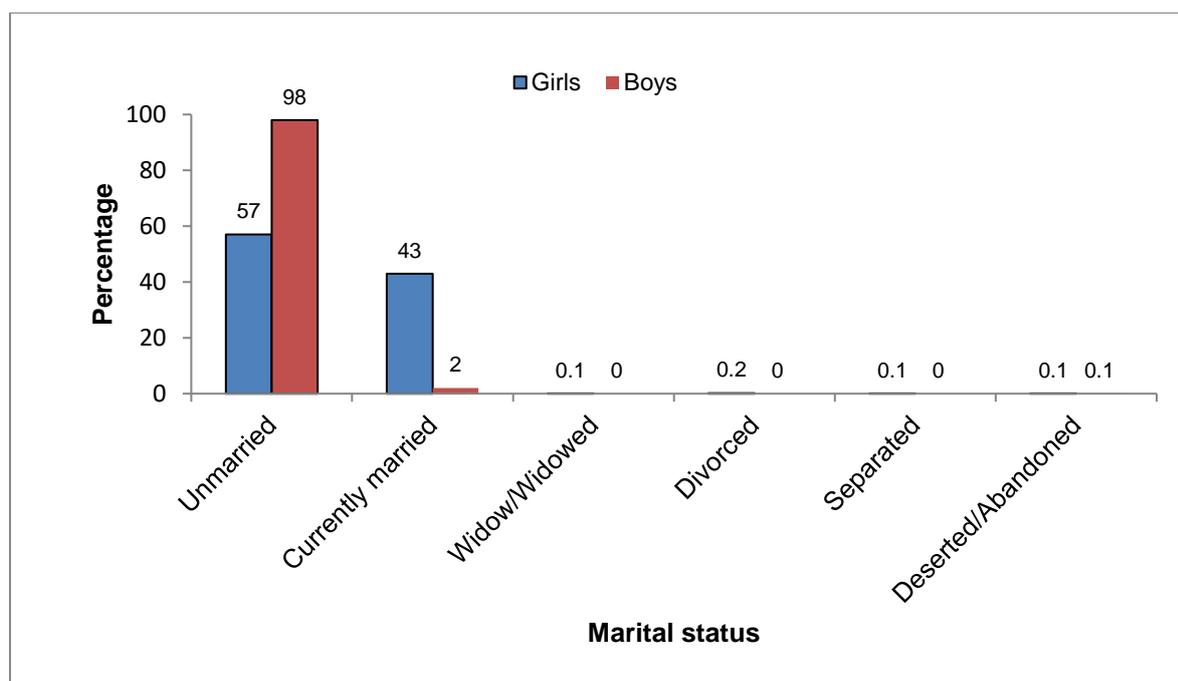
30-34 years	2.68	39.17	78.52	89.54	94.47	97.12	0.29	15.0
35-39 years	3.93	43.92	82.53	91.61	95.43	97.59	0.26	15.0
40-44 years	5.57	52.82	85.91	93.00	96.80	98.70	0.16	14.0
45-49 years	9.05	58.30	87.25	93.81	97.40	98.55	0.04	14.0
20-49 years	3.47	39.04	75.73	87.88	93.32	96.27	2.11	15.0

Table 4. Percentage of men aged 15-49 years who were first married by specific exact ages and median age at first marriage, according to current age, Rangpur 2019, (N=34,585)

Current age	Percentage first married by exact age					Percentage never married	Median age at first marriage
	15	18	21	25	29		
15-19 years	0.17	na	na	na	na	96.84	17.0
20-24 years	0.93	6.48	na	na	na	62.63	20.0
25-29 years	1.35	8.96	29.47	60.44	na	24.65	22.0
30-34 years	1.29	10.10	37.07	65.24	84.72	6.13	22.0
35-39 years	1.55	11.36	42.65	71.74	88.54	1.30	21.0
40-44 years	1.41	9.32	45.15	75.22	90.91	0.89	21.0
45-49 years	1.73	10.23	35.55	67.91	89.72	0.54	22.0
20-49 years	1.36	9.39	35.41	62.46	76.82	17.10	21.0

In 12-19 age group 43% of the adolescent girls and 2% of the adolescent boys were ever-married (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Marital status of adolescent girls and boys aged 12-19 years in the study villages in Rangpur, 2019 (N=12,583)



4.2.2 Comparison across study arms

A higher percentage (28%) of women aged 20-24 years were married by the age of 15 in FTP arm compared to LTP (24%) and control arms (23%). The differences between control vs. FTP and LTP vs. FTP were statistically significant. Similarly, a higher percentage of women were married before the age of 18 in FTP (66%) arm compared to LTP (62%) and control (60%) arms and the differences between control vs. FTP was statistically significant. The median age at first marriage for these women was 16 years across all study arms and the differences between arms were statistically significant (Table 5).

Table 5. Age at first marriage of women currently aged 20-24 years in study villages in Rangpur by arm, 2019

Characteristics, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample (N=5,430)
	Control (N=1,551)	LTP (N=2,152)	FTP (N=1,727)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Married by exact age 15	23.15	23.65	28.03	0.622	0.006*	0.005*	24.90
Married by exact age 18	59.70	62.27	65.66	0.089	0.001*	0.075	62.62

Median age at first marriage	16.35	16.25	16.17	0.041*	0.000*	0.013*	16.0
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* Significant at 5% level

Around, 1% of the men aged 20-24 years were married by the age of 15. There were no significant differences between any pair of arms. The median age at first marriage for this group of men was 20 across all study arms (Table 6).

Table 6. Age at first marriage of men currently aged 20-24 years in study villages in Rangpur by arm, 2019

Characteristics, %	Arm			p-value			
	Control (N=756)	LTP (N=1,011)	FTP (N=826)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample (N=2,593)
Married by exact age 15	1.06	0.89	0.85	0.679	0.885	0.846	0.93
Married by exact age 18	5.82	7.22	6.17	0.208	0.881	0.439	6.48
Median age at first marriage	19.57	19.67	19.54	0.167	0.692	0.320	20

Findings from quantitative and qualitative data

4.2 Background characteristics of the survey sample

A total of 1,275 girls aged 12- <16 years were enrolled into TP and interviewed successfully at baseline. Arm-wise distribution of the sample is as follows: 443 girls in the control arm, 412 in the LTP and 420 in FTP arms (Table 7).

Overall, there were limited statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics between arms. The only statistically significant difference was in religious identity where control has significantly fewer respondents identified as Muslim (86%) compared to the light arm (94%) and the full arm (93%). The average age of the girls was 13 years across all arms. Around 21% of the girls were aged 12. The girls aged 13, 14 and 15 years were represented in the sample as 28%; 26% and 25% respectively. Nearly all of the girls could read and write and attended formal schools. Around 30% of the girls had 8-

10 years of education, 48% had 6-7 years of education and another 22% had 1-5 years of education. Approximately, 98% of the girls were enrolled in school. Majority of the girls were Muslim (91%) with a relatively higher proportion of Hindu from the control arm (14%). Less than 1% of the girls from the control arm were Santals (an ethnic group), whereas all other girls were Bengalis. As expected, very few girls were from the lowest wealth quintile. Nearly half of the girls belong to the middle wealth quintile.

Table 7. Background characteristics of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16yr. by arm, Rangpur, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Characteristics, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample (N=1,275)
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Contro l vs LTP	Contro l vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean age (in years) (range, SD)	13.57 (12-15, 1.08)	13.50 (12-15, 1.08)	13.50 (12-15, 1.07)	0.265	0.813	0.182	13.55 (12-15, 1.08)
Age in years							
12 years	20.99	21.60	20.24	0.098	0.993	0.075	20.94
13 years	25.73	32.04	25.71				27.76
14 years	27.77	21.60	28.33				25.96
15 years	25.51	24.76	25.71				25.33
Literacy							
Cannot read or write	0.45	0.24	0.00	0.766	0.149	0.360	0.24
Can read or write	0.45	0.24	0.00				0.24
Can read and write	99.10	99.51	100				99.53
Type of educational institutions attended							
School	79.91	78.64	82.62	0.269	0.285	0.329	80.39
Madrassa	9.71	7.52	7.14				8.16
Both school and madrassa	9.93	13.59	10.24				11.22
Never attended education institute	0.45	0.24	0.00				0.24
Level of education							
No formal education	0.45	0.49	0.24	0.516	0.393	0.873	0.39
1-5 years of education	19.64	22.82	24.05				22.12
6-7 years of education	47.86	48.79	46.90				47.84
8-10 years of education	32.05	27.92	28.81				29.65
Still continuing education	96.37	97.81	98.5	0.214	0.041	0.410	97.56
Religion							

Muslim	86.46	94.17	93.33	0.000*	0.001*	0.616	91.22
Hindu	13.54	5.83	6.67				8.78
Ethnic group							
Bengali	99.55	100	100	0.172	0.168	-	99.84
Santal	0.45	0.00	0.00				0.16
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	0.68	0.97	1.43	0.482	0.243	0.353	1.02
Second	14.00	14.56	10.24				12.94
Middle	50.79	45.87	48.81				48.55
Fourth	32.05	34.47	36.19				34.20
Highest	2.48	4.13	3.33				3.29

* Significant at 5% level

A total of 626 adult community members (308 women and 318 men) were interviewed at baseline. The background characteristics of the community sample are presented in Table 8 (women) and Table 9 (men).

In the women community sample, 105 were from control arm, and 107 and 96 women were from LTP and FTP arms respectively (Table 8). Overall, this sample displays comparable socio demographic characteristics across arms, apart from religion. The average age of the women was 45 years, with no significant difference between arms. As expected, the combined proportion of women from the highest two age groups (55-64y and 65+y) was lower. Almost 51% of the women did not have any formal education and 56% could not read or write. Around four percent of the women attended *madrassa* and 5% attended college or university. There was significant difference in type of educational institution attended by women sample between LTP and FTP arms. Thus, college or university education was higher and *madrassa* education was lower in the LTP arm compared to the FTP arm. Overall, 87% of the women community sample were currently married and 9% of them were widowed. About 17% of them had an adolescent daughter and 16% had an adolescent boy. Similar to the girl sample, 92% of the women were Muslim with a higher proportion of Hindu in the control arm compared to the intervention arms and these differences were statistically significant. Women in the FTP arm were more economically active compared to the control and LTP arms and the difference was statistically significant.

Table 8. Background characteristics of women aged ≥ 25 years, Rangpur at baseline by arm, 2019 (N = 308)

Characteristics, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample (N=308)
	Control (N=105)	LTP (N=107)	FTP (N=96)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean age in years (Range, SD)	45.44 (25-80, 13.56)	44.42 (25-91, 13.92)	43.58 (25- 99, 14.77)	0.587	0.352	0.678	44.50 (25-99, 14.05)
Age (categorical)							
25-34 years	26.67	28.97	26.04				27.27
35-44 years	22.86	26.17	37.50				28.57
45-54 years	22.86	23.36	15.63	0.823	0.191	0.315	20.78
55-64 years	19.05	13.08	15.63				15.91
65 and above years	8.57	8.41	5.21				7.47
Literacy							
cannot read or write	57.14	55.14	55.21				55.84
Can read Only	0.00	0.93	1.04	0.554	0.669	0.513	0.65
Can write Only	0.95	0.00	2.08				0.97
Can read and write	41.90	43.93	41.67				42.53
Educational institutions							
School	46.67	36.45	52.08				44.81
Madrassa	1.90	2.80	6.25				3.57
College or University	3.81	9.35	2.08				5.19
Both	0.95	2.80	0.00	0.210	0.440	0.018*	1.30
Not attended in any institutions	44.76	48.60	38.54				44.16
Other	1.90	0.00	1.04				0.97
Level of education							
No formal education	54.29	49.53	47.92				50.65
1-5 years of education	21.90	15.89	29.17	0.185	0.683	0.062	22.08
6-10 years of education	20.00	24.30	18.75				21.10
11 years and above education	3.81	10.28	4.17				6.17
Marital Status							
Currently married	87.62	85.98	88.54				87.34
Divorced	1.90	1.87	1.04				1.62
Widowed/widower	8.57	9.35	10.42	0.905	0.519	0.554	9.42
Separated	1.90	1.87	0.00				1.30
Never married	0.00	0.93	0.00				0.32
Has any adolescent daughter							
Yes	14.29	15.89	19.79	0.745	0.298	0.467	16.56
No	85.71	84.11	80.21				83.44

Has any adolescent boy							
Yes	13.33	14.02	21.88	0.885	0.111	0.143	16.23
No	86.67	85.98	78.13				83.77
Religion							
Islam	82.86	99.07	93.75	0.000*	0.017*	0.038*	91.88
Hindu	17.14	0.93	6.25				8.12
Primary occupation							
Unemployed	2.86	3.74	3.13	0.359	0.099	0.038*	3.25
Housewife	92.38	86.92	81.25				87.01
Agriculture	0.95	0.00	4.17				1.62
Day labour	0.95	0.00	6.25				2.27
Business	0.95	0.93	0.00				0.65
Self-employed (tailor/ Homeopath Doctor)	0.00	0.93	2.08				0.97
Service(Govt./non- Govt./Madrassa teacher)	0.95	6.54	3.13				3.57
Other (Student/Domestic worker/work in shop)	0.95	0.93	0.00				0.65

* Significant at 5% level

Among, 318 community men sample, 110 were from control arm, 107 were from LTP arm and another 101 from FTP arm. Overall, the sample was comparable across arms except for religion. The mean age of the men was 48 years. Men from FTP (49 years) were slightly older compared to the other two arms (47 years). However, this difference was not statistically significant. Age distributions were more or less similar across all arms. Similar to the women sample, in all arms the proportion of men in the highest age group (65+) was lower than in the other age groups. Forty-two percent of the men did not have any formal education and 48% could not read or write. Almost 96% of the men were currently married with 16% of them having at least one adolescent daughter and 22% having at least one adolescent son. The men were predominantly Muslim (92%). The control arm included much higher proportion of Hindus compared to intervention arms arm (15.5% vs. 6.5 in LTP and 2.9% in FTP) and the difference was statistically significant. Overall, about 46% of the men were involved with agriculture followed by business (22%), while 8% were unemployed with no statistical differences by arms (Table 9).

Table 9. Background characteristics of men aged ≥ 25 years, Rangpur at baseline by arm, 2019 (N = 318)

Characteristics, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample (N=318)
	Control (N=110)	LTP (N=107)	FTP (N=101)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean age in years (Range, SD)	47.21 (25-76, 12.87)	47.35 (25-89, 15.35)	49 (25- 98, 16.58)	0.943	0.382	0.456	47.83 (25-98, 14.89)
Age (categorical)							
25-34 years	20.91	25.23	24.75				23.58
35-44 years	22.73	22.43	17.82				21.07
45-54 years	22.73	20.56	18.81	0.961	0.788	0.857	20.75
55-64 years	20.00	18.69	22.77				20.44
65 and above years	13.64	13.08	15.84				14.15
Literacy							
cannot read or write	45.45	43.93	53.47				47.48
Can read Only	0.91	0.93	0.00	0.975	0.344	0.263	0.63
Can write Only	0.00	0.00	0.00				0.00
Can read and write	53.64	55.14	46.53				51.89
Educational institutions							
School	40.00	50.47	38.61				43.08
Madrasa	2.73	4.67	7.92				5.03
College or University	10.00	8.41	6.93				8.49
Both	6.36	4.67	1.98	0.508	0.319	0.239	4.40
Not attended in any institutions	40.00	31.78	43.56				38.36
Other	0.91	0.00	0.99				0.63
Level of education							
No formal education	42.73	37.38	47.52				42.45
1-5 years of education	19.09	28.04	23.76	0.319	0.512	0.455	23.58
6-10 years of education	23.64	25.23	18.81				22.64
11 years and above education	14.55	9.35	9.90				11.32
Marital Status							
Currently married	96.36	96.26	95.05				95.91
Divorced	0.00	0.00	0.00				0.00
Widowed/widower	0.91	1.87	1.98	0.765	0.649	0.783	1.57
Separated	0.00	0.00	0.99				0.31
Never married	2.73	1.87	1.98				2.20
Has any adolescent daughter							
Yes	19.09	15.89	12.87	0.535	0.220	0.536	16.04
No	80.91	84.11	87.13				83.96
Has any adolescent boy							
Yes	23.64	19.63	20.79	0.473	0.620	0.834	21.88
No	76.36	80.37	79.21				78.62

Religion							
Islam	84.55	93.46	97.03	0.036*	0.002*	0.229	91.51
Hindu	15.45	6.54	2.97				8.49
Primary occupation							
Unemployed	7.27	5.61	10.89				7.86
Agricultural work	40.91	43.93	52.48				45.60
Day labour	9.09	4.67	8.91				7.55
Business	20.91	28.04	15.84				21.70
Self-employed (driver/carpenter/ tailor/ Homeopath Doctor)	14.55	8.41	7.92	0.529	0.203	0.071	10.38
Service(Govt./Non- Govt./Madrassa teacher)	5.45	6.54	0.99				4.40
Other (Stud/Domestic worker/work in shop)	1.82	2.80	2.97				2.52

* Significant at 5% level

4.3 Background characteristics of the qualitative sample interviewed in-depth

A total of 20 girls and 10 boys were interviewed in-depth. More of the girls and boys were aged 14 to 15 compared to those in 12 to 13 age categories (Table 10). The girl sample seems to lag behind in terms of academics than the boys. While the age distribution was same in girl and boy sample a lower proportion of girls were in G-9 to 10. Most of the girls were studying in mixed-sex schools. While all the boys were studying in mixed-sex schools two girls were studying in all girl school/s and four girls were attending *madrassas*. Two girls worked as seasonal day labor. No one else worked in the sample. Almost one-third of the fathers and one sixth of the mothers had SSC (passed G-10). Overall, the parents seem to be relative more educated in the girl sample compared to the boy sample. The fathers pursued mostly farming, rickshaw/van/auto-rickshaw driving, while half of the mothers were homemakers. One-third of the mothers raised poultry or livestock. A little more than half of the sample came from rural middle class, almost a third came from financially disadvantaged families.

Table 10: Background characteristics of the sample interviewed in-depth of adolescent girls and boys (N=30)

Characteristics	Girls (20)	Boys (10)	Total (N=30)
Age group, yr			
12-13	8	4	12
14-15	12	6	18

Education, yr			
6-8	13	5	18
9-10	7	5	12
Educational Institution type			
Co-Education	14	10	24
Girls/Boys School	2	0	2
Madrassa	4	0	4
Occupation			
Student	18	10	28
Student+day labour	2	0	2
Father's education			
No Education	5	4	9
1-4	2	1	3
5-9	7	2	9
10+	6	3	9
Father's occupation			
Farmer	8	5	13
Driver (Van, Rickshaw, auto)	4	1	5
Day labour	4	1	5
Business	1	2	3
Tailor	1	0	1
Private service	2	0	2
Mechanic	0	1	1
Mother's education			
No education	7	5	12
1-4	0	0	0
5-9	10	2	12
10+	3	3	6
Mother's occupation			
Housewife	7	8	15
Poultry/ livestock	10	0	10
NGO staff/teacher	1	1	2
Tailor	2	1	3
Family type			
Nuclear	14	9	23
Extended	6	1	7
Socioeconomic status			
Poor	7	2	9
Middle class	12	6	18
Rich	1	2	3
Religion			
Islam	20	10	30

4.4 Proximate drivers of child marriage

4.4.1 Building intrinsic agency

Girls' intrinsic agency was measured around four domains: (1) self-efficacy; (2) Aspiration about marriage and education; (3) knowledge, attitudes about practice regarding menstruation; (4) knowledge about sexual and reproductive health (SRH); (5) attitudes regarding gender.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Self-efficacy of the girls was measured based on girls' perceived confidence in achieving life goals in education, healthcare, mobility, marriage, and income earning. The response options included: not at all confident, somewhat confident, fairly confident, and strongly confident. The scale was validated using factor analysis. All eight items were retained in the final scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.79 with two factors.

The results on girl's self-efficacy have been presented in Table 11. More than half of the girls were strongly confident that they could achieve their goals despite challenges (53%). Approximately 68% of the girls reported strong confidence in accessing their desired level of education and 56% reported strong confidence in refusing marriage. More than half of the girls (57%) were also strongly confident that they could participate in income generating activities if they wished to do so. Nearly 44% of the girls were strongly confident that they could speak in community about girl's problems. Proportion of girls strongly confident in freedom of mobility was much lower than in the previous indicators with only about 28% of the girls having strong confidence in leaving home without permission. About 17% and 14% reported strong confidence in accessing healthcare and participating in income earning even if they had objection from their families, respectively.

Summative score of the scale are also presented in the Table 11. The scale scores range from 0 – 24 where higher score indicates higher self-efficacy. The mean score of self-efficacy was slightly higher in both intervention arms compared to the control arm (16 in LTP and FTP vs. 15 in control arm) and these differences were statistically significant. Based on the summative score, tertiles of self-efficacy were calculated and stratified indicating 'low', 'medium' or 'high' self-efficacy. A small percentage of girls from all arms had low self-efficacy (6-9%), while majority of the girls had medium (36-47%) or higher self-

efficacy (44-58%) across arms. The difference between intervention and control arms was statistically significant.

Table 11. Reported self-efficacy of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 years, Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,244)

Items	Girls aged 12 - <16, %			
	Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident
Achieving life goals despite challenges	5.06	14.39	27.33	53.22
Achieving desired education	2.41	8.28	21.70	67.60
Accessing healthcare if ill	27.41	35.45	20.18	16.96
Leaving home if needed without permission	22.75	27.57	21.70	27.97
Speaking about girls' problems in community	5.23	21.38	28.94	44.45
Refusing marriage if not desired	5.23	14.79	24.12	55.87
Working for money or in income generation if wanted	3.22	4.10	35.77	56.91
Working for money or in income generation if family objected	25.64	14.47	46.06	13.83

Summative score, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample
	Control (N=430)	LTP (398)	FTP (416)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean score (range, SD),	15.33 (2-24, 4.76)	16.34 (0-24, 4.75)	16.42 (2-24, 4.50)	0.002*	0.000*	0.808	16.02 (0-24, 4.70)
Score Tertiles, %							
Low Self-efficacy	8.84	6.78	6.25				7.32
Medium Self-efficacy	47.21	39.95	35.82	0.026*	0.000*	0.406	41.08
High Self-efficacy	43.95	53.27	57.93				51.61
Cronbach's alpha= 0.79; KMO= 0.80							

* Significant at 5% level

Aspirations about education and marriage

Girls were asked about their aspirations around education and preferred age at marriage. The findings on aspiration about education and marriage are presented in Table 12. A high proportion of girls from each arm (37% - 41%) wish to have a professional degree such as doctor, engineer etc. An

overwhelming majority of the girls (93-97%) would like to continue their studies after marriage. The difference between desire to continue study after marriage between control (93%) and FTP (95%) arms was significant. The majority of the girls would like to get married in their 20's. The mode of preferred age at marriage was 20 across arms. The analyses were conducted following age categories for preferred age at marriage. The findings showed that one in three girls would like to get married between 24 and 27 years while one in five girls preferred marriage between 21 and 24 years. The difference between LTP (22 yrs) and FTP (21 yrs) was significant in terms of preferred age at marriage.

Table 12. Aspiration of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019. (N = 1275)

Characteristics, %	Girls aged 12 - <16 years						
	Arm			p-value			
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Desired level of highest education							
Primary	0	0	0				
Secondary	3.16	2.91	4.29				3.45
Higher secondary	11.51	9.22	10.95				10.59
Honor's/B.A./Fazil	20.54	16.50	19.05				18.75
Masters/M.A.	26.19	29.13	22.86				26.04
Professional degree	36.79	40.29	41.19	0.159	0.786	0.268	39.37
Diploma	0.45	1.21	0.48				0.71
Not interested to study/ currently not studying	1.35	0.49	0.48				0.78
Others	0	0.24	0.71				0.31
Desire to continue education after marriage	92.78	96.60	95.00	0.062	0.034*	0.853	94.75
Preferred age of marriage (Mode & range)	20 (16-35)	20 (18-35)	20 (16-40)				20 (16-40)
Preferred age of marriage (categorical)							
< 18	0.23	0	0.48				0.24
18 -<21	41.31	35.44	44.76				40.55
21-< 24	21.44	23.06	21.19	0.114	0.251	0.007*	44.47
24-<27	26.86	30.83	24.05				13.41
≥27	9.71	10.19	9.29				0.94

Does not want to get married	0.45	0.49	0.24	0.39
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* Significant at 5% level

Qualitative evidence on aspirations about education, employment, and marriage

Results from the qualitative data substantiate the survey findings. The qualitative data suggest that the adolescent girls nurture high aspirations regarding education. Their aspirations ranged between G-12 and higher studies beyond Masters. Most girls aspire to complete Masters while others wanted to complete graduation. It seems girls' aspirations regarding education is tipped towards higher education.

Data from half of the girls who had a discussion on their education with their families indicate that these families almost exclusively supported higher education of girls. Some of them nurtured a dream about their daughters' higher education. They did not only promise to ensure support to their education as long as they wish to study, but also encouraged them to dream about it.

"I want to complete Masters. If I do well in SSC I'll study Nursing. If not, I'll get admitted in a college. [My parents] will let me do what I wish. I told my father I want to study Nursing. He said, 'Okay, if you do well in SSC I'll get you admitted [to the Nursing school].'"

IDI-Girl-16_village D

"I want to go a long way in education. My parents dream of making me a doctor. I have seen many in our village to become doctors or policeman. This encourages me."

IDI-Girl-12_village B

"If my parents allow I'll complete Masters. If not I'll become a pilot. One day ...I told my father that I'll become a pilot. My mother said. 'What a desire! Your father does not have any money. How would he make you a pilot? ...Our daughters will go to another house and feed them earning an income. What's the use of struggling to educate and to get them employed?' My father says in response, 'We'll be recognized for this.'"

IDI-Girl-14_village B

"I want to be a doctor. Girls from a family nearby studied and prospered. My parents tell me, 'See how they have become big by getting education? You need to do the same.'" I want to become big keeping in mind my parents aspiration. I want to study attentively."

IDI-Girl-13_village B

"It is my aspiration that I'll definitely complete Masters. My father is most enthusiastic about it....My father says he will educate me up to the level I want to complete. He asks me, 'Don't you want to go for higher studies abroad beyond Masters?' I told him, 'Pray for me so that I can complete Masters and go abroad for higher studies.'"

IDI-Girl-9_village C

Findings suggest that girls' aspiration regarding timing of marriage was similar in all the four villages. Almost all the adolescent girls aspired not to marry before they were 18 while majority of them wanted to get married after 20. Aspirations of the girls, who wish to marry between 18 and 20, are driven by their consciousness of the legal age of marriage and the social norm of marrying by 16; desire for gaining maturity to deal with issues in marital life beforehand; and desire for getting some education. They try to find a solution considering all these drivers, which are not necessarily unidirectional.

"I want to marry between 18 and 20 years of age. A woman at 18 has some understanding and wisdom. But it is best to allow more time for allowing her to understand how to run a family."

IDI-Girl-4_village A

"I want to get married after 18, rather at 20. I want to study. That is why I want to marry so late. I want to study, but the community members say it is difficult to get older girls married. They do not receive marriage proposals easily."

IDI-Girl-6_village C

The girls' aspiration to marry after reaching age 20 was linked to education but only two of them mentioned getting employed and being financially independent before they get married.

"I won't marry now. I hope I don't have to marry. I don't like it. I am planning that many years after joining nursing I'll not marry at all. I'll take care of my parents. I'll educate my brother. We have a lot of scarcity in our family, which I want to overcome. This is why I want to look after my family instead of marrying. But my parents won't let me do this. So, I'll probably end up marrying no earlier than 25 or 26."

IDI-Girl-16_village D

"I want to marry at 30. I want to marry once I am well established; I have good education; and I earn well."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

One-third of the girls defined their aspirations regarding timing of marriage not in terms of age but in terms of education.

"I wanted to study medicine. ... It is useless to tell them about it. ...I said, 'I won't marry now. I'll study.' My father retorted, 'It is for us to decide'. ...I cannot collect the courage to tell them. I am afraid he'll retort back again."

IDI-Girl-1_village A

"My dream is to complete education first. Not sure which year I'll complete my studies. I guess I may need another 7 to 8 years [for completing education]."

IDI-Girl-5_village A

*"I'll either not marry or ask the groom to wait until I have completed my studies. ...I told this to my mother. She got angry. She told me, 'Don't discuss this with anyone. People will say this is bad. Isn't it odd to talk about own marriage? ...People will say, 'Look she talks about her own marriage. She is shameless. She is so obsessed with catching a **bhatar** (husband).'"*

IDI-Girl-9_village C

"I have no wish to marry now. I'll marry late. About 10 year later. This is because I want to complete my education; get a job; and become self-reliant."

IDI-Girl-10_village C

"I'll marry only after completing my studies not matter how old I get."

IDI-Girl-14_village B

"No matter how old I get I'll marry only after I achieve a high status. I have to complete my education. I cannot reach a high position unless I complete my studies. My parents want to get me married after 18. If I have good grades in SSC (G-10) then they'll let me continue my studies."

IDI-Girl-15_village B

In all the study villages even though the girls expressed their aspirations and views about marriage and education, they said that the decision regarding timing of marriage would ultimately depend on their parents' and they would have to comply with their parents' wishes.

One of these girls' expressed a higher than usual sensitivity towards the norm of not participating in decision making regarding own marriage went to such extent as to considered it futile even to think about timing of marriage as she was conscious that at the end of the day she has to comply with her parents' wishes.

"I have never thought about my marriage timing. ...What is the use of thinking about it? Why would I think about it? If my marriage is arranged what good will come of my thinking about it? If my parents arrange it I cannot do anything about it....I can't disobey my parents."

IDI-Girl-20_village D

Only a few girls interviewed in-depth wanted to pursue employment. Majority of them wanted to work as professionals (e.g., doctors, engineers, teachers, police, and pilots) while several of them wished to generate income by working as tailors and garment workers, and the rest were willing to undertake whatever work they can manage to do. All the girls from village C aspired to pursue non-professional occupation.

Knowledge, attitude and practice around menstruation among adolescent girls

Table 13 presents findings about knowledge and practices of adolescent girls regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Over 95% of the girls from each arm had heard about menstruation. A slightly higher percentage of girls from LTP (82%) reported knowledge about two or more hygienic absorbents

compared to control (80%) and FTP (79%). The difference between LTP and FTP was statistically significant.

Mothers were found to be the most common source of knowledge about menstruation for adolescent girls (76%), followed by sister or sister-in-law (57%) and friends (48%). Some less frequent sources were cited namely, books and journals (15%), other female family members (11%), NGO workers (11%), teachers (11%) and other sources (0.01%). Interestingly internet/social media was cited as a source of information about menstruation by just 4% of the girls from control arm, while 2% and 1% from FTP and LTP respectively. The difference between the control arm and intervention arms were statistically significant in terms of this source of knowledge.

A higher percentage of girls from FTP (67%) agreed that menstruation is shameful and embarrassing for girls compared to control (63%) and LTP (56%) and the difference between the two intervention arms (LTP vs. FTP) was statistically significant. Around 49% girls from control and FTP agreed that one should not enter a kitchen during menstruation, while, 46% from LTP did so.

Around 86% girls from two intervention arms and 89% from control arm already had menarche. Between 64% and 69% of the girls from the study arms use old reused cloths and 52% in control and 53% in LTP and FTP used sanitary pad during menstruation. Around 65% of the girls from control and FTP arms and 60% from LTP arms washed and reused the absorbents, while 34%, 37% and 40% girls from FTP, LTP and control arms respectively buried the absorbent underground.

Girls were also asked about restrictions practiced during menstruation such as avoiding household work, playing/going outside/jumping, and going to school. Around one third of the girls reported no restrictions, while almost half of the girls (50% in two intervention arms and 56% in control arm) reported to have 1-2 restrictions and over 18% of the girls reported having three to five restrictions. The difference between control (higher restriction) and FTP (lower restriction) in numbers of restrictions practiced during menstruation was statistically significant.

Table 13. Knowledge, attitude and practice regarding menstruation, adolescent girls aged 12 - <16yr., Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Adolescent girls aged 12-<16 years	
Arm, %	p-value

	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=413)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full Sample, %
Knowledge about Menstruation							
had heard about menstruation	95.71	97.57	95.95	0.133	0.859	0.187	96.39
Knowledge of 2 of more hygienic absorbents	79.95	81.84	78.66	0.726	0.133	0.039*	80.15
Source of knowledge about Menstruation							
Mother / Grandma	74.06	74.38	78.16	0.916	0.167	0.207	75.51
Teacher	7.08	7.46	9.93	0.830	0.141	0.215	8.14
Sister/sister-in-law	59.91	53.73	58.06	0.073	0.591	0.216	57.28
Friends	47.17	48.51	47.89	0.700	0.836	0.861	47.84
Books and Journal	14.86	14.18	16.63	0.782	0.485	0.336	15.22
Internet/social media/ TV/ Radio/ Billboard/Poster /festoon	4.25	1.00	1.74	0.004	0.035*	0.365	2.36
NGO worker/ Girls club	7.31	7.71	9.43	0.827	0.271	0.384	8.14
Other female family members	13.44	9.95	10.42	0.119	0.181	0.825	11.31
Other source (Neighbour, doctor, health centre, Community clinic)	1.42	0.75	1.99	0.355	0.525	0.130	1.38
Attitudes about menstruation							
Agreed: menstruation is shameful and embarrassing for girls	62.74	56.47	66.75	0.066	0.227	0.003*	62.00
Agreed: One should not enter the kitchen during menstruation	49.06	45.77	48.88	0.345	0.960	0.377	47.93
Practice regarding Menstruation							
Had menarche	89.15	86.07	86.85	0.178	0.308	0.747	87.39
Absorbent materials used							
Old reused cloth	68.78	64.45	68.57	0.217	0.951	0.249	67.32
Sanitary pad	52.12	52.89	53.14	0.835	0.782	0.947	52.70
New cloths/ Tissue	8.99	8.96	5.71	0.987	0.092	0.100	7.91
Underwear	14.29	11.05	11.46	0.192	0.257	0.863	12.32
Disposal of absorbent							
Burns it	2.12	1.16	0.57	0.312	0.074	0.404	1.30
Throws it with routine waste	6.61	10.69	10.57	0.050*	0.056	0.958	9.22
Flushes/hides it	11.90	13.58	13.43	0.498	0.536	0.952	12.94
Buries underground	40.21	36.99	34.00	0.375	0.083	0.409	37.15

Washes and reuses it	64.55	59.83	65.14	0.190	0.867	0.147	63.22
Other	0.79	0.87	1.71	0.913	0.261	0.323	1.12
Restrictions practiced during menstruation							
No restriction	21.96	29.19	31.71				27.47
1-2 restrictions	56.08	49.71	49.71	0.098	0.009*	0.707	51.96
3-5 restrictions	21.96	20.81	18.00				20.30
5+ restrictions	0.00	0.29	0.57				0.28

* Significant at 5% level

Attitudes regarding menstruation among Community members

Attitudes regarding menstruation among community members were measured using three items with four response options. The findings are presented in Table 14. A higher percentage of women (49%) strongly disagreed that menstruation is shameful and embarrassing for girls compared to men (32%). In contrast, a higher percentage of men (46%) disagreed with the statement that ‘one should not enter a kitchen during menstruation’ compared to women (25%). Over 66% of community men and women disagreed that “a mother can discuss menstruation with her daughter”.

A scale was constructed to measure attitudes of the community regarding menstruation using factor analyses. The scale retained all the three items with Cronbach’s alpha=0.44, and KMO=0.56. The score ranged from 0 to 9, with a higher score referring to negative attitudes. The mean score for attitudes regarding menstruation among women and men were 5 in all study arms. About half of the women and men had neutral attitudes towards menstruation. Between 17% and 25% had positive attitudes.

Table 14. Attitudes of community women and men aged ≥25 years about menstruation at baseline, Rangpur, 2019 (N=626)

Items	Women and men aged ≥25 years ,%							
	Women (n=308)				Men (n=318)			
Attitudes regarding menstruation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Menstruation is a shameful and embarrassing situation for girls	14.94	12.34	23.38	49.35	16.98	19.50	31.76	31.76
One should not enter into the kitchen during menstruation because of unclean rituals	24.03	27.27	23.38	25.32	9.12	12.26	33.02	45.60
A mother can discuss menstruation with her daughter	3.90	6.82	20.78	68.51	1.57	6.60	25.47	66.35

Cronbach's alpha=0.44, KMO=0.56

	Arm			p-value			Arm			p-value		
	Control	LTP	FTP	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Control	LTP	FTP	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP
Mean score (Range, SD)	4.62 (0-9, 2.08)	5.13 (0-9, 2.13)	5.15 (0-9, 2.02)	0.084	0.070	0.931	4.88 (0-9, 2.15)	4.45 (1-9, 1.89)	4.54 (1-9, 1.81)	0.126	0.222	0.737

**Score
Tertiles,
%**

Negative attitude	35.24	21.50	23.96				28.18	36.45	32.67			
Neutral attitude	48.57	53.27	52.08	0.054	0.151	0.913	52.73	49.53	50.50	0.350	0.759	0.782
Positive attitude	16.19	25.23	23.96				19.09	14.02	16.83			

Knowledge of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) among girls

Roughly one in four girls had ever attended any classes in school on SRH. A higher percentage of girls from LTP arm (41%) had correct knowledge regarding getting pregnant during the first sexual intercourse compared to control (36%) and FTP (37%) arms. The difference between LTP and FTP was statistically significant. Similarly, a higher percentage of girls from LTP (27%) had correct knowledge about a women's most fertile time between periods compared to the control and FTP arms. The differences in this between control vs. LTP and LTP vs. FTP were statistically significant. A higher percentage of girls from control arms (82%) could correctly identify at least one negative consequence of teen pregnancy, while 80% and 78% from the LTP and FTP respectively could do so. Between 15% and 21% of the girls from three study arms could spontaneously name at least one sexually transmitted infection (STI) and less than 1% could spontaneously name two STIs. The difference between control (15%) and LTP (21%) was statistically significant. A higher percentage of girls from two intervention arms could spontaneously name at least two institutions providing sexual health care (43% in both intervention arms) and reproductive health care (39% in both intervention arms) compared to the control arm. Between 28% and 33% of the girls had knowledge about contraceptive methods. Nearly half of the girls who had knowledge about contraceptive methods could correctly identify at least two sources for obtaining contraceptives (Table 15).

Girls were asked about their confidence in seeking SRH information and accessing SRH services, if needed. A higher percentage of girls from LTP arm (45%) were strongly confident that they could seek SRH information if needed compared to control (37%) and FTP (43%) arm. The difference between control and LTP was statistically significant. In contrast, a higher percentage of girls from FTP arm

(51%) reported strong confidence in accessing SRH service if needed compared to LTP (47%) and control (42%). The differences between two intervention arms and the control arm were statistically significant.

Table 15. Knowledge of SRH among adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 years, Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Knowledge of SRH	Adolescent girls aged 12-<16 years						
	Arm, %			p-value			
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full Sample, %
Ever attended school classes on SRH	24.15	26.21	24.52	0.366	0.749	0.492	24.94
Correctly stated that a woman can get pregnant the first time she has sex	36.12	41.26	37.14	0.091	0.768	0.008*	38.12
Correctly identified that a woman's most fertile time is between periods	24.60	26.70	23.81	0.013*	0.852	0.015*	25.02
Correctly identified at least one negative consequence of teen pregnancy	82.07	80.00	78.29	0.443	0.168	0.547	80.16
Able to name spontaneously at least 1 STIs	14.67	21.36	19.05	0.035*	0.227	0.613	18.27
Able to name spontaneously at least 2 STIs	0.45	0.24	0.48	0.035*	0.227	0.613	0.39
Able to name spontaneously at least 2 places to receive Sexual Health care	39.05	42.96	42.62	0.140	0.386	0.055	41.49
Able to name spontaneously at least 2 places to receive Reproductive Health care	34.99	38.83	38.81	0.506	0.023*	0.064	37.49
Reported knowledge of contraceptive methods	33.18	31.55	28.33	0.611	0.123	0.311	31.06
Correctly identified at least 2 sources of contraceptive methods	45.58	56.92	49.58	0.106	0.392	0.066	50.51
Confidence in seeking SRH information if needed							
Not at all confident	12.19	7.04	7.62				9.02
Somewhat confident	23.93	17.23	23.33	0.002*	0.092	0.129	21.57
Fairly confident	26.86	30.83	26.19				27.92
Strongly confident	37.02	44.90	42.86				41.49

Confidence in accessing SRH services if needed

Not at all confident	12.64	7.52	8.57				9.65
Somewhat confident	23.48	16.75	16.90	0.001*	0.008*	0.315	19.14
Fairly confident	21.67	28.88	23.33				24.55
Strongly confident	42.21	46.84	51.19				46.67

* Significant at 5% level

Qualitative evidence on knowledge on Reproductive Health and Menstruation

Source of knowledge

Adolescent girls were found to obtain knowledge on reproductive health and menstruation from various sources. Information was obtained mostly from mothers and female family members or relatives. Most adolescent girls were found to obtain information on reproductive health from female peers and physical education curriculum in school. Some adolescent girls also obtained information from books distributed by various organizations.

Mothers were found to be the most common source of knowledge of adolescent girls for reproductive health and menstruation. Most, though not all, adolescent girls were found to have been told about menses by their mothers as the closest female family member with knowledge on menstruation.

"At the first time you get scared, right? Blood and all that. I screamed, people in the home asked "what happened?"- Luckily, there was nobody at home. Only my mom was there. My mother kept laughing. I kept saying, "Mommy. How is blood coming out here?" She said, "This is not blood. They say it happens like this. It happens to everybody. All girls get this. Menses like this." Since then I know that this is menses... I have had it (menses) about 2-3 times."

IDI-Girl-2_ village A

Some adolescent girls reported that their mothers had informed them about menstruation and menstrual hygiene prior to menarche. One adolescent girl reported that she has no one else to talk about her reproductive health and menstruation as all other females of her generation live a distance away. She feels comfortable in talking with her mother about menstruation. Others reported that they feel that they can get more accurate information from mothers, as compared to information from other female relatives or peers.

A: *I mean, when I got my first menses, my mother had told me before that, and I did just like that.*

Q: *... Your mother discussed this with you before you got your menses?*

A: *... Yes, (she) said that "This kind of problem will happen. All girls get problems like this now and then and then you have to say like this (clean)." She told me these... Take, for example if something comes out (blood) then to use cloth, tissue, pad for this.*

IDI-Girl-7_ village C

Elder sisters and *bhabi* (wives of elder brothers) were also reported to impart knowledge on adolescent girls about menstruation when adolescent girls were too shy to ask their mother. These adolescent girls were more comfortable discussing personal issues with someone who is a female family member, but not in the position of a parent.

- A: *I don't (talk to my mother about this). I have bhabi, sister- (should I) not talk to them and tell my mother!*
- Q: *So you talk about these with your bhabi. Does your mother talk with you about menses, about cleanliness?*
- A: *Yes ... (She) says to stay clean- she says like this. My bhabi says the same thing as ammu.*
- Q: *But you feel comfortable talking with your bhabi?*
- A: *Yes.*

IDI-Girl-1_ village A

Most adolescent girls discussed about their bodies and menstruation with female peers. Those who were found to have reached menarche before their peers pass on the knowledge to those who have not yet reached menarche. Knowledge is not only shared from more experienced adolescent girls to those who have not yet reached menarche, but also within adolescent girls who have menses.

"I am very free (open) with my female friends, don't you know? I, always- friends should stay as friends, right? (Q: Hmm) ... Like how to take care of the body, or what to do. I mean, I am always free with my female friends. I have heard from them... Like that, when my friends gets (her menstruation) for a week, we say, 'What happened to you? Hm?' We say, 'Why, why do these things happen? Ugh, how!' If she doesn't tell me, will I also tell? Then she says, 'Why are you doing (speaking) like this with me? It will also happen to you, just wait and see!'"

IDI-Girl-2_ village A

Some adolescent girls reported that they learnt about menstruation from school teachers as part of physical education class.

"I mean, in the book- isn't it in the book? In physical education book. I mean, there are all kinds of (information) on the body, exercise, and everything like this. I read these. Our madam (female teachers) gives lessons."

IDI-Girl-2_ village A

A few adolescent girls mentioned that they had read a book called *Nijeke Jano*, distributed by an organization that they could not name, or had obtained it from their peers on loan. One adolescent girl

stated that, on the matter of menstruation, she trusts information in this book even more than the information obtained from her mother.

“For example, we at school got the books such as “Nijeke Jano” and get books like this. We read those books, I mean we can understand how we can solve (problems with our body/menstruation) or how (to take care of ourselves)... I didn’t get those books, my friend did. She once brought it to school. So from there, I read one or two pages- I didn’t get so much time to see through it (whole book), you see? You know those books on child marriage?”

IDI-Girl-8_village C

- Q: *Like, dependable, trustworthy. Which information seemed more dependable or trustworthy?*
- A: *Book... In the book- I mean, (the information) from the book, everything will be correctly given there. That’s why I think that (the book) is safe (source of information).*
- Q: *So which one (information) are you following? (The information) From the book?*
- A: *I follow the book... I also follow the instructions my mother gave.*
- Q: *But you think that (the information in) the books is more dependable?*
- A: *The book (yes).*

IDI-Girl-9_village C

Knowledge obtained

Adolescent girls were found to have obtained information about menstrual hygiene and cleanliness for adolescents. The Islamic prescription for removing pubic hair every forty days was found to be a common knowledge passed from sources to adolescent girls. While most girls reported knowledge of using rags, some were also informed about the risks of using rags to capture menstrual fluid. They reported that using rags can lead to bugs and worms growing in the vagina, and can even lead to cancer. One girl reported that her parents don’t allow her to use rags due to the possible risk of getting cancer.

“Like, my mother says that I must use Joya (commercially available budget-friendly sanitary napkins), things like this. I mean that place (vagina) must always be kept clean, otherwise bugs and insects (probably means bacteria and fungus) can accumulate and those things can happen. My parents- my mother has never let me use rags. Because she knows that (I am) young, where will (I) keep it. Bugs and insects can gather there and can lead to harm and injury. This is why my parents don’t allow me to use those (rags).”

IDI-Girl-8_village C

A few girls reported knowing to use of hot compresses to reduce menstrual pain. One girl reported that she had learned of this from her family.

- Q: *Have you ever suffered from problems related to menstruation?*
- A: *I get pain in my lower abdomen, but I don’t get white discharges.*
- Q: *What do you do when you get pain in lower abdomen?*

- A: *Then- villagers say that heating a cloth on a fire and applying heat on the abdomen (with it) makes it better.*
- Q: *Who are the- villagers as in?*
- A: *People from my family say that, take a piece of cloth, twist it and to put that on the fire... take the heat and give (apply) on the lower abdomen.*

IDI-Girl-3_village A

Lack of information on sexual health rights

While conducting in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, it was found from all villages that many adolescent girls lack information on whether and how to access sexual health services even though, findings from the survey suggested that about 45% of the girls felt confident that they could access SRH services.

- Q: *These various bodily changes and information regarding these (menstruation), then these feminine illnesses, like pain in lower abdomen- there are treatment services for these. (Can you tell me) what are the reasons that you don't know that there are services like this or what could be done so that you could get this information?*
- A: *As such, I don't know well- how I can get this information.*
- Q: *OK, you are saying that you can know it from your bhabhi. There are no other ways (to get this information)?*
- A: *No.*
- Q: *And moreover, that there are treatment services, you have no idea on this matter on whether clinical services are provided or not?*
- A: *Hm, I don't know.*
- Q: *What are the reasons behind not knowing that you can get these treatment services?*
- A: *Reasons for not knowing?*
- A: *Yes*
- Q: *There are no reasons. For example, I stay at home. Like, nobody has ever told me that treatment services are given. I know nothing about it.*

IDI-Girl-7_village C

Qualitative Evidence on Attitudes on Reproductive Health and Menstruation

It was found that attitudes regarding menstrual health and hygiene were positive amongst most residents of the villages under study. Adolescent girls reported the use of pads to avoid possible infections and were found to be encouraged to use pads for management of menstrual fluid. Those girls who were not using pads were found to be washing the rags with soap and drying them in direct sunlight.

"My parents- my mother has never let me use rags. Because she knows that (I am) young, where will (I) keep it. Bugs and insects can gather there and can lead to harm and injury. This is why my parents don't allow me to use those (rags)."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

It was found that adolescent girls were supported by their family with appropriate medical advice such as applying a hot compress to the lower abdomen for menstrual cramps. While adolescent

girls were not aware of menstrual health services available at the community clinic, they expressed interest in obtaining these. As the nearest hospitals were far away, they felt that having a nearby clinic would allow them to get appropriate services while saving time.

A: *No. We don't get it (sexual health information) from there (community clinic). I just go and bring medicines (colds, coughs, and fever). They never even talk about those matters. They don't even tell adolescent girls and boys that you have to do these (things) to keep your body in health. Nothing like that.*

...

Q: *But did you ever try to learn information (on menstrual health) by yourself?*

A: *I didn't even know that they can know well about these things (puberty), or that they can inform us about it.*

Q: *Your female friends of your age, do they go there, ask about this matter?*

A: *No. They go but they go to bring medicines- they never tell about this matter and we have no idea about it.*

...

A: *Like take for example, if there was a healthcare center in the village it would have been good for us. We should have been able to talk about these things and have discussion with them (healthcare providers) about it. If this treatment center was in our village or nearby- I don't have a lot of time, in that regard if it was nearby, they it would have been important (good) to go to them quickly and learn about it. We have a lot of other things to do on Fridays and holidays, like washing our (school) uniform, helping our parents. That's why if we had a health center, a medical (center) then it would- we could go. Or if it was nearby then we would not feel the lacking of this (service).*

Q: *But now the problem is that as your parents are busy, you have to go to Rangpur (division capital), so you don't tell them.*

A: *Yes.*

IDI-ADG-8_village C

However, it was found that elders of the village Community, especially those not from the adolescent girls' families may have negative attitudes on sharing knowledge about menstruation and bodily changes during puberty. Adolescent girls identify that elders are less likely to understand the need for discussion.

A: *These village people. I mean, those who do not understand. They think that if (we) talk about this then something (of sexual nature) might happen. And those who understand, they think, "What's the harm in talking about it? It happens to everybody."*

Q: *Ok, who do you mean by "village people"?*

A: *These people who understand less- elders.*

IDI-ADG-15_village B

Menstruation as passage to sexual maturity

It was found that the societal attitude towards menstruation is that adolescent girls who have reached menarche have reached sexual maturity and are now capable of bearing children and therefore should be married off. It was reported that fearing the societal expectation and pressure to marry off their daughters early, many parents attempt to hide the fact that their daughters have undergone menarche for as long as possible.

- A: Yes. The fear is that their child has become very big. Has reached adulthood. (What if) She isn't married, (what if) this doesn't happen, that doesn't happen? These are peoples' problems. That's why they don't want to tell (to others)
- Q: Then in your village, once menstruation-
- A: When they get menstruation, (people) think that (the adolescent girl) has reached adulthood, grown up (to be) very big.

KII-Woman-1_village A

"... Most villagers feel shy (and think) that "If I go and tell others, what will they think of me?" And (villagers) will say that, "Oh my, you have grown up so much! You have become an adult. You must be married off now." They say these in jest, but many people become serious. Many girls can't take it. May be this is why (we don't discuss about our menstruation and sexual health with others)."

IDI-ADG-4_village A

It was also found that in village society, menstruation is associated with shame on part of the adolescent girl, and some are therefore opposed to discussing matters concerning menstruation with others, including close female relatives.

- Q: You used to- I mean, you shared with your aunt the first time it happened (menarche). Do you still do that?
- A: No, I don't do anything like that. Now I feel shy, I don't share with anyone.

IDI-ADG-5_village A

Cross-gender communication with father and brother

It was found that as a rule, adolescent girls avoid communicating with their fathers and brothers on matters of sexual health and menstruation. Mothers are used as intermediaries to communicate all needs regarding sexual health and menstruation to the father, such as menstrual product purchase or need of medical attention in regard to sexual health to fathers. Fathers then procure the menstrual hygiene products such as sanitary napkins or accompany the adolescent daughter to a hospital along with the mother.

"Like this, that I will go and tell my father that I got my menses, I feel so ashamed of myself. It is that type of a feeling- that's why I don't tell (my father). And for my menses I used rags previously. My mother went and told my father that, "Our daughter has got her menses. Give me money, I will buy soap."

IDI-Girl-9_village C

M: Well, what would the villagers say if they knew?

P4: Then they would think so many things. That, is this something to tell your brother that you are telling it to him? If we discuss about these things, and if a male happens to pass by, we say, "Shush, shush. You cannot let that boy hear." We just shut up at that time so that (boy) cannot overhear us.

FGD-Girls-1_village A

Q: Do you talk about this with your father?

A: No, I don't discuss these with my father.

Q: Why?

A: Because- father is father. How can (I) discuss this in front of my father? There is bound to be some shame in there, right? For things like this, I mean for these shameful issues, I have never discussed these issues with my father.

IDI-Girl-8_village C

Cross gender communication with male friends

Talking with male peers regarding menstruation and sexual health is not allowed in these villages. Adolescent girls reported that they would feel ashamed, should they talk about “these matters” with or in front of their male peers.

P 3, 4, 6: *The reason is, we will not be able to tell (these) to the boys. We would feel bad. I will not talk about my own bodily problems with a boy. If we tell these to boys, they will think like that (negatively) of us. We will feel ashamed of ourselves. When you will tell him, you will feel ashamed to stand in front of him that, “I told him about this. How will we go in front of him?”*

FGD-Girls-2_village C

Adolescent girls reported that though they attend the physical education class together with the boys, there is shame and uneasiness in learning about the body in the same class space with boys.

“The physical education book, I mean everything related to the body, exercise and things are in it. We study that. Madam takes this class, sir will not. We female friends sit together at this time. We keep on laughing that, “What is she talking about! The boys are also in the class.” We are also in the (same) class(room)- it feels strange, right? Then after the madam goes away, they give us tiffin, we girls sit together and gossip about this. “What is that lesson the madam gave!” Isn’t it funny (uneasy)? Doesn’t it feel weird? The boys are in the class, what will they think? Also, what will the boys think?... And then if it was only girls, that would have been (acceptable). But then, I mean, our madam gives the lesson, and it’s only girls, then it’s not a problem. But then, there are boys there on the side, right? They are in the same class(room). What is that like? The boys are grown up, they will understand these things, will they not?”

IDI-Girl-2_village A

Gaining knowledge on body and sexual health from education system

It was found that as reproductive health has become part of school curriculum, studying about it at home has become accepted. Neither parents nor community members restrict adolescent girls from studying the physical education textbook given from school.

M: *The things in this book, that girls are being able to learn about this beforehand (prior to menarche), do villagers have any reaction on this that the school is teaching these things or that girls are being able to know about these? Do villagers criticize this?*

All: *No, no. Because these are good for girls.*

M: *This is good for girls- do all villagers understand this?*

All: *Yes,yes*

M: *Nobody criticizes that such things are written in the book? That which you talked about- that your mother told you that you can’t talk about this with boys. Like how it’s written in the book, the information given- do your parents know that the book has information (on puberty)?*

All: *Yes, knows.*

- M: Do you have conversations that such and such information is given in the book?
- P3: Yes. And we study at home. If parents are home at the time, they hear us read.
- M: Don't they say anything like, "What is all this that you're studying?"
- P3, 4: No, what will they say?
- P5: It's given in the book. It's not like I am studying this for no reason.
- P6: We are not studying this for fun! We need to, therefore we are studying.
- P6: That's our (curriculum) subject.
- M: Well, do villagers know that there are conversations (school curriculum) like this?
- All: Yes, because there are children studying in every household, everyone knows.
- FGD-Girls-2_village C**

Gender attitudes

Attitudes regarding gender roles, control of adolescent girls by family members and justification of girl beating

Gender attitudes of the girls and community members were measured around gender roles, control of girls by family members, justification of girl beating and gender discrimination. Several statements were used to measure gender attitudes under each theme using modified version of the Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) Scale (Pulerwitz & Barker, 2007). For girls there were two response categories: disagree and agree. For adult community members there were four response categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The frequency distributions of the items among girls and adult community members (by sex) have been presented in Table 16. And the mean score and score tertiles by arm in Table 17.

Gender roles

A total of eight items were used to measure adolescent girls' attitudes regarding gender roles. Seven of them were retained after factor analysis (Cronbach's alpha=0.70 and KMO=0.81). A high percentage of girls agreed that a woman has to have a husband or son or some other male kinsman to protect her (83%); a woman's role is to take care of her home and family (75%); a wife should always obey her husband (60%); and it is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss (54%)". Over 54% disagree that only when a woman has a child, she is a real woman (54%); a man should make the final decisions about important household issues (60%); and a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together (64%) (Table 16). The total score of the scale ranges between 0 and 7, higher score indicates more gender equitable attitudes. The mean score of attitudes regarding gender roles

was 3 across arm. A higher percentage of girls from FTP arm (47%) had low gender equitable attitudes compared to control (39%) and LTP arm (42%) with statistically significant difference between control and FTP arms.

To measure attitudes regarding gender roles among community members, 12 statements regarding gender roles were used. After factor analysis eight items were dropped (Cronbach's alpha=0.61 and KMO=0.70). A high percentage (between 58 and 82%) of women either agree or strongly agreed with each of the statements of the scale. Similarly a high percentage of men either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements except for women/girls should work outside. A high percentage of men either disagreed (29%) or strongly disagreed (33%) with that statement. The total score for this scale among community member ranges between 0 and 12 with higher score indicating high equitable attitudes. The mean score for women was 5 across all arms and for men it was between 3 and 4, indicating less gender equitable attitudes among men. Around half of the women from both intervention arms (between 48% and 50%) had low gender equitable attitudes and half (50%) from the control arm had moderately equitable attitudes. About 75% men from the intervention arms and 67% from the control arm expressed low gender equitable attitudes.

Control of family members over an adolescent girl

Adolescent girl's attitudes regarding control by family members was measured using four items. Scale validation retained all four items (Cronbach's alpha=0.76 and KMO=0.73). Between 65% and 80% of girls agreed that a family member is justified in telling a girl which friend she can talk to; kind of dress she can/cannot wear; what to do all the time; and not allowing to go outside (Table 18). The total score for the scale ranged from 0 to 4 with a higher score indicating high endorsement of control. The mean score was 3 in each arm. A higher percentage of girls from FTP arm (69%) expressed high endorsement of control by family members (Table 17).

The same items were used to measure attitudes of the adult community members regarding control over girls by the family members. Factor analysis retained all four items (Cronbach's alpha=0.94 and KMO=0.80). Similar to the girls, a majority of the women and men either agreed or strongly agreed with all four items (Table 18). The total scale score ranges from 0 to 12 (higher score indicates high endorsement). Approximately 50% of the women and men had high endorsement of control over girls

by the family members. The difference between women from LTP (lower endorsement) and FTP (higher endorsement) was statistically significant (Table 17).

Justification of physical chastisement of the girls

Attitude towards justification of physical chastisement of the girl, which we will refer to as girl-beating, was measured using nine scenarios, where girl-beating will be perceived justified. In the girl sample, eight items were retained after factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.78 and KMO was 0.82. Over 56% of the girls disagreed with each statement except for the statement "a girl deserves to be beaten when she does not obey elders which was agreed by 63% of the girls. (Table 16). The total scale score was 0-8 (higher score, high endorsement of girl beating). The mean score among girls from the control arm (3) was higher compared to the intervention arms (2 in both arms). Over half of the girls from each arm had low endorsement of girl beating in any situation. A higher percentage of girls from the control arm (13%) had expressed high endorsement compared to the intervention arms (10% in both LTP and FTP) (Table 17).

Among adult community members, factor analysis retained all nine items (Cronbach's alpha =0.89 and KMO =0.91). The frequency distribution of the scale items among adult community women and men were similar to girls. Majority of the women and men either strongly disagreed or disagreed with every statement except for "a girl deserves to be beaten when she does not obey elders". For this statement, 54% of the women either agreed or strongly agreed and 69% of the men also did so (Table 16). The total scale score for adult community members was 0-27. Women from LTP arm had a slightly lower mean score (9) compared to the control (10) and FTP arm (10). Over half of women from all study arms had low endorsement of girl-beating in any scenario, while a higher percentage of men moderately endorsed girl beating in each arm (50% - 60%). Distribution by arm shows that a lower percentage of men from LTP (50%) had moderate endorsement of girl-beating compared to control (59%) and FTP arm (60%) (Table 17).

Gender discrimination

A total of six items were used to measure attitudes regarding gender discrimination. Among girls the factor analysis showed poor Cronbach's alpha (0.22) and KMO (0.54). Among adult community member

four items were retained (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.67$ and $KMO=0.71$). About 68% of the women strongly agreed that it is important to that sons and daughter have equal education and 64% strongly agreed that if there is limited amount of money to pay for tutoring, it should be spent on equally on daughters and sons. While, high percentage women strongly disagreed that daughters should be sent to school only if they are not needed to help at home (61%) and strongly disagreed that since girls have to get married they should not be sent for higher education (54%). Among men, responses to each item had similar pattern as of women (Table 16). The total scale score ranges between 0 and 12, where higher score refers to high discriminatory attitudes. The mean score among women and men were almost similar across arms (1.90 – 2.39). A higher percentage of women (between 77% and 79%) and men (between 82% and 86%) from each arm had low discriminatory attitude. While, 1% or less than 1% had high discriminatory attitude.

Table 16. Attitudes of adolescent girls aged 12-<16 years, women and men aged ≥25 years regarding gender in Rangpur, 2019

Items	Girls aged 12-<16, % (N=1,275)		Adult community member, (N=626) ^a , %							
			Women aged ≥25 years (N=308)				Men aged ≥25 years (N=318)			
	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Gender roles										
A good woman never questions her husband's opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them			11.36	26.30	33.44	28.90	2.83	11.95	43.71	41.51
Sports like football, cricket, and cycling are not for girls			20.78	21.43	20.13	37.66	13.52	16.67	21.70	48.11
Women/girls should work outside			13.64	15.26	39.61	31.49	33.02	28.62	25.79	12.58
A woman's role is to take care of her home and family	25.18	74.82	5.84	12.34	22.08	59.74	2.83	5.35	22.96	68.87
A woman has to have a husband or son or some other male kin to protect her	16.94	83.06								
It is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss	46.35	53.65								
A man should have the final decision about important household issues	60.31	39.69								
Only when a woman has a child, she is a real woman	53.65	46.35								
A wife should always obey her husband	40.16	59.84								
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	63.61	36.39								
Cronbach's alpha	0.70		0.61							
KMO	0.81		0.70							
Control by family members										
A family member is justified in -										
Telling a girl which friend she can or cannot talk to or see	34.59	65.41	17.86	13.31	26.30	42.53	10.69	22.96	33.96	32.39
Not allowing a girl to go outside alone	19.69	80.31	7.47	6.17	37.34	49.03	7.86	9.12	37.42	45.60
Telling a girl what kind of dress she can or cannot wear	28.08	71.92	11.04	8.12	37.01	43.83	8.49	11.01	29.87	50.63

Telling a girl what to do all the time	29.41	70.59	9.09	9.09	44.48	37.34	13.52	11.95	44.34	30.19
Cronbach's alpha	0.76		0.94							
KMO	0.73		0.80							
Justification of girls beating										
A girl deserves to be beaten when she talks to a boy	77.33	22.67	38.31	28.90	18.18	14.61	20.13	37.11	33.96	8.81
A girl deserves to be beaten when she goes out to play	86.98	13.02	40.91	33.44	16.88	8.77	20.44	45.91	27.99	5.66
A girl deserves to be beaten when she stays out late	68.55	31.45	34.42	32.47	22.40	10.71	8.49	46.54	30.50	14.47
A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't help in household chores	76.71	23.29	46.43	31.49	14.94	7.14	18.55	46.23	31.45	3.77
A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't complete her homework			29.87	24.35	31.17	14.61	10.38	40.88	38.68	10.06
A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't obey elders	36.71	63.29	21.10	25.32	33.12	20.45	4.72	26.42	40.57	28.30
A girl deserves to be beaten when she fights with others in class	55.61	44.39	32.47	31.82	27.27	8.44	11.95	38.68	44.34	5.03
A girl deserves to be beaten when she fights with brothers and sisters	61.25	38.75	38.64	32.79	23.05	5.52	10.69	47.48	39.94	1.89
A girl deserves to be beaten if she replies back when harassed by boys	93.88	6.12	64.94	21.75	8.77	4.55	57.86	35.53	6.29	0.31
Cronbach's alpha	0.78		0.89							
KMO	0.82		0.91							
Gender discrimination										
It is important that sons and daughters have equal education.			1.62	2.92	27.27	68.18	0.63	3.46	11.32	84.59
Daughters should be sent to school only if they are not needed to help at home			60.71	22.08	12.01	5.19	56.60	33.96	6.29	3.14
If there is a limited amount of money to pay for tutoring, it should be spent equally on daughters and sons			0.97	4.87	29.87	64.29	0.63	3.14	24.21	72.01
Since girls have to get married they should not be sent for higher education			53.57	18.51	20.13	7.79	41.51	23.27	22.01	13.21
Cronbach's alpha				0.67						
KMO				0.71						

^aAdult community members survey was not powered to interpret sex segregated results.

Table 17. Mean score and tertiles of gender attitudes among girls aged 12-<16 years, women and men aged ≥25 years by arm, Rangpur, 2019

Scores	Girls aged 12-<16 years			women aged ≥25 years			Men aged ≥25 years		
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control (N=105)	LTP (N=107)	FTP (N=96)	Control (N=110)	LTP (N=107)	FTP (N=101)
Gender Roles									
Mean score (Range, SD),	3.18 (0-7, 1.93)	3.10 (0-7, 2.02) ^a	2.89 (0-7, 1.94)	4.97 (0-12, 2.41)	5.16 (0-12, 2.88)	4.80 (0-12, 2.65)	3.57 (0-12, 2.73)	3.08 (0-12, 2.52)	3.28 (0-12, 2.26)
^a The difference of mean score of attitudes towards gender roles among girls between control and LTP was significant at 5% level (p≤0.029)									
Score tertiles of gender roles, %^b									
Low gender equitable attitudes	38.60	41.99	47.14	42.86	46.73	50.00	67.27	74.77	74.26
Moderate equitable attitudes	34.54	31.31	30.24	50.48	38.32	39.58	24.55	21.50	22.77
High equitable attitudes	26.86	26.70	22.62	6.67	14.95	10.42	8.18	3.74	2.97
^b The difference of tertiles of attitudes towards gender roles among girls between control and LTP was significant at 5% level (p≤0.039)									
Control by family members									
Mean score (Range, SD)	2.79 (0-4, 1.35)	2.90 (0-4, 1.36)	2.96 (0-4, 1.34)	8.73 (0-12, 3.31)	7.96 (0-12, 3.40)	8.68 (0-12, 2.55)	8.4 (0-12, 3.24)	7.91 (0-12, 3.47)	8.36 (0-12, 3.05)
Score tertiles of control over girls by family member, %^c									
Low endorsement of control	20.32	19.66	17.62	10.48	17.76	5.21	12.73	18.69	11.88
Moderate endorsement control	14.90	13.35	13.10	35.24	34.58	42.71	33.64	28.97	37.62
High endorsement control	64.79	66.99	69.29	54.29	47.66	52.08	53.64	52.34	50.50
^c The difference of tertiles of attitudes towards controlling by family member among women between LTP and FTP was significant at 5% level (p≤0.020)									
Justification of girl beating									

Mean score (Range, SD)	2.50 (0-8, 2.11)	2.40 (0-8, 2.11)	2.38 (0-8, 2.16)	9.50 (0-25, 6.65)	8.78 (0-26, 6.93)	9.91 (0- 25, 5.99)	11.95 (0- 21, 4.77)	11.53 (0- 24, 5.09)	12.13 (0- 24, 4.96)
Score of justification of girls' beating, %									
Low endorsement of girls beating	55.08	56.55	56.90	52.38	57.94	50.00	35.45	43.93	31.68
Moderate endorsement of girls beating	32.05	33.25	32.62	36.19	30.84	43.75	59.09	49.53	60.40
High endorsement of girls beating	12.87	10.19	10.48	11.43	11.21	6.25	5.45	6.54	7.92
Gender discrimination									
Mean score (Range, SD)				2.09 (0-9, 2.41)	2.11 (0-10, 2.64)	2.55 (0-9, 2.25)	1.90 (0-8, 1.91)	2.17 (0-7, 1.85)	2.39 (0- 10, 2.23)
Score tertiles of community members regarding gender discrimination, %									
Low discriminatory attitude				79.05	78.50	77.08	85.45	85.98	82.18
Moderate discriminatory attitude				20.00	19.63	21.88	14.55	14.02	16.83
High discriminatory attitude				0.95	1.87	1.04	0.00	0.00	0.99

4.3.2 Changing power relations

“Changing power relation” was measured around eight domains; (1) freedom of movement; (2) communication and negotiation; and (3) participation in financial activities and decision making; (4) group membership; (5) cohesion, solidarity and negotiation; (6) Participation in events; (7) collective efficacy; (8) connectedness with parents.

Freedom of movement

The items used to measure mobility of girls included ability to visit kin’s house; distant cluster in the village; friends/relatives in village; friends/relatives in another village/town; market; health facility/provider; community meeting/gathering; and fair/park. Information was also collected on whether permission was required for such visits and whether she was accompanied by someone during her last visit. To generate mobility score, five categories were generated combining all the information and coded for each place. The categories were: cannot visit=0; can visit with permission and chaperoned=1; can visit without permission, but chaperoned=2; can visit with permission and without chaperon=3; and can visit without permission and accompanied by none without chaperon=4. Factor analysis was conducted based on the newly derived scores. Two items were dropped based on factor analysis (i.e., visiting kin’s house and visiting friends/relatives in village). The Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.53 and KMO was 0.69. Frequencies of retained items based on original scale among full sample, total score and score tertiles by arm are presented in Table 18.

Between 40% and 70% of the girls were able to visit places in the scale. A high proportion of the girls (70%) reported that they can visit friends/relatives in another village/town and 73% of the girls who could visit friends/relatives in another village/town required permission during the last visit. In their last visit (who could visit) 83% were accompanied by an adult. About 67% can visit market and 65% of the girls who could visit market required permission and 61% were accompanied by an adult in their last visit. In terms of visiting health facility/provider and fair/park 64% and 60% of girls reported that they were able to visit those places respectively, majority of them required permission during the last visit and was accompanied mostly by an adult. About 44% of the girls were able to visit a distant cluster in the village and 76% of the girls who could visit a distant cluster required permission (76%) and 62% of those girls were accompanied by an adult. Over 60% of the girls required permission during their last

visit for all places mentioned except for visiting health facility/provider, for visiting health facility 51% of the girls required permission. A lower proportion of the girls were accompanied by someone younger ($\geq 1\%$). In summary, majority of girls were able to visit places with permission and with adults.

The scale score ranges from 0-24, higher score indicates high mobility. The mean score of mobility was slightly higher in both intervention arms (5 in both LTP and FTP) compared to the control arm (4). The difference was statistically significant. Across all arms over 96% of the girls had low mobility and none had high mobility. There was no difference between arms girls' mobility. Thus, girls' mobility was very low throughout the intervention and control villages unless they were accompanied by someone or took permission to visit a specific place.

Table 18. Mobility of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur at baseline, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Name of the place	Girls generally able to visit, %	Required permission in last visit, %	Person accompanied during last visit, %					
			None	Adult	Friend/peer	Someone younger		
A distant cluster/para in the village	44.39	76.33	8.66	62.19	27.74	1.41		
Other friends/relatives in another village/ town	70.27	72.77	5.36	82.70	10.71	1.23		
Market	67.45	64.53	10.35	60.58	27.44	1.63		
Health facility/provider	64.16	51.47	3.79	88.51	7.33	0.37		
Community meeting/gathering	40.08	68.10	2.74	82.00	14.29	0.98		
Fair/park/somewhere else for recreation	60.71	75.58	1.03	75.71	22.87	0.39		
Cronbach's alpha= 0.53; KMO= 0.69								
		Arm			p-value			
		Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	p-value Control vs LTP	p-value Control vs FTP	p-value LTP vs FTP	Full sample, %
Mean score (Range, SD),	4.63 (0-15, 2.75)	5.05 (0-12, 2.67)	5.24 (0-15, 2.71)	0.024*	0.001*	0.336	4.96 (0-15, 2.72)	

Score Tertiles (Mobility of girls), %

Lower Mobility	97.74	97.57	96.67				97.33
Medium Mobility	2.26	2.43	3.33	0.870	0.337	0.435	2.67
Higher Mobility	0.00	0.00	0.00				0

* Significant at 5% level

Communication and negotiation

The TP indicators include communication and negotiation skills of girls. A scale developed by Liu, Chua & Stahl (2010) was adapted and validated to measure girl's communication skills. Ten items out of 15 were retained based on factor analysis using girls' data. The scale showed good validity (KMO=0.67) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.72). The total score of the scale ranges from 0-10, where higher score indicates better communication skills. The frequency distribution of the scale items and the scores are presented in Table 19.

Over 84% of the girls agreed to each of the items, indicating good communication skills. The mean communication score was 9 across arm. The difference in mean score between control (9.08) and LTP (9.33) arm was significant. More than 90% of the girls from all study arms had good communication skills and less than 1% had poor communication skills. There was no difference between arms in terms of girls' communication skills.

Table 19. Communication skills of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16, Rangpur , 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Girls aged 12-<16, %						
	Disagree	Agree					
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -							
I understood what the other side was saying	4.00	96.00					
I understood what was important to the other side	15.92	84.08					
I think the other side understood me clearly	6.43	93.57					
The messages exchanged were easy to understand	4.39	95.61					
The other side responded to my questions and requests quickly during the interaction	10.59	89.41					
I was willing to listen to the other side's perspectives	7.69	92.31					
When the other side raised questions or concerns, I tried to address them immediately	6.51	93.49					
I was nervous talking to the other side	91.29	8.71					
I felt comfortable interacting with the other side	8.24	91.76					
The other side seemed comfortable talking with me	5.25	94.75					
Cronbach's alpha= 0.72; KMO= 0.67							
Characteristics	Arm			p-value			Full sample
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean score (Range, SD),	9.08 (2-10, 1.49)	9.33 (2-10, 1.33)	9.26 (2-10, 1.40)	0.009*	0.054	0.519	9.22 (1.41, 2-10)

Score tertiles (Communication skill of the girls), %

Poor communication skill	0.45	0.49	0.71				0.55
Medium communication skill	7.45	5.10	5.71	0.368	0.525	0.842	6.12
Good communication skill	92.10	94.42	93.57				93.33

* Significant at 5% level

Girls' confidence in negotiating education, marriage and mobility with their parents was also measured as part of TP indicators. Three questions were asked to measure confidence in such negotiation. The responses were recorded on a four-point scale. Factor analysis was conducted to validate the scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.72 and KMO was 0.68.

A little more than 70% of the girls had strong confidence that they could negotiate with their parents about education, 58% had strong confidence in negotiating mobility, while 48% had strong confidence in negotiating marriage (Table 20). The total score of the scale ranges from 0 to 9. The mean score of negotiation skills was 7 (in all arms), and the difference between control and LTP arm was statistically significant. A higher percentage of girls from intervention arms (72% in FTP and 71% in LTP) had higher confidence in negotiating ability compared to the control arm (67%). The difference between control and LTP was significant.

Table 20. Confidence of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 regarding negotiation, Rangpur, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Girls aged 12-<16, %			
	Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident
Negotiating with parents/ guardians about own education	1.73	6.04	18.51	73.73
Negotiating with parents/ guardians about own marriage	5.80	16.78	29.57	47.84
Negotiating with your parents/ guardians about own mobility	2.51	14.27	25.02	58.20
Cronbach's alpha=0.72; KMO= 0.68				
	Arm		p-value	

Score	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Mean score (Range, SD),	7.04 (0-9, 2.13)	7.3 (0-9, 1.75)	7.30 (0-9, 1.89)	0.021*	0.059	0.696	7.22 (0-9, 1.94)
Score tertiles, %							
Lower confidence in negotiation ability	8.35	3.64	5.48				5.88
Medium confidence in negotiation ability	24.38	25.49	22.62	0.016*	0.172	0.320	24.16
confidence in negotiation ability	67.27	70.87	71.90				69.96

* Significant at 5% level

Participation in financial activities and decision-making

Information on girls' participation in financial activities was also collected during baseline. Participants were asked five questions related to their involvement in financial activities and one related to their participation in financial decision making. The findings are presented in Table 21. As expected, a low proportion of girls (9% in each arm) were engaged in income-generation during the last 12 months. Varying proportions of girls had their own saving, 19%; 26% and 21% in control, LTP and FTP arm respectively. The difference between control and LTP was statistically significant. Over 66% of the girls could make decision about use of own savings. Between 10-13% girls had own asset that could be used for income generation. More than half of the girls participated in household financial decision making. The percentage was higher in FTP arm (59%) compared to other two study arms. The difference between control (lower participation) and FTP (higher participation) arm was statistically significant. Among those who participated in household financial decision making, over 82% reported that their opinions were considered.

Table 21. Participation of adolescent girls aged 12-<16 in income generating activities by arm, Rangpur , 2019 (N = 1,275)

Participating in income generating activity, %	Arm			p-value			Full sample
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Engaged in income-generating activities in the past 12 months	9.03	8.50	9.52	0.783	0.802	0.604	9.02
Had own savings	19.19	26.21	21.19	0.014*	0.464	0.088	22.12
Made decisions about use of own savings	65.88	75.00	74.16	0.357	0.097	0.422	71.99
Had own assets that could help generate income	10.38	12.86	10.00	0.257	0.852	0.194	11.06
Participated in discussions about household finances	51.92	55.10	58.81	0.352	0.042*	0.280	55.22
Her opinions regarding financial decisions were considered	82.17	86.78	87.85	0.174	0.082	0.726	85.65

* Significant at 5% level

Group membership

About 88% girls from the control group, 22% and 17% girls from LTP and FTP respectively were not members of any group. Among those who were members, 91% from both intervention arms and 65% from control arm were members of girls' club. The difference between intervention arms and control arm are statistically significant. About 9% of the girls from the control arm were involved with sports/arts/crafts group while less than 1% from LTP and none from FTP arm had any such involvement. The differences were statistically significant. Seven percent and 6% of girls from LTP and FTP respectively were members of girls' club/*kishori* club from and 2% from control. In terms of group membership, the intervention arms were significantly different from the control arm. These findings should be interpreted with caution as girls from the intervention arms were enrolled to TP groups before the baseline survey was launched. Thus, a higher proportion of girls from the intervention arms reported membership in girls' groups (Table 22).

Table 22. Group membership of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 by arm, Rangpur, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items, %	Arm			P - value			Full sample
	Control, N=443	LTP, N=412	FTP, N=420	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Not member of any group	87.58	21.84	17.38	0.000*	0.000*	0.105	43.22
Members of any group:	N=55	N=322	N=347				
Girl's group/Kishori club	1.82	7.14	5.76	0.135	0.222	0.467	6.08
Civic/Political/Union	0	0	0	-	-	-	0
Social work/Charitable	0	0	0.29	-	0.690	0.335	0.14
Sports/Arts/Crafts	9.09	0.62	0	0.000*	0.000*	0.141	0.97
Economic/Savings club	1.82	0.00	0	0.015*	0.012*	-	0.14
Girl's club	65.45	90.68	91.07	0.000*	0.000*	0.863	88.95
Religious Organization	3.64	0.31	0.29	0.010*	0.007*	0.958	0.55
NGO	1.82	0.31	0.00	0.155	0.012*	0.299	
Other Organizations	9.09	0.31	0.58	0.000*	0.000*	0.607	1.10

* significant at 5% level

Cohesion, solidarity and mobilization skills

Group cohesion among the girls was measured using the neighbourhood cohesion scale by Buckner (1998). The scale consists of 16 items. Factor analyses retained 13 items. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.93 and KMO was 0.95. The item frequency and scores by arm are presented in Table 23.

Around 96% of the girls agreed that they belong to their groups, 95% agreed that they could go to someone in the group for advice; and another 95% agreed that their group mate will help them in emergency. Similarly, 95% agreed with statements like they are loyal to their group; they will be willing to work together to improve the group. It is worth to note that around 88% of the girls were not part of any group from the control arm.

The scale's total score ranges between 0 and 13 with higher score indicating greater cohesion. The mean score was 12 for each arm. More than 94% of the girls from each arm had strong cohesion. There was no statistical significant difference between arms.

Table 23. Cohesion of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 by arm, Rangpur, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Girls aged 12 - <16, %						
	Disagree	Agree					
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -							
Overall, I am very attracted to this group	8.94	91.06					
I feel like I belong to this group	4.47	95.53					
The friendships and associations I have with other people in my group mean a lot to me	9.88	90.12					
If the people in my group were planning something I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing	6.90	93.10					
If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my group	4.78	95.22					
I think I agree with the most people in my group about what is important in life	9.41	90.59					
I believe my group mates would help me in an emergency	5.18	94.82					
I feel loyal to the people in my group	4.63	95.37					
I borrow things and exchange favours with my group mates	6.59	93.41					
I would be willing to work together with the others on something to improve my group	5.10	94.90					
I like to think myself as similar to the people who are in this group	7.76	92.24					
A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in this group	12.24	87.76					
I regularly stop and talk with people in my group.	6.82	93.18					
Cronbach's alpha= 0.93; KMO= 0.95							
	Arm			p-value			
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Mean score	12.14 (0-13, (Range, SD), 2.09)	12.07 (0- 13, 2.51)	11.99 (0- 13, 2.65)	0.629	0.335	0.655	12.07 (0- 13, 2.42)
Score tertiles (Cohesion), %							
Weak cohesion	1.81	3.88	3.81				3.14
Moderate cohesion	3.39	1.94	2.62	0.084	0.168	0.807	2.67
Strong cohesion	94.81	94.17	93.57				94.20

Participation in events

Data on participation of adolescent girls in different social events and their role in those events were collected during baseline survey. The findings have been presented in Table 24. A higher percentage of girls from LTP (93%) and FTP (94%) agreed that they could collaborate with other community members to address a community needs compared to the control arm (86%). The differences between intervention arms and control arm were statistically significant.

Between 6% and 12% girls from each arm had ever participated in any event on education, child marriage, dowry, rights, and violence against girls, with significant differences between intervention and control arms. Among those who had participated in such events, 64% from control arm attended a rally, while 58% from FTP and 36% from LTP did so. There were significant differences between control vs. LTP and LTP vs. FTP. Approximately, 38% from LTP and 26% from FTP had attended some form of dialogue exchange, while only 7% from control group did so. Statistically significant differences were found between control vs. LTP and control vs. FTP. A higher percentage of girls from LTP (20%) participated in some form of protest compared to control (14%) and FTP (4%) the difference between LTP and FTP was statistically significant.

Over 40% of the girls had attended at least one event in the last year from each arm. Between 73% and 86% girls were just a participant in the last event, while around 22% from control and LTP and 4% from FTP were active participants. A lower percentage of girls from control arm (4%) were members of any group or network addressing issues related to education, child marriage, dowry, rights, violence against women, etc compared to LTP (17%) and FTP (13%). The difference between control and intervention arms were significant. Around 5% of the girls from control and LTP arm and 3% girls from FTP had ever communicated with someone influential/any government official/political leaders for placing a memorandum, protesting against any rule or decision etc. Majority of the girls (64% - 76%) were just a participant in such communication.

Table 24. Percentage of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 participating in different social events in Rangpur, by arm, 2019, (N = 1,275)

Event participation	Girls aged 12 - <16, %
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	Arm			p-value			Full sample
	Control, N=443	LTP, N=412	FTP, N=420	Control I vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Agree that you could collaborate with other community members to address a community need, %	85.88	93.20	94.05	0.001*	0.000*	0.618	90.95
Ever participated in any event on education, child marriage, dowry, rights, and violence against girls	6.32	10.92	11.90	0.016*	0.004*	0.656	9.65
^aTypes of events							
Rally	64.29	35.56	58.00	0.017*	0.586	0.029*	51.22
Protest	14.29	20.00	4.00	0.535	0.102	0.015*	12.20
Cultural program on those issues	10.71	17.78	16.00	0.412	0.520	0.817	15.45
Dialogue exchange	7.14	37.78	26.00	0.004	0.043	0.218	26.02
Visiting any influential person with an demand	7.14	0	0	0.069	0.056*	-	1.63
Other (Uthan boithok, cycle rally)	7.14	0	2.00	0.069	0.257	0.340	2.44
Number of events attended in last 1 year							
No event	35.71	35.56	22.00				30.08
1 event	42.86	42.22	44.00	0.998	0.469	0.395	43.09
2-3 events	17.86	17.78	24.00				20.33
More than 3 events	3.57	4.44	10.00				6.50
Role in the last event							
Organizer	0.00	2.22	0.00				0.81
Led the event	0.00	2.22	0.00				0.81
Just a participant	75.00	73.33	86.00	0.581	0.267	0.309	78.86
Volunteer	3.57	0.00	0.00				0.81
Active participant	21.43	22.22	4.00				18.70

Member of any network or group that works on issues related to education, child marriage, dowry, rights, violence against women, etc	4.06	17.23	13.33	0.000*	0.000*	0.118	11.37
Ever communicated with someone influential or any government officials or political leaders for	5.42	5.10	3.33	0.834	0.136	0.205	4.63
Role in the above event							
Organizer	4.17	4.76	14.29				6.78
Led the event	4.17	4.76	0.00				3.39
Just a participant	70.83	76.19	64.29	0.954	0.447	0.521	71.19
Volunteer	0.00	0.00	7.14				1.69
Active participant	20.83	14.29	14.29				16.95

^aMultiple response

* Significant at 5% level

Collective efficacy

Girls' collective efficacy was measured in undertaking collective action involving the community around preventing child marriage, preventing violence against girls, trying to achieve girls' rights, and tendency to help each other during needs. The responses were coded on a five-point Likert scale. The findings are presented in Table 25.

Less than half of the girls were somewhat sure that girls' and others in their community could prevent child marriage (47%), prevent violence against girls' (47%), and could try to achieve girls' right (46%). While a higher percentage of girls (70%) were completely sure that girls and the community members would help each other in need.

Factor analysis was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the scale. The results showed a high Cronbach's alpha (0.83) and KMO (0.79). The total score of the scale ranges from 0 to 16. Higher score refers to higher collective efficacy. The mean score was 13 across arms and the difference between control (12.99) and FTP (13.48) was statistically significant. Tertiles were created using the total score. Results show that a high percentage of girls from each study arm had high collective efficacy (87% in control arm and 90% in both intervention arms).

Table 25. Confidence on collective efficacy village people of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019. N = 1275

Items	Full Sample						
	Not sure at all	Somewhat unsure	Neither sure nor unsure	Somewhat sure	Completely sure		
The girls and others in your community could prevent child marriage	4.16	3.61	2.12	47.14	42.98		
The girls and others in your community could prevent violence against girls	5.25	3.84	1.57	47.22	42.12		
The girls and others in your community could try to achieve girl's right	4.86	3.45	2.43	46.43	42.82		
The girls and others in your community would help each other during needs	1.02	1.25	0.71	26.98	70.04		
Cronbach's alpha= 0.83; KMO= 0.79							
	Arm			p-value			
	Control (N=443)	LTP (412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Mean score (Range, SD), %	12.91 (0-16, 3.19)	13.25 (1-16, 2.93)	13.48 (0-16, 2.86)	0.115	0.005*	0.231	13.20 (0-16, 3)
Low efficacy	5.87	3.64	2.62				4.08
Medium efficacy	7.22	6.80	7.62	0.296	0.062	0.641	7.22
High efficacy	86.91	89.56	89.76				88.71

* Significant at 5% level

Connectedness with parents

Girls' connectedness with parents was measured using seven items. Girls were asked whether they agree or disagree with each of the statements. Typical items included were: "you feel very close to your parents"; "your parents care about you", etc. The findings have been presented in Table 26. Over 92% of the girls agreed with each statement. Approximately, 98% agreed that their parents cared about them and 96% agreed that they are very important to their parents. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.77; and KMO was 0.82. The total score of the scale was between 0 and 7 with higher score indicating greater connectedness. The mean score was higher in intervention arms (7% in both LTP and FTP)

compared to the control arm (6%). The difference between control and LTP arm was statistically significant. Tertiles were created based on the total score for connectedness. A very high percentage of girls from each arm had high connectedness with their parents (93%, 97% and 95% in control, LTP and FTP arm respectively).

Table 26. Connectedness of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 with their parents in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Full sample, 1275	
	Disagree	Agree
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -		
You feel very close to your parents	4.86	95.14
Your parents spend time with you	7.14	92.86
You can approach your parents for any problem that you face	6.75	93.25
Your parents care about you	1.96	98.04
Your parents help you with your homework	6.20	93.80
You feel comfortable to talk to your parents	7.92	92.08
You are very important to your parents	3.37	96.63
Cronbach's alpha= 0.77; KMO= 0.82		

Scores	Arm			p-value			Full sample
	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	
Mean score (range, SD),	6.52 (0-7, 1.18)	6.70 (0-7, 0.92)	6.64 (0-7, 0.96)	0.013*	0.092	0.389	6.61 (0-7, 1.03)
Connectedness with parents, %							
Low Connectedness	2.48	1.21	1.67				1.80
Medium Connectedness	4.06	2.18	3.10	0.108	0.516	0.610	3.14
High Connectedness	93.45	96.60	95.24				95.06

* Significant at 5% level

Girl's experience of gender discrimination at home/family was measured using five items that compares treatment by parents between adolescent daughter and son. The questions were asked only to those who reported to have a brother of similar age (younger or older than 1-2 years). The results have been presented in Table 27.

Between 84% and 93% of the girls reported equal treatment in terms of parents paying attention to their problems, listening to their opinions, and considering their study as important as that of their

brothers'. On the other hand, 60% reported that their parents treat them equally as their brothers in terms of the amount of work that they have to do for the household.

Factor analysis was conducted using the five items to validate the measure. One item was dropped due to non-loading. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.58 and KMO was 0.68. The total score ranged from 0 to 4. The mean score for gender discrimination in the household was 0.7 in all arms. Higher proportion of girls from the intervention arms (81% from LTP and 85% from FTP) reported experience of low discrimination compared to the control arm (76%). From control arm 21% reported medium discrimination while 11% and 7% from LTP and FTP arm reported so respectively. A lower percentage of girls from control arm (3%) reported high discrimination compared to the two intervention arms (LTP=8% and FTP=7%).

Table 27. Gender discrimination in the family of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 102)

Items	Full sample, 102						
	Disagree	Agree					
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -							
Your parents pay attention to your problems as much as they pay attention to your brothers' problems	6.86	93.14					
Your parents listen to your opinion as much as they listen to a brother's opinion	15.69	84.31					
Your parents treat you equally to your brothers in terms of how much work you have to do for the family (total time for household labor, field work, etc)	40.20	59.80					
Your parents consider your study as important as your brother's	10.78	89.22					
Cronbach's alpha= 0.58; KMO= 0.68							
	Arm			p-value			
	Control (N=438)	LTP (N=37)	FTP (N=27)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Mean score (range, SD),	0.79 (0-3, 0.87)	0.73 (0-4, 1.12)	0.67 (0-3, 0.92)	0.797	0.587	0.812	0.73 (0-4, 0.974)
Score tertiles							
Gender discrimination in the family, %							
Low discrimination	76.32	81.08	85.19	0.311	0.241	0.889	80.39
Medium discrimination	21.05	10.81	7.41				13.73

High discrimination	2.63	8.11	7.41	5.88
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4.3.3 Understanding social norms using quantitative data

Social norm was measured using 12 statements around normative expectations (also called injunctive norms) regarding girls' practices. The responses were coded on a three-point Likert scale. Based on the results from factor analysis eight items were removed due to non-loading, cross loading and construction of factor with less than three items (Cronbach's alpha= 0.61; KMO= 0.69). The total score of the scale ranges between 0 and 8 with higher scores indicating positive social norms. The frequencies and results based on the normative expectations scores have been presented in Table 28.

A high percentage of girls reported that people of their villages will disapprove with each of the items. Approximately 82% of the girls reported that people of their village will disapprove if a girl plays football or other outdoor sport; nearly 80% of the girls reported disapproval of people if a girl goes to bazaar alone. Sixty one percent and 58% of the girls reported disapproval of people if a girl goes to visit her friend in free time alone and if girls ride a bicycle for leisure respectively.

The mean score was 2 for all study arms. Around two in three girls from each arm reported negative social norms or norms against girls' rights. Nearly two in five girls had no normative expectations and one in ten of the girls reported social norms in favour of girls' freedom of movement, girls' employment and participation in sports, etc or positive social norms. There were no differences between arms.

Table 28. Social norms reported by adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 years in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Girls aged 12 - <16 years, %		
	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove
Percentage of girls reported that people of her village will approve, be neutral towards or disapprove			
If a girl goes to the bazaar alone.	18.35	1.73	79.92
If a girl rides a bicycle for leisure (i.e. not to go to school)	38.67	2.98	58.35
If a girl plays football or other outdoor sport.	15.84	2.27	81.88
If a girl walks alone to visit her friend in her free time	36.55	2.35	61.10
Cronbach's alpha= 0.61; KMO= 0.69			
Score	Arm	p-value	

	Control (N=443)	LTP (N=412)	FTP (N=420)	Control vs LTP	Control vs FTP	LTP vs FTP	Full sample
Mean score of social norms (Range, SD),	2.36 (0-8, 2.45)	2.26 (0-8, 2.35)	2.21 (0-8, 2.25)	0.568	0.331	0.696	2.28 (2.35, 0-8)
social norms, %							
Negative social norm	62.08	66.26	68.81	0.437	0.101	0.696	65.65
No normative expectations	21.44	19.42	18.57				19.84
Positive social norm	16.48	14.32	12.62				14.51

Social norms among community men and women were measured about normative expectations (injunctive norms) regarding girls' practices and parents' practices. The responses were coded as participants' perception on approval from the community in a three-point Likert scale. Two separate factor analyses were conducted for two sets of normative expectations among the full sample. There were 12 items regarding normative expectations regarding girls' practices. Eight items were retained after factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the community sample for adolescent girls' behavior was 0.71 and KMO was 0.80.

There were ten items regarding normative expectations regarding parents' practices of which eight items were retained. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.79 and KMO was 0.85. The frequencies and on the scores for normative expectations have been presented in Table 29.

Majority of women and men perceived that the people of their village will disapprove most of the statements presented on normative expectations regarding girls'/women's transgression of gender roles. A higher proportion of women reported disapproval of community regarding norms around girls' behavior compared to men. For example, 95% women reported community disapproval of going to bazaar alone, while 82% men reported this; 82% women vs. 57% men reported community disapproval of earning money of a non-school going unmarried girl. Relatively progressive opinions of men compared to women may be driven by their greater exposure to the outside world, familiarity with progressive ideas and values of the modern world introducing social desirability bias in their responses.

Similarly, majority of women and men perceived community disapproval with most of the statements related with “normative expectations regarding parents’ practice” of endorsement of girls’ rights to freedom of movement, expression of views, participation in decision making, etc. Here as well, a higher proportion of women reported disapproval with all statements compared to men (Table 29).

Table 29. Social norm reported by community members aged ≥25 years in Rangpur, 2019 (N = 626)

Items	Women aged ≥25 years (N = 308)			Men aged ≥25 years (N = 318)		
	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove
Percentage reported that people of their village will approved, will be neutral towards or disapprove						
If a non-school going, unmarried girl works outside home to earn money	15.58	1.95	82.47	35.85	7.55	56.60
If a married woman goes out of house to work.	52.27	1.62	46.10	49.69	10.38	39.94
If a girl expresses her opinion regarding her marriage to her parents	28.25	1.30	70.45	42.45	6.29	51.26
If a girl goes to the bazaar alone	4.55	0.32	95.13	15.09	2.83	82.08
If a boy regularly cooks food for his family	6.17	1.95	91.88	14.78	4.09	81.13
If a girl speaks openly about menstruation	4.22	0.0	95.78	4.09	0.94	94.97
If a girl advocates for girls' needs in the community	26.62	2.60	70.78	45.91	5.03	49.06
If a girl walks alone to visit her friend in her free time	4.22	1.30	94.48	12.58	1.89	85.53
Cronbach's alpha=0.71; KMO=0.80						
Normative expectations regarding parents' practice						
If parents allow their daughter to expresses her opinion regarding her marriage	45.78	1.95	52.27	51.89	7.23	40.88
If parents allow their daughter to go to the bazaar alone	7.14	1.30	91.56	20.75	3.77	75.47
If parents encourage their son to regularly cooks food for his family	7.47	2.27	90.26	12.89	6.29	80.82
Parents allow their daughter to speak openly about menstruation	5.52	0.0	94.48	3.46	0.63	95.91
If parents allow their adolescent daughter to advocates for girls' needs in the community	28.90	1.62	69.48	47.80	5.03	47.17
If parents allow their adolescent daughter to ride a bicycle for leisure (i.e. not to go to school)	12.99	0.97	86.04	32.08	6.60	61.32
If parents allow their adolescent daughter to play football or other outdoor sport	6.82	0.97	92.21	16.98	6.60	76.42
If parents allow their daughter to walk alone to visit her friend in her free time	5.19	0.32	94.48	20.75	2.83	76.42
Cronbach's alpha=0.78; KMO=0.85						

4.3.4 Understanding social norms using qualitative data

Social norms around girls' mobility in and around the village

Over time mobility of the girls has expanded a lot. In contrast to the girls several decades ago, the girls aged 12-16 now have the opportunity to go to school, market, and even to some public gatherings such as fair. Still, freedom of movement remains quite restricted for them.

Adolescent girls' movement in and around the village is conditional on the purpose of their trip. During the day most girls are free to go to school or coaching in group or alone. If the coaching schedule requires a girl to return home in the evening, she is usually accompanied by adults. The girls regularly attend schools and/or coaching in another village. In most of the villages girls go alone to buy school supplies and other necessities from the shops in the village. But most girls are not allowed to go to market alone. Most girls go to visit their neighbors, relatives, and peers within the village alone. However, if the village is large and the relatives and peers live far away from their own neighborhood they have to be accompanied while visiting them. Likewise, they are not allowed to go outside the village alone for the purpose of socializing.

Majority of the girls attend village fair, school picnic or go to park when accompanied. The girls rarely move in and around the village alone without any clear purpose. The community members react negatively to such mobility of the girls. They form a negative impression about the girl, try to figure out why exactly the girl is wandering around, and send her home. They consider it their responsibility to inform her parents about it and warn them of potential adverse consequences. They also demand the parents discipline her properly. The parents usually take measures to discipline her. Despite such strict control over girls' mobility a few girls transgress these norms. They are usually punished for it and learn to conform (Figure 8).

Empirical expectations

Most of the girls study up to G9 or G10. Unfortunately, not all villages have a secondary school (from G6 to 10). Therefore, the girls from villages without a secondary school attend school in another village. Similarly, most of them attend coaching, which may or may not be located in their own village. When necessary, girls go to school and coaching alone.

Most girls go to some places alone and to others with chaperons. They visit relatives and neighbors from the same village alone though they have to obtain permission from the family. In all villages except for Village B most girls go to small shops alone within the village for buying necessary things for herself or for the household. All girls from these villages can go to market if accompanied. Except for one to three girls no one **berhaye** or wanders within or around the village aimlessly or for pleasure.

“Adolescent girls from our village won’t go alone. Suppose I am going somewhere for pleasure –I won’t go alone. I’ll be accompanied either by my father or by my mother. If I have friends they may go with me. The bottom line is there will be somebody with me.”

IDI-Girl-2_village A

Normative expectations

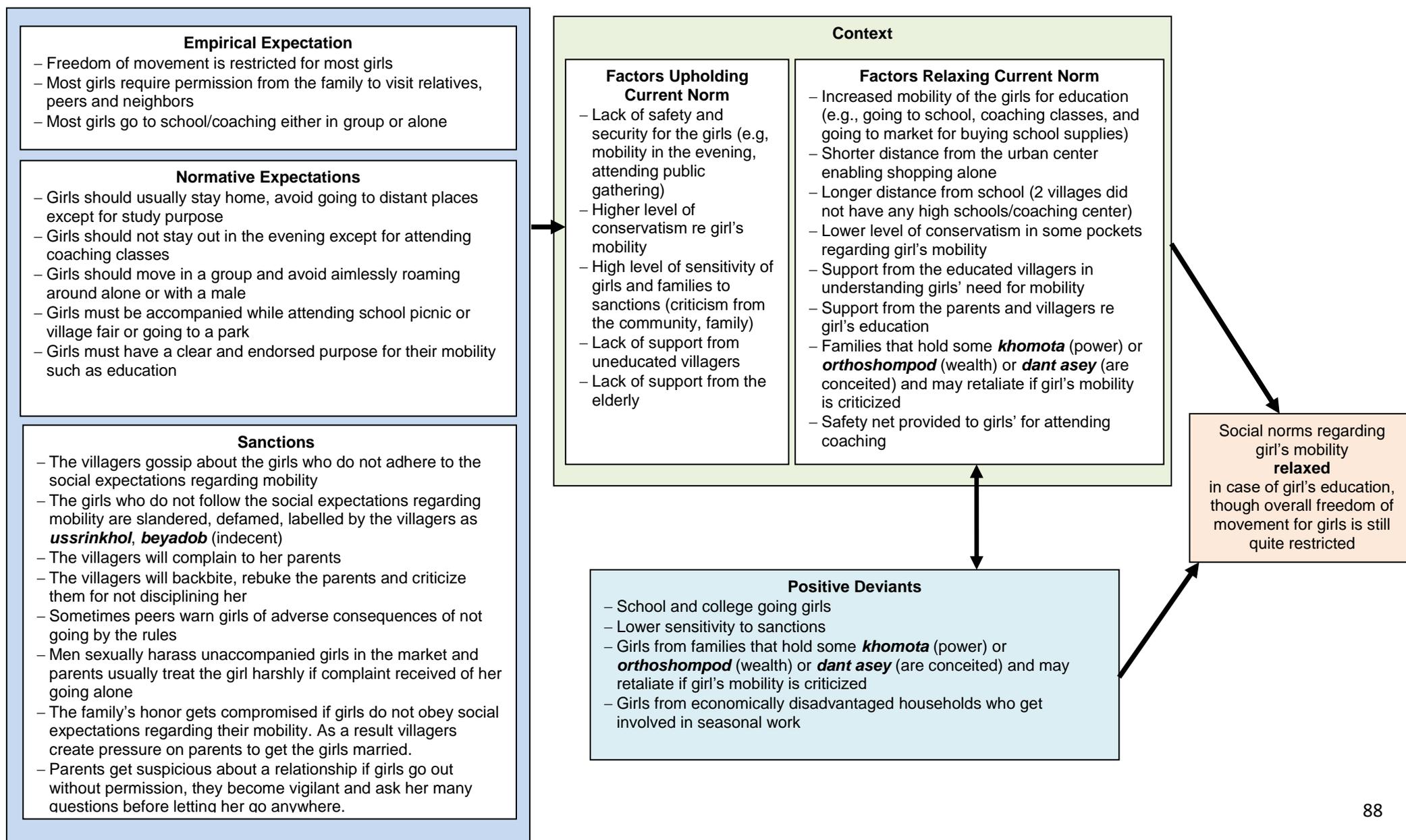
According to the villagers mobility of the girls at these ages must have a clear and endorsed purpose such as education, socialization with relatives and female peers or running errands for the family. Going some places alone for the purpose of education is endorsed by the villagers, but girls must be accompanied while attending school picnic or village fair or going to a park. Villagers appreciate adolescent girls who seriously engage in studies and usually stay home rather than going to different places and hanging out with peers. No girl is usually allowed to go long distances alone.

A girl from village C linked wandering alone with criticism by the villagers and to damaging marriage prospect.

“If I go out alone the villagers will say, ‘This girl wanders around too much’. They will come up with bad ideas about me. When people from the groom’s side will come to see me the villagers will say, ‘She roams around too much’. This is why it is not good for a girl to go here and there.”

IDI-Girl-9_village C

Figure8: Conceptual Framework Emerging from the Data on Social Norms Related to Girls' Mobility



Hanging out with peers in someone's house has higher approval than hanging out with peers outside of home or in open space. The villagers feel it is okay if the girls go to different places in the village in group, but aimlessly roaming around alone is not approved. According to the mothers from Village A, families across socioeconomic strata do not allow girls to roam around alone (FGD-Mothers_1_village A). Even this is discouraged by parents. A female KI from village A said that the parents caution the girls saying,

"Don't roam around. People do not consider this good."

KII-Woman-1_village A

All the other groups of informants suggested similar normative expectation.

The villagers are vigilant about what a girl wears, how she carries herself, and how she behaves, particularly when she is outside home. Going out without any clear purpose is treated with suspicion and negativity. In such case, the villagers usually assume the girl is either already involved in a relationship or is eager to get involved. The villagers do not like the girls to attend public gathering such as fair.

Sanctions

Wandering in the village alone

A girl wandering alone within and around the village is criticized by the villagers as a bad girl. They may try to discipline her by rebuking. They also lodge complains to her parents. They demand that the parents take necessary measures for stopping such bad behavior. The following exchanges among FGD participants illustrate very well how transgressing the norm is penalized by the villagers.

- P1: *The villagers will wonder, 'Where does she go alone'? They will criticize her.*
P2: *Many men gather in the market and gossip in the tea stall. They'd say, 'We saw the daughter of such and such wandering around.'*
...
P3: *Her family may receive complaint.*
P2: *They'll tell the father...*
P3: *'You see, your daughter is not a good girl. Why does she roam alone? If an accident happens how would you manage?'*
P2: *...The parents have to marry off the girls who wander around.*

FGD-Boys-4_village C

The villagers criticize not only the girl, but the parents as well. They think a girl like this needs to be married off immediately.

- M: Do the villagers talk about the parents if they allow their daughter to wander around alone?
- P1-3: Even if they don't say anything directly they will surely engage in backbiting.
- P2: They'd comment, 'They (the parents) are not getting her married. They are giving her too much education.'
- P4: 'She is going here and there all by herself.'
- P2: They will intentionally leave out the fact that this is also due to attending private classes having evening schedules.
- P2, 5: This is wrong, but people will still do this.
- P2, 3: People will ask the parents to get her married. They'll send the matchmaker to the parents with marriage proposals.
- P4: By marrying her they'll waste the girl's life.

FGD-Mothers-2_village A

Going to market alone

Markets are not available in all villages. So, people from villages without a market usually shop in their neighboring villages with markets. Even if there is a market in the village it is located as a rule at one end of the village. Traditionally a market was never a place for females due to **purdah** (covering up) norm and restricted mobility of the females. A woman seen in the market was equated with a commercial sex worker (CSW). In fact, in Bengali the expression **bajarer meye** (a woman from the market) literally means a CSW. Over time this has gradually changed. Now, reputation of a female is not tarnished if she goes to the market accompanied by someone or if she does not have a male household member to do shopping.

In this context, going to market alone may not be a very easy task for an adolescent girl. This is so also because men congregate in market and they tend to sexually harass females. Harassment includes passing sexual comments, winking, pulling **orhna** (a piece of cloth worn as an extra cover for breasts).

*"The market is full of men. If a girl goes to the market they pass bad remarks. While she is passing by they will wink at her or pull at her **orhna**. They will discuss that the girl must be very bad otherwise she'd not come to the market."*

IDI-Boy-1_village A

Although the data suggest relaxation of restrictions on going to market over time girl's presence in the market without a justifiable reason is usually not tolerated. She can go to the market if she needs school supplies or if her father is away and her mother sends her on some errand. Fancy commodities available in the markets often attract girls. Still, most of the girls do not dare to go to the market alone without a justifiable purpose. It was reported that only "weird" girls go to market to listen to music, watch movies and TV. Villagers and parents start disciplining girls quite early in their lives for preventing them from

going to market. If a villager sees a girl from the village in the market he would immediately ask her why she came. If the reason was not good enough for the villager he will usually send her off to home and complain to her parents. In such cases, the parents usually treat the girl harshly. Thus, for example, a girl from Village B was scolded and beaten by her father for going to the market and watching a movie when she was 10 years old.

Who enforces the norm?

Overall findings suggest that the family and the community are the main actors in enforcing mobility norms on the girls. It is part of common knowledge that the family nurtures, guides and disciplines children. But the role of community in enforcing norms often remains invisible or hidden. The data clearly demonstrate not only the importance of the community in enforcing norms, but also the fact that the community enforces the norm both on the girls and the families. Thus, when the norm is still strong the community can impose penalties on the family and the girl if they deviate from the norm.

In all the villages the informants mentioned the elderly as the most active enforcers of social norms.

Thus, a girl from village B said,

“There are several small shops inside the village, but most girls do not go there. Elderly men gather in the shops. They say, ‘Girls should not come here. It is not [for them] to come [to a shop]. They can ask their elder brothers and father to bring what they want.’ This is why I and my peers don’t go to these shops.”

IDI-ADG-6_village B

In Village B, the girls felt that the mobility norm was so strong that the community may override parents’ intention to allow greater freedom to the girl.

P1-3: Even if our parents wish to allow us freedom of movement they are unable to act because of criticism by some villagers.

FGD-Girls-3_village B

Case study 1 illustrates pressure from the community to make a girl conform to social norm is so great that parents actually have to surrender to it. This case study also shows that such pressure impedes a girl’s development.

Case study 1: How norm is enforced

Luna, a girl aged 13 living in village B used to go everywhere. Her father runs a business in milk and owns a shop in the market. Luna used to go to the market every day for shopping. People would say she behaves like a boy. She used to climb trees and ride a bicycle. Many people in the neighborhood

used to call her *mordani* (masculine). The villagers were scandalized by her non-feminine behavior. They believed she is a bad girl. They did not like her and they were desperate to stop her act like a boy.

Luna's parents were comfortable with her tom-boyish behavior. But as time went by the villagers' negative attitudes and criticism made Luna's mother wary. She reacted to her tree climbing. It is unknown what exactly she told her, but ever since then Luna ceased to do the things that annoyed the villagers. Now she stays home most of the time. She seems to have lost interest in everything. She does not even attend school regularly.

Exception

It is clear from the data that otherwise stringent restrictions on mobility of the girls are relaxed in case of education. When necessary the girls are allowed to go to school and coaching on their own. They may have late schedule for coaching classes making them return home quite late in the evening. This is also accepted by the villagers. In order to ensure safety of the girls returning from coaching in the evening, an adult (the teacher or a parent) accompanies them. When none of them are available to accompany them the male students from the coaching center are in charge of accompanying the girls and help them reach home safely.

Although villagers do not like the girls to go to the market they do not criticize the girls who go there to buy supplies for school. The girls can also go to market for buying other things they need except for in Village B. Only a very few girls aimlessly wander in the village; they tend not to obey their parents.

P1: We have to go far for schooling, isn't it?

P1-3: It is.

P3-4: We have to go far for private tuition and coaching.

P1: The villagers never mind that.

P2: People do not mind if a girl goes somewhere alone for the purpose of studying. She may also go for buying, for example, guide book or book.

P1: The villagers don't mind if she goes to the doctor on her own for treatment.

P2: She can also go to buy earrings/pins, cream, powder...

P1: her cosmetics, in a nutshell.

P1-4: She can go to the market (for these purposes).

FGD-Girls-1_village A

The data from the mothers' FGD in village A substantiates what the girls said about exceptional cases.

P1: [A girl can go alone] to work.

P2: It is forbidden to go alone except for the purpose of education or employment...

P3: ...or for buying books, clothes, for private tuition, coaching.

All: No, these are not considered as problematic.

P3: But we won't allow her to wander with a boy.

P4: If there is an off day at school and she wants to wander around we do not allow her to

do so. She can't go anywhere unnecessarily.

P5: She can go to the town if she needs to buy books or clothes. That will not cause any problem.

P6: But in that case she needs to be accompanied.

P1, 4: There will be no problem if the father or the elder brother accompany her. Some girls take their friends along.

All: That is fine.

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

Respondents mentioned there were a few unusual examples of girls who “aimlessly wander” in each of these villages. Some of them are living with their relatives, while their parents are working away from home. The informants reported they tend not obey their guardians. If a girl from a family considered to hold **khomota** (power) or **orthoshompod** (wealth) or simply considered to be **dant asey** (conceited) wanders in the village without any purpose the villagers avoid discussing the matter with the parents fearing retaliation. People avoid as well criticizing the families that are **kachhanni** (quarrelsome).

P1: If a girl from an educated family roams around in the village the villagers don't say anything.

P2: If a girl behaves well, does well in her studies and do not mix with **changrha** (boys) then she can go anywhere without worrying others.

P3: Those who are better off are not criticized.

P4: Nobody can talk about the well off, Even if people know something about them they will keep silent.

P3: They have money. That is why people are afraid of them. This is why the rumor does not spread. In contrast, if this is about a poor family everyone will talk even if there is a slight deviation [from the norm].

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

Case study 2: Positive deviant in mobility

Although girls from village C do not go to shops in the *para* due to disapproval of the villagers, a 15 year old girl does not hesitate to go to the shop for buying necessities for herself, for her family and sometimes even for her neighbors. Her parents endorse her mobility being confident that she will not engage in any bad behavior.

Her mother has no education and her father has very low education (G-3). Her father, the only breadwinner in the family is a driver. The family is far from being well off. The girl, however, has a joyous and peaceful life with her family. According to her this is so because she is conscious that her parents are exceptional as they love their daughters and son equally in a context of deep-rooted son preference. She observed that sons are usually valued and loved more than the daughters as they are supposed to live with the parents and take care of them in their old age, while the daughters will be married off draining household resources and serve another family.

This girl's elder sister has been married for a while. Even now whenever dresses are bought for the children the elder sister has never been excluded. The same happens when there is special food (e.g., chicken or beef) on the table. Her elder sister always gets her share.

High sensitivity to social norm

The data reveal some girls who are highly sensitive to socially defined mobility norms. They refrain from taking advantage of the shift in the norm over time. Thus, either their families and/or they themselves do not engage in mobility that the norm allows. As a result, they have mobility lower than the average mobility of their peers in the village. Below we present some examples of these girls' high sensitivity to social norm.

A 15 year old girl from village A is highly appreciated as a good girl in her village. Although the girls from her village are free to visit neighbors and relatives living in the village alone she prefers to stay home and not to socialize with others. She told the interviewer, *"My family does not want me to visit others as that may allow the villagers to say, 'She always wanders and does not stay home.'"* According to her such girls are called **ussrinkhol** (unruly) by the villagers. She informed the interviewer that while other girls usually go to the market to buy necessities, she never does that.

Case study 3: High sensitivity to social norm in mobility

The girls from village D go to the railroad, village market and upazila headquarters for shopping. A 14 year old girl, however, does not go to these places. She is also not allowed to interact with her peers in the village. She referred to these girls as **beyadob** (impudent). She said her elder brother does not allow her to mix with them as all of them have multiple romantic relationships. This is why she usually stays at her grandparents' house and attends a **madrassa**. She goes to the market and the village fair only if accompanied by her mother. Her parents, elder brother, and grandparent do not let her go anywhere alone. She even goes to school only if her elder brother lets her.

How the norm is affected by context

It seems that the girls from village D have highest mobility among these four villages. Thus, it is unique to village D that the girls travel to the *upazila* headquarters alone for buying clothes without being criticized by the villagers. The girls also go far despite criticism of some villagers. Some parents allow their daughters to go to the fair on their own. Some elderly villagers with traditional notions do not approve of this (FGD-Girls-4_village D). The girls from Village A have higher mobility compared to

village B and village C. The contextual factors that need to be considered in understanding these variations are presented below. Both villages A and D do not have any high schools within the village. Thus, the girls have to go to another village for schooling. village D is closest to Pirgachha, the upazila headquarter. It can be treated as a peri-urban area. Both village D and Village A have a small Hindu population, while village C and village B are exclusively Muslim villages. village C with lowest mobility of the girls has four *madrassas* in the village. Moreover, the Islamic Foundation is active in the village and running mosque-based education. There are 10 mosques in village C, while village D has three mosques. Village C has the lowest age at marriage for girls.

The girls in all the villages except for village C are allowed to go to the market alone for obtaining supplies for school or other necessities. All the school supplies for the girls are bought by other family members in village C. According to a 14 year old girl from village C, elderly men own small shops in the village and they do not allow girls to buy anything from their shops. That is why male family members usually do the shopping. The girls do not usually go to the market outside the village alone as *bokhatey* (derailed) youngsters hang out there.

The girls are not supposed to go to the field or work in the field. This norm is relaxed for the girls belonging to economically disadvantaged households. Girls from such households get involved in seasonal work such as sowing and harvesting potato not only on own or rented in land, but also on other's land on daily wage basis.

A girl aged 14 from village A reported going alone to the tailor in the neighboring village indicating her greater mobility compared to other girls in the village and the girls from village C and village B.

Social norms around girls' riding and playing in the village

Norms for adolescent girls regarding riding

The data identify the empirical expectation that girls do not ride bicycles. This empirical expectation was uniform throughout the four villages studied. Data on normative expectation identify that villagers and community would not like it if adolescent girls rode bicycles. Therefore, the pervasive norm in these villages is that adolescent girls do not ride bicycles. However, the data suggest that the villagers will not

disapprove if girls ride bicycle for going to school or attending coaching or private tuition. Bicycle riding leads to sanctions in the form of verbal criticism of both adolescent girls and their parents. Those who impose sanctions are usually the villagers, including adolescent boys.

There are some exceptions in the form of positive deviance: i.e. girls who ride bicycles despite possible communal sanctions. Positive deviants are allowed license to defy the existing norm as they have parents who are supportive of them in engaging in bicycle riding. Positive deviants were also found to be allowed to engage in bicycle riding due to the opportunity to advance education that bicycle riding presents by allowing faster and easier transport to school and coaching.. We summarize the findings from this exploration in the framework below (Figure 9).

Norms for adolescent girls regarding play

Data identify the empirical expectation that girls do not play sports such as cricket and football, identified as boys' games in the villages studied. Data on normative expectation identify that villagers do not like it when adolescent girls play games or sports. Hence, the pervasive norm in the villages is that adolescent girls do not play sports or games. However, data also suggest that playing boys' games may be permissible if the games are played within school boundaries, or in places where the girls cannot be seen to be playing by outsiders. Defying the norm leads to sanctioning from villagers in the form of verbal criticism, labeling as manly, shameless and may even pose the possibility of impending physical violence on the adolescent girls. Parents and brothers of adolescent girls also face sanctions from villagers and the community and in turn they also sanction adolescent girls by prohibiting them from playing.

Positive deviants were found to be participating in playing despite criticisms from villagers and the greater community. It was found that in the context of living in a neighborhood that consists mostly of family and relatives, adolescent girls are allowed to play games outside the home. Younger adolescent girls who have not yet undergone menarche were also found to be playing. One adolescent girl was found to have low sensitivity to sanctions and therefore playing despite sanctions. Some participants identified that adolescent girls may be allowed to play within the confines of school grounds should the secondary school curriculum requires girls to do so. We summarize the findings from this exploration in the framework below (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Conceptual Framework Emerging from the Data on Social Norms Related to Girls' Bicycle Riding

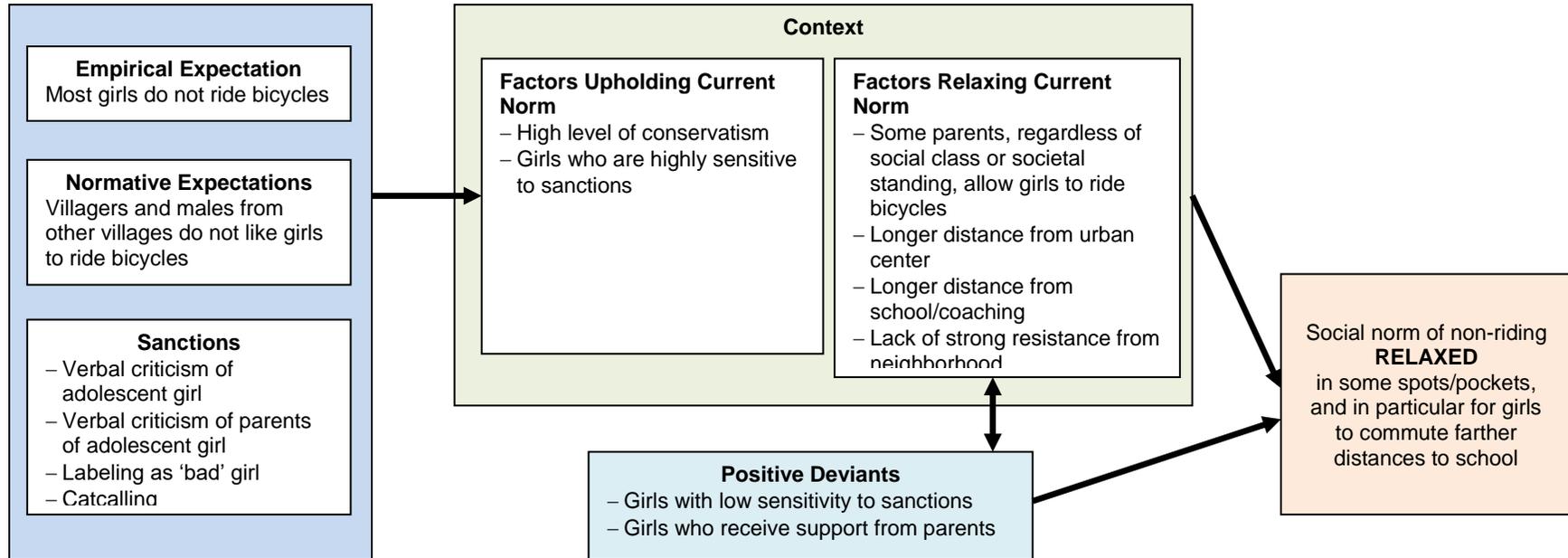
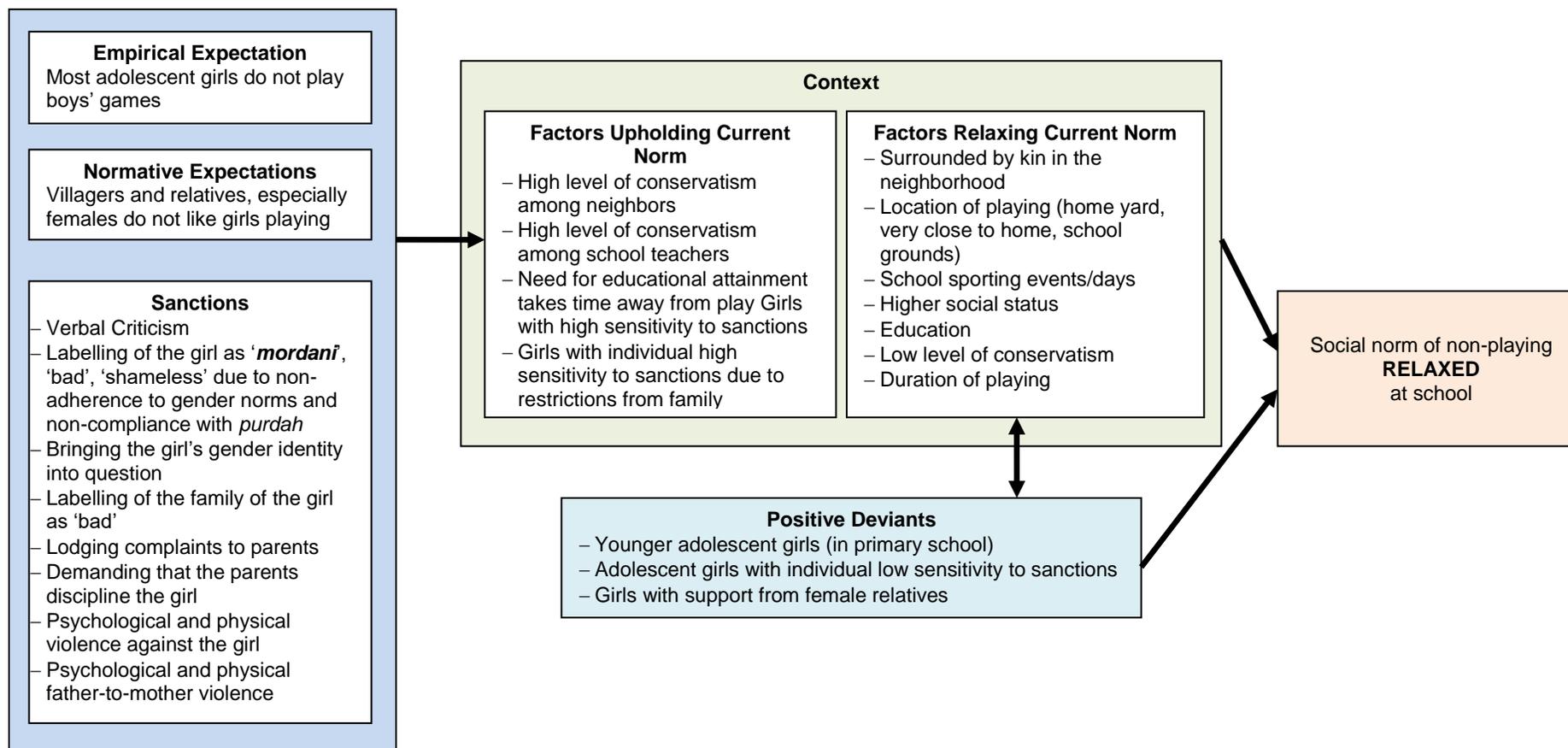


Figure 10: Conceptual Framework Emerging from the Data on Social Norms Related to Girls' Playing



Empirical expectations

a. Adolescent girls riding cycle

Most girls do not ride bicycles in these villages. From adolescent girls in village A village, all participants reported the empirical expectation that girls do not ride bicycles. Notably, both girls village A who ride the bicycles also individually reported that no girls other than themselves ride bicycles. Similarly, in village C, most participants, apart from one, did not report that adolescent girls ride bicycles. In village B, it was found from most participants that most adolescent girls do not ride bicycles. However, empirical expectation regarding girls riding bicycle was conflicting amongst adolescent girls. While most girls reported that only one girl rides cycle, some girls reported that there may be more than one girl who rides cycles in this village.

“No girls ride cycle and climb on a tree as community people do not like it. Only one girl rides cycles and climbs trees.”

IDI-Girl-11_village B

“Most of the girls do not ride cycle or participate in singing or dancing. Though some adolescent girls ride cycle, but they avoid the villagers or neighbors. They ride cycle in the morning or at home.”

IDI-Girl-13_village B

In contrast with village A, village C and village B, it was found that the empirical expectation in village D differed depending on where in the village the participants resided. It was found from FGD that almost half of the girls ride the cycle, while only one adolescent girl participant (IDI) reported that adolescent girls do not ride bicycles. It is most likely that as the village is divided in three distinct parts by a highway and a rail line, the practices are different in the three parts of the village. FGD captured girls from one part and the one adolescent girl reporting the empirical expectation that no girls ride the bicycle was from another part of the village.

“Almost half of the adolescent girls ride cycle and no one says anything to them.”

FGD-Girls-4_village D

“No girl ... rides cycle at home or in an open space.”

IDI-Girl-20_village D

b. Adolescent girls playing games and sports

Most participants from the villages under study reported that adolescent girls do not play games. Restrictions were stronger outside the home and in open places, as opposed to inside the home. In

particular, reservations were strong when the game in question was traditionally thought of as boys' games such as cricket and football.

"No girls play boy's games. She also stopped playing football after reaching G-7."

IDI-Girl-18_village D

"No girl plays boy's games."

IDI-Girl-6_village C

Notably, despite generational gap, the empirical expectation of both adolescent boys and mothers were found to be similar regarding adolescent girls playing games.

"No adolescent girl plays boys' games or those that requires jumping."

FGD-Mothers-2_village A

"No adolescent girl plays boys' games in open field or in the school as family and community people do not like it. Girls can play their own games (i.e. badminton, hopscotch, dariyabandha, etc.) at home."

FGD-Boys-1_village A

It was also found that while adolescent girls cannot play boys' games outside home or at school, comparatively small girls (8-10 years old) and those who have not reached menarche yet can play those games outside of home and at school (FGD-Girls-1_village A). This can be explained by the religious-cultural concept of reaching adulthood when a girl starts to menstruate or otherwise show external signs of approaching physical maturity. However, one adolescent girl reported that only girls as young as 5-6 can play boys' games and not beyond that.

"No girls play boy's games or outside of home."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

"No adult (10+ Y) girls play boy's games. Only 5-6 years old girls can play boy's games."

IDI-Girl-10_village C

One participant reported that once she reached the age of 11 or 12, she stopped playing all kinds of games, including those considered traditionally as girls' games, such as *bou-chi*, dice-throwing and playing with dolls. The concept of ***bujhlaml buddhi hoilo*** (coming of age) was found to be important for girls who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood and are therefore expected to understand the society around her more than before.

"In the past means when I was nine or ten years even then I played. Then when I was eleven or twelve and was promoted to class eight then I understood and since then I stopped playing."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

It was also reported that many in the peer group of adolescent girls are married at a young age and become unavailable to playing these games. Therefore unmarried adolescent girls also become unable to participate in these games due to a lack of playmates.

"Their friends get married at early age that's why they do not get them to play those games."

IDI-Girl-10_village C

Adolescent girls also reported that once girls started to become more invested in education, opportunities to play becomes reduced as they have to study and also attend coaching (private, after school tuition).

M: Ok, that means that you, as in 12-16 years old adolescent girls don't play these games at home either? (Not even) in the yard?

P: No, we don't see these.

P5: We don't get time. So we don't play either.

P1: We don't get time as in, (we have) coaching (private tuition in group) in the morning, then (we have to go to) school. After school there is private (private tuition) (P5: Hm)... with this kind of time table, it's not possible."

FGD-Girls-2_village C

However, one adolescent girl reported that despite time limitation and pressure for education, they play girls' games in school.

*"They are allowed to play **dariyabandha, gollachut** (local games of the girls) at home or in an open place but they do not play those at home or in an open place because they hardly manage time from their coaching and school. They play these games in school ground during school time."*

FGD-Girls-2_village C

Moreover, mothers in village C reported that girls are allowed to sing and dance at school events.

"Adolescent girls can sing and dance in school programs."

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

While adolescent boys reported that adolescent girls do not play boys' games at home or school, it was also reported by adolescent girls and boys that adolescent girls can play badminton at home, but not in an open place. Boys also reported that girls play cricket in the school during tiffin time, and that at school, adolescent boys can be found to be playing these games with adolescent girls. Boys reported that they don't play with adolescent girls at home.

M: Then, do they not criticize you? (They) Don't say anything to you?

P3: They are doing (playing) this at school time.

P2: Doing at school.

P1: It's not outside.

- P4: *We are playing at school- if we play at home, maybe they (people in the village) will see, and after seeing, they will say that... I mean, what you are doing is not right.*
- P4: *They will say like this.*
- M: *So you don't do at home, or what?*
- P3, 2, 1: *No. We don't play at home.*
- P4: *We don't play at home. At home we play with our younger brothers. But with sisters, elder sisters or younger, we don't play with (them).*
FGD-Boys-4_village C

Fathers of adolescent girls mentioned that girls play their “own” games. They reported that sometimes they can be found playing these games at school or outside school. Others reported that girls may sometimes be found to play football at school, but not outside.

*“No adolescent girls play football or cricket. They play **balish khela** (pillow passing), skipping, etc. in the school or outside of school.”*

FGD-Fathers-3_village B

“Adolescent girls play football in the school but not at home or outside of school”.

FGD-Fathers-1_village D

Normative expectation

a. Normative expectation regarding adolescent girls riding bicycles

Bicycle riding by adolescent girls is not easily accepted by the communities of these villages, especially villagers and community members. While not all adolescent girls reported normative expectation regarding bicycle riding, most of those who did, reported that nobody likes girls riding bicycles (IDI-Girl-1_village A). Very few adolescent girls were of the opinion that they should not ride bicycles.

“Villagers, family members, cousins all think that an adolescent girl should not ... ride a cycle.”

IDI-Girls-20_village D

Data from villages A, B and C suggests that the norm operated similarly in these three villages. On the other hand, it was found from adolescent girls FGDs from village D that they can cycle to school or private tuition, and very few people think negatively of it. Those who do are mostly adolescent boys (FGD-Girls-4_village D).

b. Normative expectation regarding adolescent girls playing sports

Adolescent girls identified that the normative expectation of girls not playing outside is related to menarche.

“Village people and family do not like that an adolescent girl plays boys' game in an open field or near to home once they get their menstruation. Comparatively small girls can play boy's games in school or outside of home. But an adolescent girl aged 12 to 16 cannot play those games in school. They can play these (games) at home.”

FDG-Girls-1_village A.

All participants and focus groups, regardless of age or sex, reported the normative expectation that girls should not play boys' games. Similar results were found in village A.

“Community people do not like that a girl plays boys' games (i.e. football, cricket etc.) or ride cycles).”

IDI-Girl-6_village C

“Girls should not play cricket and football. A girl should behave like a girl. They should not behave/ act like a boy.”

IDI-Girl-4_village A

“Village people and family do not like that an adolescent girl plays boys' game in an open field or near to home once they get their menstruation. Comparatively small girls can play boy's games in school or outside of home. But an adolescent girl aged 12 to 16 cannot play those games in school. They can play these (games) at home.”

FDG-Girls-1_village A.

Specific normative expectation of adolescent girls avoiding games that involve jumping was reported by most participants.

“Community people do not like girls' playing (i.e. football, cricket or any sorts of playing which required jumping etc.) and hanging out.”

IDI-Girl-5_village A.

This is related to the expectation that once girls start showing physical growth in terms of secondary sexual characteristics, including starting the maturation of breasts, increase in weight and height, they will refrain from physical activities.

The normative expectation that girls should maintain ***purdah*** (veil) was mentioned by adolescent girls. The community associates the playing of boys' games with wearing boys' clothing, and thereby abandoning ***purdah***. Adolescent girls identified that this was related to the normative expectation that girls should not engage in activities that the boys do. The concept of femininity and the appropriate conduct for young women emerged as a key normative expectation identified by adolescent girls. They

think that a girl should maintain **purdah**. If a girl plays cricket wearing boy's clothing, then community people will criticize her because a girl cannot do the same things as a boy.

"Because I am a girl- so that I cannot do as a boy does- that's why they will set barriers for me. I cannot do everything as a boy (can). I have to do everything as a girl (is expected to)."

IDI-Girl-5_village A

Additionally, it was reported that adolescent girls can play boys' games if it is hidden and not seen by outsiders (FGD-Girls-1_village A). This reinforces the concept of purdah as related to engaging in activities that may be seen.

Rejection of transgression of the physical boundary of home and familiarity was also found as a normative expectation that adolescent girls, mothers of adolescent girls and adolescent boys reported. Mothers identified that village people and parents do not like adolescent girls playing outside of home, in an open field or beside the home (FGD-Mothers-1_village A). Adolescent boys identified that a girl cannot play boy's games in an open field. They should play at home or beside the home (FGD-Boys-1_village A)

It was also reported that the community of the village hardly likes girls playing and believes that adolescent girls should not leave their home.

"Villagers think an adolescent girl should not play any games outside of home. They hardly like girls' playing. An adolescent girl should not go outside of home as they are growing up."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

"Girls should not play boy's games at home or in an open place. They can play those games in their school but it should not be played after finishing school time."

FGD-Boys-4_village C

On a similar note, it was reported that not only people of the community, but parents also think that girls should not play outside of home, or in open places.

"Community people and parents think that a girl should not play outside of home, in an open place."

IDI-Girl-10_village C

As with Village A, the concept of veil was found to be important in maintaining the norm regarding non-playing.

*"Female folk should stay inside **purdah**."*

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

Adolescent girls reported that as they are physically more matured than younger girls, they should not play games that require running and jumping, but younger girls can play these games. This was due to the reason that running and jumping results in their breasts bouncing. Therefore, it “looks bad” and hence not acceptable. As boys’ games such as football and cricket require more jumping, girls reported the norm that adolescent girls do not play these games.

- P: *We have grown up, as in- we can't adjust with them- I mean, they are younger than us. That's why they play. And we have grown up, that's why we don't play.*
- M: *Grown up as in, in terms of your body? Which meanings do the village people use?*
- P 1, 2, 4, 6: *Bodily growing up. They say this mostly. Growing up in body, then puberty.*
- M: *Puberty?*
- P 1-4: *I mean, you know, because of aging, a change comes to girls, right?*
- P5: *And in these games, because of running and jumping, the breasts bounce. Doesn't that look quite bad?*
- M: *Because of these reasons, village people don't like girls of your age to play games like this- football/cricket?*
- All: *Hmm. They don't like.*

FGD-Girls-3_village C

“Adolescent girls should not play boys' games as they have grown up, their physical organs have changed, they got their menstruation.”

FGD-Mothers-4_village C

“Girls should not play boy's games. It looks odd when a girl plays boy's games. Even they should not play any sorts of games which requires jumping.”

FGD-Boys-4_village C

- P3: *Not small anymore- when they grow breasts, from the time they get menstruation, they become big in the eyes of parents. Everyone knows that the girl is now mature, and cannot do bad things anymore, talking unnecessarily with boys, or running and jumping.*
- P2: *Cannot.*
- P3: *Everyone keeps an eye on girls then.*

FGD-Boys-4_village C

In Village B some girls claimed that girls should play girls’ games at home or near to home, but not in open spaces.

*“Girls should play girls' games (i.e. **dariyabandha, kanamachi** etc) at home or near to home but not in an open space.”*

IDI-Girl-15_village B

It was also reported that girls should not play with boys outside the home, implying that if it is inside of the home, then adolescent girls can play with boys. This is in disagreement with finding from village A and village C where it was reported that girls cannot play with boys.

“She should not play with boys outside of home.”

IDI-Girl-15_village B

Fathers reported that even in schools, adolescent girls were not allowed to play boys games, but were allowed to play socially acceptable games of short duration. They were not aware of the reason why teachers did not allow adolescent girls playing games in an open field.

M: But are there any special situation or time when they let them play these games? Take, in school event, or where they study?

P1: They allow in school.

P2: They allow inside the school

M: Do they let them play football, cricket, or other games?

All: No, no, no.

P1: They play other games. They allow playing rope hanging games, biscuit run, pillow games.

P2: Rope games.

P3: Rope games, or run, or chair game.

P4: They allow playing kabaddi

P5: Those games that are light (of short duration), like they are social (they allow to play those games).

P6: Running game, biscuit run, rope hanging-

M: But not allowed to play football or cricket.

All: No.

M: Why do they not allow playing these, can you tell us?

P1: We are not in a position to explain why the teachers do not allow.

M: No, I mean, why do they not allow playing in open fields?

P1: f they allow playing women folk in the field, how can that be? If you let them, men will see.

P2: Other men will see.

FGD-Fathers-4_village B

In the village D, one adolescent girl reported that there is a possibility that community people might not say anything if adolescent girls play boys' games or outside the home (IDI-Girl-19_village D). While, this participant in particular was found to have stopped playing football after reaching grade 5, she sometimes still plays hopscotch in an open space near her home.

It was specifically mentioned by participants in village D that girls should not play these games even in the school and therefore schools do not arrange these games for adolescent girls. This is in accordance with findings from two other villages, but in disagreement with findings from village C. However, from FGD of fathers it was found that even if adolescent girls in public schools can play these games within the school, **madrassa**-going girls should not play these games anywhere.

“Adolescent girls should not play boy's games in the open place or in the school ground or in the competition. Even school do not organize those games in the high school level for the girls.”

FGD-Girls-4_village D

*“Adolescent girls should not play boy's games outside of school. And **madrassa** going girls should not play these games in the school or anywhere else.”*

FGD-Fathers-1_village D

Sanctions

The major form of sanction was found to be verbal criticism, though some reports of threatening with physical violence has also been mentioned. Participants reported sanctions being imposed on individuals who displayed behavior that are at odds with normative expectations and empirical expectations. Sanctions were found to be imposed on both adolescent girls and their parents.

What are the sanctions?

The major form of sanction reported for defying norms was found to be verbal criticism with various intents. Verbal criticism took the form of asking about the lack of shame on the parts of both the girl and the parents. Moreover, actions of those parents who enable adolescent girls to ride cycles and play games were also found to be strictly criticized. Questioning the adolescent girl's parent's intention behind allowing adolescent girls to play was also reported

“Villagers become angry and behave badly with the girls. They complain to their parents that, “Adolescent girls are grown up, why do they permit their girls to play those?”

IDI-Girl-13_village B

“A lot of people say that, ‘why have you brought a cycle for your daughter? There are some people in the village who cannot accept this. They say that it's a lot better to walk. Why did they buy her a cycle? They say like these.”

IDI-Girl-5_village A

Sanctions also took the form of a stricter form of verbal criticism: labeling. Adolescent girls who defy norms were found to be labeled impudent, manly, shameless and bad. Such labeling was found throughout all the villages under study.

All: If adolescent girls play boys' games then community people will criticize her and consider her activity as impudent.

M: So, what kind of things do they say?

P2: She has become so big, still hasn't quit playing.

P1: They see it as impudence.

FGD-Girls-3_village C

*“They say that she (acts) like boys. As in, she is always climbing trees and getting off trees, like this, as she has mannerisms of boys, that’s why in the para (neighbourhood) everyone calls her **mordani** (manly woman).”*

IDI-Girl-11_village B

“If they run around in open field, then people will of course criticize that, what is up with that running girl! She has no shame!”

FGD-Boys-1_village A.

Fathers of adolescent girls identified that verbal are also directed towards parents of the adolescent girls, and these may be in the form of gossiping, and may lead to loss of honor. Parents were criticized verbally, or feared being gossiped about by people of the village.

M: Well, but if in your village, if girls aged 12 to sixteen play games like this, their parents allow if, then how will the people in the village take it? Will they say that it is good, or what?

P1: They will say that this is bad. They will say it is bad.

P2: No, then they will say bad (things)

M: Why will they say that it’s bad?

P3: They will say that it’s bad. You cannot play every day, if (the girls) play once a week or less, maybe they won’t say anything.

P1: Letting an adult girl play every day is like that, you know! If we let daughters play like this, what will the people say about us!

FGD-Mothers-4_village C

M: I see. If any parent does so (allow girls to play) in that case, what can happen?

P3: But it’s my belief that if within this village, a father allows a daughter to play, ten other fathers will speak up and tell him that it doesn’t look good, letting daughters play. This is what I think.

P7: Yes, they will say.

P 1, 2: They will say this.

M: Well, what else can happen, due to which parents don’t allow it? Like, any issues with dignity and honor...

P5: Issues with compromising dignity and honor as in, if they meet friends in the market or here and there, and they say, your daughter is 12 or 16 years old now, you still let her play? Thinking these things, parents in the village Areas do not let their daughters play.

FGD-Fathers-2_village D

Physical violence (beating) and threat thereof were reported to by participants as sanctions imparted upon adolescent girls who are found to defy the norm of refraining from playing. As with village A and village C, sanctions in the form of verbal criticism on parents was found to be present in village B. Complaints thus made to parents were reported to lead to beatings of these adolescent girls.

*“Villagers do not like an adolescent girl playing. If any girl play outside then villagers scold them and **lathi nie tara kore** (chase them with stick) to express their anger.”*

IDI-Girl-10_village C

“Even if my parents do not want to beat me, even then if people come and tell parents, then they will need to beat me saying that ‘Such and such a person has told (us) that you play with boys, you play in such a manner.’”

IDI-Girl-15_village B

However, sanctions may be weaker if girls play games that are culturally accepted as girls' games.

*"No one will criticize if they play their own games like **kutkut** (a game similar to hopscotch), **khula** (local games of the girls) at home or near to home."*

IDI-Girl-20_village D

Who is sanctioned? Why are they sanctioned?

Upon examination of data from qualitative investigation, it was found that adolescent girls are sanctioned for riding cycles, and playing games. Adolescent girls who have attained menarche are sanctioned as religious and cultural institutions deem menarche as passage to adulthood. It was further reported that while all girls are talked about and criticized if they participate in playing activities, **madrassa**-going girls are supposed to follow **shoriyot** (shariah) and are therefore especially strongly criticized against.

"She has become such a big girl, yet still riding bicycles."

IDI-Girl-1_village A

Sanctions were reported to be frequently imposed on parents who are seen as not to be fulfilling the duties of guardian, controller, and protector of their "grown-up" daughter. By inflicting verbal criticism on parents, those who impose the sanctions effectively practice control on the family of the adolescent girl by shaming them of shirking their duties who in turn then feel pressured to exercise control on their daughter and the status quo empirical expectation can be re-established.

A: *Village people criticize both the girl and her parents if she plays cricket or football.*

Q: *Do they say it to only the girl, or do they also say something to the parents?*

A: *They can also say something to the parents. Because as the son/daughter is theirs, they have to keep an eye (on them). They are her guardians- sees what she (or he) does or does not do.*

IDI-Girl-4_village A

P6: *They cross the age you know they get that- menses? Don't girls become adult?*

P7: *Crossing age 12...*

P6: *The girl then becomes adult.*

M: *Becomes an adult?*

P6: *They grow up.*

P1: *That's why (they don't) let them play*

P6: *That's why.*

M: *That's why they don't let them play?*

P1: *People will say that the parents are bad.*

P6: *People will say that it's bad. The girl has grown up.*

P1: *You know, village people?*

P6: *Jumping and dancing are impudent activities. You know, they say that.*
FGD-Mothers-3_village C

It was reported that not only parents, but other family members may be criticized and seen as non-controlling of adolescent girls. Adolescent boys reported that brothers of adolescent girls may also be verbally criticized by others, if found to be allowing their adolescent sisters to play.

P1: *They will say that it's not right for girls to do so. Then they will say, "What kind of a brother are you? Letting your sister do things like this! This is not right!" They will speak like this.*
Q: *They will speak like this... The thing that you said, will some people say so, or all?*
P 1, 3: *No, some people will say (that it is bad).*
P 5, 6: *All people will say (that this is bad)."*

FGD-Boys-4_village C

Adolescent boys were also found to be affected by the sanctions on the girls in not being allowed to play with boys. These sanctions applied to not only adolescent boys who were seen as outsiders, but also to those who were relatives, such as cousins.

P4: *My Boro ammu (eldest uncle's wife). I go to my Boro abbu's house (eldest paternal uncle). I used to go there. A few days ago, one of my aunts got married. All the sisters (including female cousins) are there.*
M: *Where is that place?*
P4: *Here, in our village.*
M: *A para (neighborhood) in this village?*
P3: *In this village*
P4: *Yes. Of our age. Boroamma said that... we were playing, playing hide and seek. Then Boroamma said, don't you have anything to do at home? Go home. It's not right to play here. She said, the girls are growing up. It's not right to play with grown-up girls. Then we stopped playing and went to the pond-side.*
P3: *They said for good.*
P4: *They said this. We went and sat on the pond-side.*
M: *They say like this?*
P4: *Yes.*
M: *I see. After that did you ever go to play? Did you ever play with older sisters?*
P4: *No, didn't play*

FGD-Boys-4_village C

Gender norms and expectations to adhere to gender norms was found to be a key reason for imposing sanctions by community and village. Transgressing the gender norm by playing cricket, football and riding bicycles may be seen as not "normal" for a girl, and thereby not only impose sanction in the form of criticism, but also further develop into labeling as "abnormal"- which may be a tougher sanction than simple verbal criticism. A participant clearly expressed that playing boys' games brings the girl's gender identity in question and that the community people may make inferences about her gender.

“They will directly say that as a girl, they should move around like a normal girl. She should not behave like a boy.”

IDI-Girls-4_ village A

*“This is a boys’ game. Girls can never play it. Different people will bring forth different opinions that, whether this person is male, female, or **hijra** (transgender), nothing is clear.”*

FGD-Boys-1_ village A

Sanctions were also found to be imposed based on assumptions on the effect playing “boys’ games” might have on the disposition of the adolescent girl after marriage. In particular, the feared characteristics these “playing girls” may develop were found to be those traditionally considered masculine in the context of rural Bangladesh.

P5: I mean, when she grows up, then everyone thinks that she should be married off. Then if she plays, everyone will say bad things that she won’t marry. If she goes away to her husband’s home (marries) she will always quarrel. This is why they don’t let them. Thinking this, they all (prohibit) girls.

P3: If she plays, she will not work (household chores)

FGD-Boys-2_ Village D

Preparing an adolescent girl for her upcoming marital duties is important in underpinning the norm that adolescent girls do not play. Mothers identified grown-up girls as those who need to be prepared for upcoming marital household work. Girls are therefore not allowed to play, and are instead taught to cook, sew, etc.

P1: Becoming big as in- she has to be married off. (We) teach her household works. Working with her mother, handworks, sewing for the home, they do this. Just household work- they do that, we also teach them to this and that. Will (she) not need to do this when (she) goes to her husband’s house? They sew carpet inside the house. There are many chores like this, right? (They) do that. Work inside the house. We teach these.

FGD-Mothers-4_ village C

Sanctions were also found to be imposed based on the location where an adolescent girl is found to be participating in play. Locations in the homestead and proximate vicinity were found to be permissible and less subject to verbal criticism than open fields and locations further away from the homestead.

“Everyone says that she had become so old, still playing. They don’t let them play there. Everyone gets angry.”

FGD-Girls-1_ village A

“If they run around in open field, then people will of course criticize that, what is up with that running girl! She has no shame!”

FGD-Boys-1_ village A

Playing was expressed as a competing activity with education in terms of time and energy required. The need to attain education may underpin the current norm dictating non-engagement in playing. Both mothers and adolescent girls identified that adolescent girls do not have the time to participate in boys' games or any other games because they are too busy with furthering their education. They spend their extra time at school or at coaching (after school private tuition). Therefore, adolescent girls who are interested in or actively engage in playing are sanctioned.

Who imposes the sanctions?

The faces of the sanctions were found to vary. Adolescent girls identified that the largest group of people who impose the sanctions are the villagers and people of the community. Adolescent girls specifically identified older people and outsider males as specific demographics within the villager and community people umbrella. While less frequently referred to, individuals of a similar age to adolescent girls were also identified as imposing sanctions. Elder girls of the community, who can be considered to be of the adolescent peer group, have been reported to also criticize the one girl in the village B who rides a cycle and climbs trees. In addition, adolescent boys and older boys from neighboring villages as the girl and sometimes from the same village were also reported to impose sanction on adolescent girls who ride bicycles by catcalling them while passing on the streets.

*“They say that she (acts) like boys. As in, she is always climbing trees and getting off trees, like this, as she has mannerisms of boys, that’s why in the para (neighborhood) everyone calls her **mordani** (manly woman). Not everybody says so. I mean those older than her- I mean, you know we have elder sisters? They say that this **mordani** does these things, like a monkey.”*

IDI-Girl-11_village B

Parents of adolescent girls also impose sanctions on their daughters by not permitting them to play. In addition, some adolescent girls and boys identified older female relatives as those who prevent the girls from playing.

Sensitivity to Sanctions

Imposition of sanctions on adolescent girls and their families were found to be mostly an effective method to deter girls from engaging in bicycle riding and playing activities. These sanctions were,

therefore, effective in maintaining the current norms of non-participation in riding and playing activities by adolescent girls.

From data it was found that most adolescent girls and their families were highly sensitive to sanctions imposed against adolescent girls engaging in playing games like boys and riding bicycles. Most adolescent girls reported that-

“No adolescent girl plays boys' games as community people do not like girl's cricket and football playing.”

IDI-ADG-4_village A

Mothers of adolescent girls also reported high sensitivity to sanctions, and thereby disallowing their daughters after the age of 10 or after the onset of menarche from playing in open fields.

“As community people criticize girls' playing that's why no parents permit their girl's to play outside of home or in an open field when they cross ten years. No girls play boys' games or other games in an open field or outside of home.”

FGD-Mother 1_village A

Adolescent boys reported that these sanctions lead to lack of interest in playing games amongst adolescent girls, and that if they do not have interest or willingness, these adolescent girls will never be able to engage in these activities.

All: They don't have the wish.

P1: Without wish, it can never be,

M: One (barrier) is that there is no wish. For example, what other societal reasons can there be?

P3: Familial reason, their family doesn't want it.

P1: Family doesn't want.

M: Family doesn't want?

All: Yes.

P1: People of the society see them as bad, that's why they don't want to play outside.

M: If they want to play, or go to play outside, what do people think of that?

All: They will think badly.”

FGD-Boys-1_village A

Exceptions were found in two girls who were found to be riding bicycles. Both girls reported that adolescent girls and their families face sanctions, yet rode the bicycle as their families do not impose restrictions on them or “say anything to” them (IDI-Girl-1_village A, IDI-ADG-5_village A). Therefore, both girls and their families were found to be less sensitive to sanctions. These girls were living in two different ends of the village. Justification for lower sensitivity to sanctions for one girl is that she uses her bicycle to go to coaching and therefore she uses it for a need to advance her career, which may be a reason why her family does not impose restrictions on her.

In contrast to village A, all participants from village C, regardless of gender, age or other background, reported that adolescent girls are highly sensitive to sanctions.

"No girl plays boy's games as community people do not like girls playing outside of home."

IDI-Girl-6_village C

"No girl play boy's games as community people do not allow them to play any sorts of games."

IDI-Girl-8_village C

"No girls play boy's games as community people dislikes it."

FDG-Girls-2_village C

As with village A, it was found that parents of adolescent girls were also highly sensitive to sanctions, and fearing criticism, they do not allow their daughters to play outside. Parents do not allow their daughter to play boy's games or any other sorts of jumping games at home or in open spaces as community people criticize them.

M: Are there no parents like this?

P 1, 3: No

All: You know, when girls grow up in the village, parents call their daughters and forbid them from doing things that may result the parents in hearing (negative) things from people, things that make them small (lose face). Girls in the village Country have to abide by this.

P1: Why will they say that it's bad? Village people will of course say- if an outsider comes and sees that a girl from such a village plays and jumps, will they not say badly? For that the parents will have no dignity remaining in the village.

P2: If they see like that.

P3: Seeing jumping and (running) around.

P2: We keep them guarded, and they also stay wary and don't play.

FGD-Mothers-4_village C

From recounts it was found that there is one girl who rides a cycle in village B and climbs trees but due to criticism from community people, her mother forbade her from going to market and climbing trees, and since then, her frequency of riding a cycle and climbing trees had been reduced, but she is not completely inactive.

Form data, it was found that regardless of the kind of personal and neighborhood context, adolescent girls' sensitivity to sanctions was high and fearing the criticism and gossiping of the community, no girl engaged in playing boys' games or sports. It was found that as with the other villages, families of adolescent girls were also highly sensitive to sanctions and not a single family allowed their adolescent girls to play these games outside home. Specifically, brothers of

adolescent girls from most villages were found to be sensitive to sanctions and therefore prevented their sisters from playing outside.

M: For this reason, are there no parents in your village who allow their adolescent daughter, their 12-16 years old daughter to play football, cricket, or sports like these?

3-4 participants: We don't have that.

P1: We don't have anyone (parents) like this in our village.

M: Not a single household?

P1: Not even a single household.

All: Not even a single household.

FGD-Fathers-2_village D

From discussion it emerged that if girls are required to play boys' games and sports such as cricket and football as part of school activities, then parents allow girls to play. Moreover, it was also found that as girls ride cycles to go to coaching, there are some boys who catcall them. Despite this limitation, they continue riding the cycle. Therefore, while the form of sanction is very harsh, the sensitivity to sanctions are low as this group of individuals who impose sanctions have lower levels of power.

Exceptions

Low visibility of adolescent girls engaging in playing and cycling

It was reported that some leeway is made for adolescent girls to play local traditionally feminine games such as cooking games, ***patapata*** and hopscotch at home or in an open space for a short time. It was also reported that they are allowed to play boy's games such as badminton, hockey and cricket with peers at home and ***uthan*** (yard) and as long as it is done in such a way that the action is hidden or not seen by the outsiders- and therefore community people do not criticize it. Moreover, it was found that adolescent girls are allowed to play in specific circumstances such as on moonlit night, as it is less shameful than playing in broad daylight. Moreover, it was found that the school, with its boundaries acts as a safe space for girls to deviate from the pervasive norms. Here, adolescent girls can engage in sports, singing and dancing, activities otherwise impermissible by current norms. It was reported that the few girls who ride cycles despite sanctions from the community try to avoid being seen by villagers and neighbors while riding.

Schooling and attainment of education

From evidence, it can be inferred that in each of the villages, attainment of education has an important role in allowing girls to ride bicycles and play sports. In village D, nearly half of the girls were found to ride the bicycle to save time to facilitate educational attainment. The same was true for case study 4 from village A. It was reported by parents of adolescent girls from most villages that if sporting events and opportunities are arranged by school, then parents might allow their daughters to play those games within the school. In village B, it was found that girls play some sports despite criticism, like hockey and badminton at home or outside, given that they were practicing for sports day at school. Therefore, formal educational institutions were an important player in affecting norms and there is an opportunity to utilize education as a means to shifting norms regarding riding bicycles and playing sports.

Parents' and close relatives' willingness to allow playing and engaging in riding

From data it emerged that parents' willing to allow their daughters to engage in riding cycles ensured that their daughters were riding. Moreover, it was found that close family relatives such as paternal aunts may sometime be supportive of girls' playing, which allow adolescent girls to engage in this activity. It was found from FGD that parents may also sometimes be willing to allow their adolescent daughters to play.

Attitudes of people in the neighborhood

People from the neighborhood were an important factor that allow or restrict girls from playing and riding bicycles. While it was reported that people in the **para** (neighborhood) criticize adolescent girls playing in certain **paras** resulting in non-playing, it was found that people of the **para** could also be non-critical of adolescent girls playing, resulting in adolescent girls being allowed to play. One adolescent girl who engages in playing reported that there were no restrictions to girls playing. Her **para** consisted mostly of relatives and there was a large open space surrounded by houses, which seemed more of an **uthan** (shared yard between multiple houses) than a large playing field, where the girls played. It was found that older relatives and grandmothers sit in front of their houses doing handy work, and gossip, resulting in creation of a safe space for playing. Her **para** is also of a higher social status than the rest of the village as many of her relatives are policemen by profession. Therefore, leveraging opportunities where the neighborhood can be involved in shifting norms may be a good stance to take. It can be especially

important to attempt to forge a gateway through relatives of adolescent girls to shift the current norms on playing and riding bicycles.

Positive deviants to norm of bicycle riding

Throughout the four villages several girls were found to be riding cycles. Two girls from village A, one from village B, and quite a few from village D were found to be riding bicycles. No example of positive deviants in regards to bicycle riding was reported in village C.

In village A, two girls were found to be riding bicycles. One girl rides bicycles because her parents do not say anything to her if she rides her bicycle around her village. Another girl was found to be riding the bicycle despite existing norms as it was important for her to reach her coaching on time and she had her parents' approval. Most participants from village B reported conformation to current pervasive norms regarding girls' sports playing. However, some accounts reported that there are a few positive deviations. One girl from this village was found to be continuing riding cycles despite sanctions from the community, peer group and parents. It was found from adolescent girls' FGD in village D that almost half of the participants were riding bicycles to school and coaching despite normative expectation that girls should not engage in riding bicycles. These girls reported that they are engaging in this activity despite cat calls from adolescent boys.

One participant from village C reported that adolescent girls of the village are going to school by riding cycle. It was explained by a participant that while the situation was not conducive to girls riding cycle before, once a sewing school opened and all girls learned sewing, they all bought cycles, which made movement easier. She reported that afterwards, all gossip stopped as all the girls were seen to be ride bicycles. It was found from data that the females in her para (neighborhood) had undergone an emancipatory process by having attained economic freedom by doing sewing activities that allowed them to purchase bicycles. In contrast, no other participant from village C reported that adolescent girls ride bicycles.

“Because of our school... When it was made, everyone learnt sewing work, everyone bought cycles. Every girl bought a cycle. When (they) started going around with these, since then I see that there is no talks (gossiping). And then it became safe.”

KII-Woman-4_village C

Case study 4: Positive Deviant in Riding Cycles

Girl 4 from village A rides the bicycle. She is 15 years old, and Muslim. She is the youngest of four siblings, the remaining of who are males. She is from a household belonging to the middle income group in the village. Her siblings have high level of education. The eldest brother is a Master's degree holder and the two other brothers are grade 12 graduates.

Girl 4 was found to be riding the bicycle despite existing norms as it was important for her to reach her school and coaching on time. Her family and she face criticisms from the people in the village for riding bicycle. She reports that as a part of her route includes a busy road through a bazaar, she has to get off from her bicycle and walk it for this portion. However, she faces unwarranted questions full of doubt from villagers on her motives behind walking her bicycle for this portion of the road. As girl 3 and her family have low sensitivity to this sanction, she continues riding her cycle.

Therefore, for this case study, facilitation to attainment of education was found to be a reason for deviating from the current norm. She reported that due to her example, other parents of her *para* (neighborhood) are also considering buying their daughters bicycles as well so that they can save time on the way to and from coaching. Cycle riding for this girl was seen to spillover to induce initiation of parents of adolescent girls in her neighborhood to consider deviating from the current norm.

However, one participant reported that while village people and the outsiders do not like that a girl rides a cycle, people in her specific *para* (neighborhood) do not say anything. Data suggest that this happened gradually. She was the first to start riding a bicycle in the village. The neighbors from her *para* observed that this participant was saving time by using a bicycle. Therefore, the parents of the other adolescent girls in the *para* have now started to be in favor of this. They are now planning to buy cycles for their daughters so that they can save their time on the way to school (IDI-Girl-5_village A). This participant rides a bicycle with approval of her family and it is evident that her reference network (people in the *para*) are not disapproving of this particular action.

Positive deviants to norm of playing

Very few adolescent girls were found to be playing games or sports among the four villages in the study. One girl from village A, one girl from village B and one girl from village D were reported to be playing games. No positive deviants were reported from village C.

The adolescent girl in village A reported that she engages in play outside home as nobody in her neighborhood says anything to her if she does so. She reported that her neighborhood consisted mostly

of relatives and therefore she didn't face any sanctions when playing. One girl from Village B was reported to be playing games despite criticism from the neighbors, but had eventually stopped doing so as her parents forbade her from engaging in playing. One girl from village D was also reported to be playing games and it was found that she does so despite criticisms from people in the village and her parents.

Relaxation of norms

From data it can be inferred that while the current norms against adolescent girls' riding the cycle and playing sports have not weakened in general, there may be some relaxation in some pockets and spots.

In village C, from most accounts, it can be inferred that there is some relaxing of the current norms regarding adolescent girls riding cycles and playing games. Some accounts have revealed that while the normative expectations are that girls should not engage in games or sports, in reality some concessions can be made as long as the activity is performed close to home and not for too long. Moreover, it was also found that the school is providing an opportunity for weakening of the norm as it has been found that playing games including those traditionally considered as boys' games are permissible within the school.

In village B and village D, the norm of non-engagement in playing and sports is strongly adhered to despite signs of some informal and subtle negotiations between those in the community who impose sanctions and adolescent girls such as allowing to play girls' games for a short time near the home.

Who is most affected by the norm?

From all villages, it was found that adolescent girls were most directly and intensively influenced by the current norms regarding non-engagement in riding bicycles and playing sport. This effectively resulted in the overwhelming majority of the adolescent girls in being unable to engage in either activity. In village D in particular, it was reported that while all girls are affected by the norm and cannot participate in playing activities, *madrassa* going girls are especially not allowed to engage in game playing activities. Therefore, adolescent girls are most affected by the current norm.

From normative expectations, sanctions would also be imposed on parents who could be considered to be non-compliant to the norm. To be non-compliant to the norm may have myriad implications including being seen as unprincipled, relinquishing control of their daughters and may result in being ostracized from society. Hence, parents who would have been able or willing to allow their adolescent daughter to ride bicycles or playing games are also deterred from allowing permission. It was found from village B some mothers be especially affected. In traditional rural Bangladesh, the mother stays at home and is more closely involved in rearing and monitoring the activities of her children, especially daughters. Therefore, it was found that when an adolescent girl was found to be non-compliant with the norm, a father beat the mother who was deemed to be failing her duties of controlling her daughter.

“As her daughter does not listen to anyone and plays outside with boys, so her father sometimes beats her mother”

FGD-Boys-3_village B

Furthermore, pervasive empirical and normative expectations imply that other members of the society are also affected, despite less directly. Adolescent boys, specifically, were found to have become not only conditioned to accept the norm but they also lose a sizable portion of their peer group when adolescent girls become unavailable to play due to current norms.

Who enforces the norms?

The most powerful enforcers of the norms were found to be non-relatives in the neighborhood and village, frequently referred to as the “community” and “villagers”. This was the largest group imposing sanctions on playing and riding activities of adolescent girls. In village A specifically, “old people” and “males” were reported to be an important category of enforcers. In village C in contrast, older females were found to be the most important category of enforcers.

- M: Who do these criticisms?*
P1, 2, 5, 6: Most of the time it is the elders, those who are older in age- they say (criticize) mostly. Yes, for example, mother’s mother-in-law, or (her) aunt-in-law- like this.
- M: So, do only female elders say these (criticisms)?*
P1: Female elders say.
P2: Mostly female elders say.
P1: Female elders say, mostly. Males don’t do that much.

FGD-Girls-2_village C

Parents of adolescent girls were also found to be enforcers of the norm, but it was reported that they did so because community people do not like girls playing and riding. Therefore, it can be concluded that while parents are also enforcers of the norm, they are less strongly so when compared to the community. Moreover, it was found in village D that brothers of adolescent girls also actively participated in enforcing the norm by not allowing them to play boys' games or outside of the home.

From accounts from participants in village B, it was clear that school teachers were also acting as enforcers of norms and actively enforced the norms by disallowing adolescent girls from playing sports inside and during school. Village B was unique in presenting peer group of adolescent girls as enforcers of norms on other adolescent girls.

Reference group

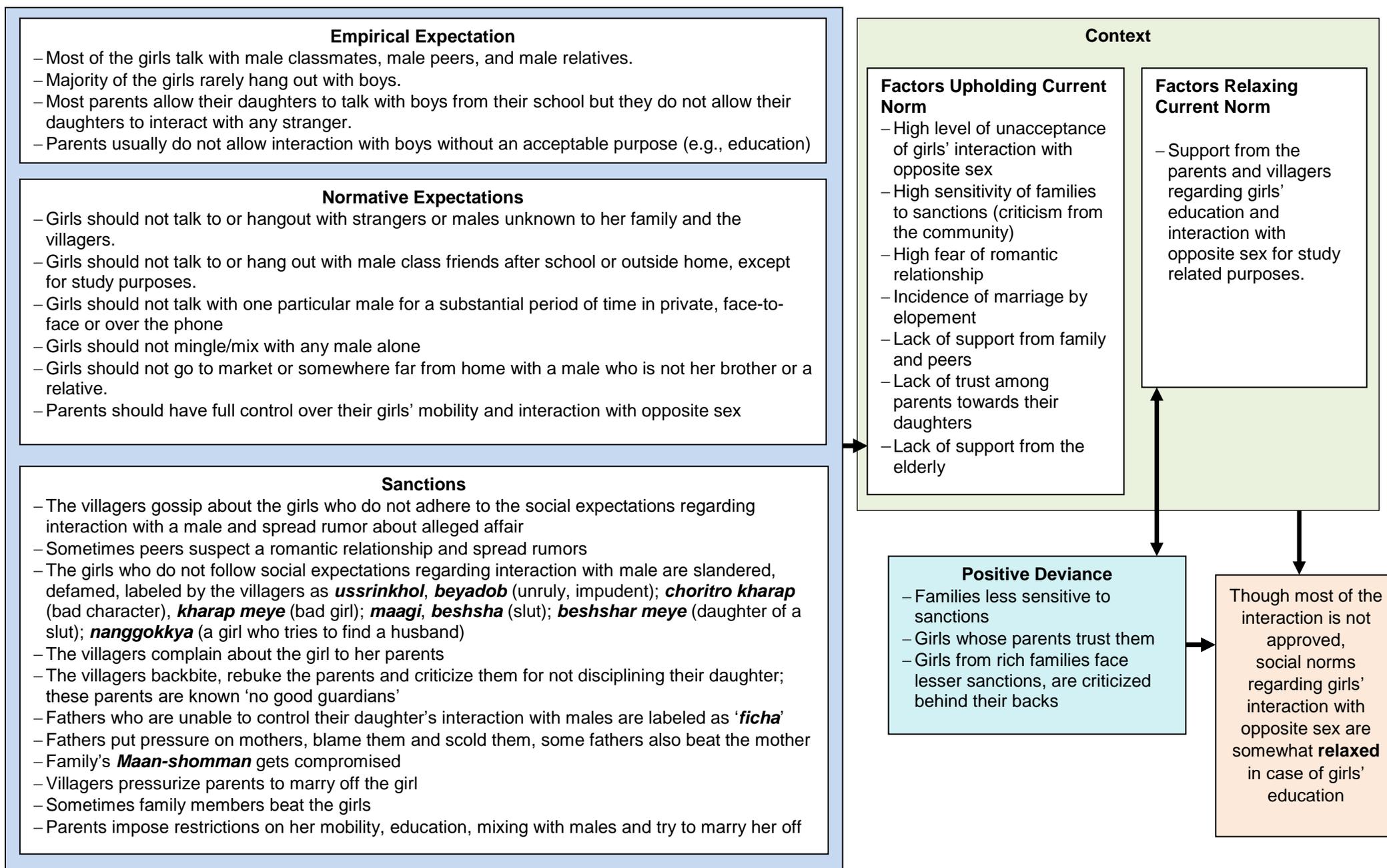
Reference groups for adolescent girls are those distinct groups of people who influence the choices adolescent girls make regarding complying with or defying the norm. From data, it was identified that adolescent girls had several reference groups. The most immediate reference group with the highest influence was found to be immediate family, especially parents. Girls who were found to be restricted from playing by their parents were found to be rarely engaging in playing. On the other hand, it was found that for playing games outside the home and riding the cycle, permission, encouragement, or lack of restriction on the part of relatives allowed some adolescent girls to play outside the home and ride cycles. Relatives included aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins.

The community at large was identified by participants as a reference group and they reported that adolescent girls do not ride bicycles or play games as they will then face the villagers and community's criticism. However, views and thoughts of the community were less influential on them than that of their families as permission or lack of restriction from the family ultimately decided whether adolescent girls were able to defy the norm or not. Girls identified this group in several ways, such as "community people", "village people", "outsiders", "passersby", etc. It was found that peer group consisting of other older adolescent girls may also be a reference group in relation to the norm.

Social norms regarding adolescent girls' interaction with opposite sex

The main findings on social norms regarding adolescent girls' interaction with opposite sex have been presented in Figure 11. Despite a range of normative expectations of the elderly villagers, parents and even the peers that disapprove girls' interaction with adolescent boys, most adolescent girls of the study sites are allowed to interact with them under certain conditions. These conditions are as follows: the purpose should be related to education; the interactions cannot be frequent; and long or private. The villagers work as a great pressure group for imposing sanctions on the girls (and their parents) if they do not adhere to the expectations. They follow movement of the girls in and around the village – particularly when they talk with boys. The sanction imposers (e.g., neighbors, elderly people etc.) feel obliged to inform the parents, sometimes on a regular basis, suspecting that the girls are in a romantic relationship, which is recognized as a bad practice across the study sites. They emphasize that the girls should be disciplined so that they cannot disgrace the family as well as the community by engaging in undesirable interaction with opposite sex. The peers also do not support the girls who talk with boys too much and often spread rumors about them. Constant persuasion by the sanction imposers influences most of the parents, who are concerned about protecting the family's *maan-shomman* (honor). As a result, those parents restrict mobility of the girls and their interaction with opposite sex. In most cases, the girls are rebuked, beaten up and married off if they do not conform. Most of the girls conform to the norms while others tend to resist, elope or commit suicide.

Figure 11: Conceptual Framework Emerging from the Data on Social Norms Related to Girls' Interaction with Opposite Sex



Empirical expectations

The empirical expectations regarding a girl's interaction with an adolescent boy is similar across the study sites and across groups of informants. The findings suggest that girls usually talk with their male classmates, male peers, and male relatives. They talk to male classmates and boys from higher grades particularly regarding studies. Majority of the girls rarely hang out with boys.

- M: Do you think most girls from your village interact with boys outside school and home?*
All: No, they don't.
*P4: They do talk...under some specific circumstances. For example, when they need help regarding studies, they discuss the issues with the boys who are like **boro bhai** (elder brothers) or the men who are like uncles.*
P3: Yes, if we have difficulties with our studies, we can seek help from anyone of the same age or the classmates.
M: Don't the villagers raise any objections in such cases?
All: No, no. They say she has gone there [to talk to him] because she needed to. Otherwise she won't have done it.

FGD-Girls-2_village C

- P4: The girls stay inside home all the time.*
P3: They go outside only during school time or for coaching.
P1: We talk with boys when we go to school together.
P2: We do not roam around with the boys and do not talk much. There is no such scope. We only exchange greetings when meet.

FGD-Girls-4_village D

The girls in village C village who engage in seasonal agricultural work interact with male peers outside school. But such interactions are limited to exchange of greetings.

- P 4: If a girl and a boy are close because of such work (potato harvesting), they may talk with each other all the time. If that happens, the conversation would be like 'how are you' or 'what are you up to'.*
M: Do this kind of exchange happen in your village?
All: Yes.

FGD-Girls-2_village C

Parents participating in FGDs across study sites mentioned that most of the parents allow their daughter to talk with boys from their school but they do not allow their daughters to interact with any stranger and also do not allow interaction with boys without any acceptable purpose (e.g., education).

- P3, 1: There is no objection from the parents and the villagers when a girl talks with a boy from the same class or a senior/junior of her school. But we (parents) become tense when it is an unknown boy from another neighborhood/village. We intervene when they talk with each other.*
P4: For instance, there is a boy from the same school whom we do not know. But my daughter may know him. He may live in another neighborhood of the same village.

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

P6: *The villagers as well as parents of the girls do not allow any boy talking with a girl without any reason.*

P2: *If that happens, the villagers become suspicious [about their intentions].*

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

Parents in all the study sites claimed that face-to-face interactions between males and girls are rare outside school or coaching center. However, due to rise in use of mobile phones, many interactions between males and girls nowadays take place over phone.

Normative expectations and sanctions

- **Normative expectations and sanctions for girls**

Interaction with strangers is not allowed

The villagers believe that a '**sheyana meye**' (a girl, who has come of age) should not talk or hang out with male strangers or males unknown to her family and the villagers.

P6, 4, 5: *If the girls are interacting with strangers, the people won't accept it. So they interact with people everyone knows, such as school friends, senior brothers or younger boys.*

P4: *This is not applicable to all situations. Let's say I know a boy from somewhere, but no one in my family knows him. If I talk to him for a short time, no one would say anything. But if I am meeting up with him regularly, people would raise objections.*

FGD-Girls-2_village C

P2: *Villagers gossip when a '**sheyana meye**' (girl who has come of age) talks with a boy who is unknown. They discuss the matter and criticize her. They mention the parents while discussing about a girl talking with a boy.*

P3: *Criticisms take place in such cases.*

FGD-Fathers-4_village B

Villagers think that a girl should not go to market or somewhere far from home with a male, who is not her brother or a senior relative.

*"If a girl goes to a picnic in Rangpur with a boy-- it won't be accepted. If they go to a **bazar** -- it won't be accepted. [The villagers would ask the girl,] 'What are you doing with him? 'Why would you go with him?' 'What is your relationship with him?' A girl can go somewhere with her brother and maternal or paternal uncle, but not with other males."*

KII-Woman-4_village C

According to the findings from all study sites and across the informant groups, a girl talking to male classmates (from own village and from different village), male peers from the neighborhood is not criticized by the villagers.

- P1: ...It is normal if they (girls) talk to the boys of their neighborhood on the way to school or in school. There is no problem if they talk to the boys from other villages who study in the same school.
- P2: Then there is no problem at all if the girls talk to the brothers or uncles from their neighborhood.
- P1: People don't take it negatively.
- M: Well, do brothers from same neighborhood means relatives?
- P1-2: In village, usually we the women of 20 to 25 households from the close neighborhood call each other **bhabhi** (sister-in-law who are junior or same age), many of them are **ja** (sister-in-law who are elder). But not all of them are from the same family, sometimes they are just neighbors. We all have children. So they all are brothers and sisters, right? Won't they talk to each other? (M: Alright) So, people don't dislike if they talk to each other.
- M: Well, that means people don't mind and won't say something bad if the girls talk with the relative or neighbors?
- P1: They won't say anything.

FGD-Mothers-4_village C

- P4: They can talk with their brothers.
- P5: They can talk with relatives or neighbors.
- P1: People won't raise objections if they talk with their relatives. ... They can also talk with their classmates.

FGD-Fathers-1_village D

Frequent interaction with a singled out male is not approved

The villagers are usually suspicious of a romantic relationship when they see a girl frequently talking with one particular male for a substantial period of time in private.

- P4: The villagers think of a romantic relation when a girl talks with a boy. They would say they see the daughter of someone with the son of someone every day. They consider it as a bad thing.
- P8: But it (a girl talks with a boy every day) does not happen in our rural areas that much.

FGD-Fathers-1_village D

"If I talk [with a male] openly in front of everyone about something important, nobody would object to it. But if I meet with him secretly and laugh [during our conversation], they (villagers) will certainly take it negatively and will think that something [romantic] is going on between us."

IDI-Girl-9_village C

It was found across the study sites and across the informant groups that girls' frequent interaction with opposite sex during adolescence is perceived as a risk of developing romantic relationship which usually is considered harmful to family honor because people start gossiping about the girl and blaming parents for their failure in controlling their daughter. A girl, whose interactions with males go beyond permissible interaction experiences some penalty and the penalty increases with frequency of such interaction.

P3: *During adolescence if girls spend much time with males they may develop **shomporko** (romantic relationship). **Ekta poribarar maan-shomman** (a family's honor) is damaged in such case.*

P1: *There are people around us who spread gossips about these girls (who spend much time with males) and say that their parents are not good guardians. It affects the parents when people say bad things about them.*

P3: *Yes, they make bad comments.*

P1: *... Restriction is imposed on their (girls') movement and they are kept under constant vigilance.*

FGD-Fathers-2_village D

Interaction with male classmates must be limited

Findings suggest that the girls are not allowed to talk with their male friends after school or outside home, except for study purposes. However, as we have mentioned above, frequent chatting with these males alone and for a long time also raises questions about the nature of the relationship.

*"The villagers '**mind hoiya jaibe**' (would be suspicious) if they talk regularly. They would wonder why this male is going to the girl's house every day; if they are friends, they may talk once or twice [occasionally]. Everyone '**mind korbe**' (would take it negatively) if they mix openly...walk in '**khuli**' (the open fields) and roads ...They would not say anything if he comes once or twice; they would assume that he has come as a friend. He will have some snacks and leave. But if he comes frequently, they '**mind kori falae dibe**' (would react negatively), no matter if he comes for any study-related issue or anything else. They would not accept it. They would gossip with one another regarding this. '**Gramer eta chail**' (This is the practice in the village)."*

FGD-Mothers-2_village A

"Talking with male friends is acceptable but not on a regular basis. Suppose one day I meet with someone from school or coaching in the street, then I can ask him, 'How are you?' But if this happens regularly then they can't accept this."

IDI-Girl-5_village A

Parents withdraw their support towards their girl's interaction with male classmates if it is frequent or if she is proposed by him.

- Many participants: *If they are classmates, people won't say anything. ...*
- P6: *In some scenarios, girls are not even allowed to talk with their classmates. For instance, if a boy proposed her and the parents get to know about it, they will prohibit her to talk to him.*
- P8: *Yes, if they spend too much time together, parents will prohibit her to talk with the boy.*
- P1: *In this context, parents will not allow any interaction anymore.*
- P7: *Yes, they won't allow.*
- M: *Do you mean if they give each other too much time while going to school?*
- P1, 8: *Yes, if they spend too much time on the way to school.*
- P7: *If they talk with each other for hours every day, parents won't allow this.*
- P5: *For example, my daughter's school finishes at 4PM. If she comes home at 5PM, I will definitely ask her where she was for an hour or what she was up to.*
- P7: *If she says she was with a boy or went somewhere with him, parents will scold her and prohibit her to talk with the boy considering that there is something [romantic] going on between them.*
- P5: *In such cases, parents have to be strict; otherwise, it could harm their family honor.*
- P10, 7, 5: *It will be a blow to their honor [in the society]. Their honor will be hurt. They will be defamed.*

FGD-Fathers-1_village D

One of the adolescent girls participating in an FGD claimed that if they meet up a male friend, villagers criticize them, which they feel is not acceptable. They argued that they have male friends and may need help in their studies from them. The girls are also criticized when they go to a social event, including fair, where men and boys gather. According to the girls, the older people criticize the girls most.

- P1: *The old people want us to live like them. If not, they criticize. But this is not possible because we live in modern time. We have to move ahead and adapt to this time. But they don't understand it. They say what they did when they were young, they didn't use to go out like us. They want us to be like them.*
- M: *So how old are they who talk this way or criticize?*
- All: *They seem to be 50 or 60 years old.*
- M: *Do both men and women say things like this?*
- P2: *Yes.*

FGD-Girls-4_village D

A girl wandering alone, carrying a mobile phone raises suspicion

Findings suggest that the villagers suspect a romantic relationship when a girl wanders alone in village and more so if she carries a mobile phone with her. They usually do not go into details why the girl is alone or whom she is talking to over the phone. Still they assume this as an indication of a kind of interaction with opposite sex that is not approved by the community.

- P5: *If a girl walks alone in the street, everyone would take it negatively.*
- P3, 5, 6: *If a girl moves alone then this will obviously be treated negatively.*
- P3, 5: *[They would] say, “shomporko achhe, prem kore (the girl has a romantic relationship).”*
- P3: *Seeing a phone with her, they (villagers) assume that she may have a romantic relationship. ...She is possibly going to meet a male.*

FGD-Boys-2_village D

Sanctions for girls are multifaceted and harsh

Girls who do not adhere to the social expectations regarding interaction with opposite sex is slandered and labeled by the villagers as ‘**ussrinkhol/ beyadob**’ (unruly/impudent), ‘**choritro kharap**’ (bad character). Girls involved in romantic relationship are labeled as ‘**kharap meye**’ (bad girl), ‘**maagi/beshsha**’ (slut) and ‘**beshshar meye**’ (daughter of a slut). The fathers from Village B reported that in such instances the criticism of the girls from poor families is harsher.

- P2: *If the girl from a poor family roams around with a boy on a rickshaw or a van, the villagers will say they are in a romantic relationship and label the girl as ‘nanggokkya’ (a girl who tries to find a husband).*
- P4: *Such criticisms are usually made in case of a poor [girl/family].*
- P2: *[For instance] If my daughter talks with the son of someone, [the villagers] will say, “His daughter is bad. [They] will say, ‘The boy and the girl are in a romantic relationship; she is trying to convince him to marry her.’” Such criticisms are common in case of girls from poor families.*

FGD-Fathers-4_village B

Besides imposing restriction on girls’ movement, keeping them under constant vigilance, scolding them and prohibiting them to talk with the males, sometimes the girls are beaten for preventing frequent interactions with males and alleged affair. In such cases, parents often prefer to stop a girl’s education and marry them off to avoid any damage to family honor. The data reveal that sanctions in such instances are harsher for the girls than for the boys involved.

“When a girl talks with a boy then villagers criticize the girl and her family but no one says anything about the boy. They can do whatever they want. Sanctions are stricter for girls than boys.”

IDI-Girls-9_village C

“While walking in the streets sometimes girls talk with boys. The villagers assume that something [romantic] is going on with the boy. But there is nothing at all, they are just friends. For this reason due to the fear, due to the shame and to avoid any occurrence they (the parents) marry of their daughter in an early age.”

IDI-Girls-8_village C

- **Normative expectations and sanctions for parents**

Findings from all the study sites suggest that villagers expect parents to have full control over their adolescent daughters' mobility and interaction with opposite sex. Talking too much with the males and spending much time with them may affect '**maan-shomman**' (honor) of her parents. This damages the prospect of receiving good marriage proposals.

- P2, 5: *If they (girls) **beyadobi korle** (show impudence), if they mingle [with males] too much...*
- P4, 2, 1: *That will be controlled by the guardians. ...if they (the villagers) see impudence [among girls] then they talk about it. ... Yes, of course they will complain; if they see the girls roaming around with boys. They complain to us (parents), saying, "Your daughter is **khub beyadob** (very impudent), she talks with male outsiders." ...*
- P1: *They criticize this...**moy-murubbis** (old people or the elderly) talk about it.*
- P2: *Hmm...*
- P1: *They say, "The girl has grown up!"*
- P2: *"She has grown up, get her married."*
- P1: *"Get her married. How could they (parents) keep such a **dangor meye** (grown up girl) in the house?" (Laughter)*
- P3: *"She (the girl) is **biyer upojukto** (matured enough for marriage), why don't you (parents) get her married? How could you keep such a grown up girl in [your] house?"*
- P4: *"How long would you keep her in [your] house?"*
- P5: *"The girl is now matured enough to be married. Who knows where she goes alone!"*
- P1: *"She will bring **bodnam** (disgrace)!"*
- P5: *"Now if such a disgrace takes place then it would be harmful to your **maan-shomman!**"*
- P3: *It is a matter of honor after all!*
- P1: *We (parents) will lose our honor.*

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

A potential groom's family usually collects information about a potential bride and her family from the girl's village. His family will not proceed with the marriage proposal if it learns the girl in question or any other girl from her family interacts too much with males or has any romantic relationship or eloped. Cancellation of a marriage proposal serves as a warning not only for this girls' family, but also for other families in the neighborhood and encourages them to restrict girls' mobility and interaction with opposite sex further.

Parents have to face immense criticism from the villagers if their daughters talk with males. The villagers start to warn both.

- P7: *If a boy talks to a girl then [the villagers] do not ask them [directly] not to talk. They rather tell their parents that the character of their son or daughter is not so good. They will add that they have witnessed that....*

- P1: *They will tell that the girl is talking to a boy -- this is not right. They will tell the parents to make their daughters mindful not to do these things anymore. Otherwise, the consequences will not be good.*

FGD-Boys_1_village A

Findings from all the study sites suggest that villagers usually backbite and criticize the parents for not disciplining the girl. They rebuke the parents for it. These parents are known 'no good guardians'. Fathers participating in an FGD in village A mentioned that a father of such a girl is called '**Ficha**' by people (the tail of a fish, which by default follows the head, implying that the man does not have any control over his family).

Parents from all the study sites reported that a father is supposed to be the breadwinner of a family and work outside of home, while the mother is expected to stay home and raise children. Therefore, fathers and villagers usually blame the mother for not being able to discipline or control her properly when questions are raised regarding a girl's interaction with males. Criticism of the villagers reaches the father very fast due to his involvement with the public. He is questioned and rebuked by the fellow villagers for his daughter's behaviors. The father usually takes out his anger and frustration on the mother blaming and scolding her for not keeping an eye on their daughter; some fathers also beat the mother and the girl in this situation.

- P3: *Village women have to hear (tolerate) a lot of things from outsiders and their husbands if '**meyeder naamay kichhu bair hoy**' (there is any gossip regarding their daughters)*
P4: *People exclaim, 'What type of mother she is!'*

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

- P6: *Altercation takes place between the husband and the wife.*
P2: *The husband tells the wife, 'You are not watching the girl when she is going out. I go outside... leaving you at home. But I do not see my daughter when I am back. She is doing bad things. She is chatting (with boys), but you are not noticing these things.' The couple argues over these issues.*
P1: *Altercations take place in such situations. It creates '**oshanti**' (harms peace) in the family.*

FGD-Fathers -2_village D

- P5: *A husband is not a person to stay home. He often goes to the (local) shop. The villagers there stalk him saying that his daughter is doing something odd (indicating interaction*

with boys), and ask him why he is not marrying her off. They say different things [of this nature].

P2: Villagers complain to the father that his daughter was seen talking and wandering with a boy.

P5: Hearing such criticisms for 10 days at a stretch the guardian takes action. He scolds the mother and daughter alike. He does not want to keep his daughter at home anymore (indicating father wants to marry off the daughter). He then tells his wife to observe her duty, and rebukes her [for neglecting it].

P2: Criticisms create pressure [on the family]....

P5: This situation arises if a male comes [to see and talk with a girl] frequently. ...

P1: Mothers are pressurized, abused by the fathers.

P4: Why won't the fathers put pressure the mothers? The mothers have to face the pressure.

P1: [Villagers say,] "What a **kharap meye** (bad girl)!"

P4: Husbands ask wives why they do not try to discipline the girl who is spending time outside however she wishes.

P1: The Husband rebukes the wife claiming she (wife) is not disciplining the daughter. She is doing this and that [indicating interaction with males] and people **gaoagaoi kortise** (are criticizing). It is a matter of **maan-shomman** after all.

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

Exceptions

Findings from all the sites and across the informant groups suggest that girls' interaction with opposite sex is less suspected by the villagers when it is for study purpose.

P2, 7: For the study purpose if they (girls and boys) talk with each other then it less suspected.

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

P3: If a girl says, "I do not have a book that I need at school. He has it. I will lend his book or notes" -- (villagers) would not mind in such cases.

P2: Everyone needs assistance in study-related issues. It means when I do not know something and if a boy knows it, and we discuss it together, then there will be no criticisms regarding this interaction (study issue).

P4: There will be consequences (problems) if they meet without any issue.

FGD-Girls-1_village A

Girls from village A said that sometimes male peers from the neighborhood are sent to deliver them money and snacks at school by the parents, which is not criticized by the villagers. It should be noted here that girls and boys studying at secondary level in this village go to another village to attend high school.

P2: Some boys whom we (girls) know or who [usually] pass nearby our school bring us biscuits. Our parents may have given gave them money and asked them to buy (biscuits) for us.

M: Are those boys your age? Are they teenagers and your neighbors?

P2: Yes.

FGD-Girls-1_village A

Adolescent girls and boys participating in FGDs at village D mentioned that interaction between a good female student with a well-behaved good male student inside or outside school is not criticized by the villagers. However, when a female student with poor academic performance talks to any male student, villagers become suspicious of her intentions. If any girl talks to a spoiled/bad boy (**'fotka'**, **'baje chhele'**) then villagers often raise questions about such interaction regardless of the venue (i.e., inside or the school).

- P3: Yes, you can talk with a boy if he is a **bhalo chhatro** (good student). No one will say anything if he is a **bhalo chhele** (good boy). But when a **kharap chhatro** (bad student) talks with a [girl who is a] good student or when a bad student talks with another bad student [of opposite sex], the villagers will question whether it is necessary to talk to a bad student, "What can he teach [you]?" But if the boy is a good student and has good manners, they will not say anything. For example, if the boy behaves like **orangutan** or is **fotka** (spoiled), they will ask, "What do you talk about with someone who is not a good boy?"
- P5: The villagers will criticize even when the girl is not a good student. They will assume that she is alluding to studies to [actually] meet the boy. ...
- M: What did you mean by the term **fotka**?
- P5: **Fotka** are the boys who do not study; use phone; smoke in public; do not respect teachers and parents; harass girls; and laughs makes fun of them with their friends.
- M: Do the villagers take it negatively when a girl talks with such boys?
- P2: Yes, they want to know why a girl is talking with a bad boy.

FGD-Girls-4_village D

- P3: If the boy is good...
- P3, 4, 6: if the boy is a good student...
- P4: if the boy is her classmate, he has no bad intentions...
- P8: if he is not jealous...
- P4: They (villagers) would not mind if she talks with him every now and then. But if she meets someone at the school who is a bad boy, everyone would take it negatively even if they talk inside the school. [The villagers would question] why she has so much [interaction] with that boy.

FGD-Boys-2_village D

On the other hand, mothers participating in an FGD at village A pointed out that frequent interaction with an unemployed male triggers criticism in the village about the girl's intention.

- P 2, 7: If a girl talks to an unemployed male every day then villagers will definitely talk about it and gossip that they are doing this and that [in a romantic relationship].

FGD-Mothers-1_village A

Data obtained from FGDs with fathers and mothers suggest that if a girl transgresses the normative expectations regarding interaction with boys her parents are criticized regardless of their financial and

educational status. However, while financially disadvantaged parents are criticized by the villagers openly, the rich parents are criticized behind their back.

Sensitivity to sanctions

FGDs with adolescent girls and boys suggest that in all the study sites most of the adolescent girls adhere to the norm regarding interaction with opposite sex. It seems that disapproval of girls' interaction with opposite sex is more stringent in village B compared to the other study villages. Talking to the cousin brothers may also raise questions in this village.

- M: If 12-16 years old adolescent girls' hangout or talk with the males outside of school or outside of home, then what will be the reaction of the villagers'?*
- All: What would they say? (All are laughing). ... They will ask us about the relationship between us. Even if we talk like friends they will otherwise. That is why we cannot even talk to our cousin brothers.*
- P6, 1, 4: A male could be our paternal cousin or uncle, but the villagers take talking to them negatively.*
- P3: When they (villagers) see us talking [with them] in absence of anybody in the house they mark it...When nobody is at home, when [our] parents are not present at home but a male whom we know comes, [we] talk to him in the courtyard.*

FGD-Girls-3_village C

Very few girls challenge social norms and continue to interact with males despite criticism by community members. The story of one such girl was shared by the FGD participants from village D.

- P3: There is a girl in our neighborhood who (studies in class 9) quarrels if anyone says something to her.*
- P1: She would say, "Why are you talking about me, who are you to talk about me? Are you my father?"*
- P3: If her mother asks her where she goes based on information from the villagers --she doesn't tell her anything. She thinks there is no need to tell her parents and the villagers about her movements. If they ask she starts quarrelling with them. She goes to places and doesn't care about the community.*
- M: Does she talk with boys?*
- All: She does whatever she wants to do. If any boy goes to her house she talks with him privately. People don't like it. If they talk in front of everyone people will not say anything but if they talk in privacy people definitely will criticize it.*
- M: What do her parents do?*
- P3: Her father is a farmer and her mother is a housewife. Their family's financial condition is not so good.*

FGD-Girls-4_village D

Findings from the FGDs with mothers and fathers from all the study sites show that villagers' attitudes force the parents to restrict their daughters from talking with males frequently and make them monitor who they interact with.

“We (parents) always follow-up on who our daughters are talking to.”

FGD-Mothers-2_ village A

When a male talks with a girl and they roam around together without any concrete purpose related to education then most of the villagers shame them by saying, “**chhi-chhanna**” (what a shame!), “**ghinnit**” (disgusting!). Most of the fathers believe in the villagers’ reports regarding their daughters’ interactions with males and threaten the girls with stopping education if they do not abandon the practice.

*P6: (Fathers) say, ‘I will stop your education. People call me **ficha**.*

P3: Many (fathers) believe in the words of other people.

FGD-Fathers-1_ village D

The parents who trust the girl and do not readily believe people’s reports often challenge the people who complain.

“Some parents would demand that the villagers do not gossip about their daughter without any reason; [they say,] ‘she is my daughter. I will check when I see her [with someone] myself.’ There are some parents who are like this.”

FGD-Girls-1_ village A

How has the norm weakened and is affected by the context?

The current norm in all the study villages is that girls’ are allowed to talk with their male relatives, male peers in neighborhood and school. While most of the people tend not to approve most potential interactions between males and adolescent girls, interaction with them regarding studies is approved by the villagers. The parents and the villagers support the girls if they talk with a well-mannered good male student or peer from the village.

Findings suggest that aspirations of the girls are shifting towards communication with opposite sex. Some of the girls aspire to talk and hangout with the boys not only for getting help in studies but also for playing cricket and performing drama and songs in school programs.

Who enforces the norm?

Findings across study sites suggest that community members play a critical role in defining interaction between adolescent girls and males. The **moy-murubbis** are particularly important in protecting and

enforcing social norms regarding girl's interaction with opposite sex. Parents and other relatives including elder brothers enforce social norms around interaction between adolescent girls and males. Peers also play a vital role in this.

Criticism by community members makes girls lose their confidence:

Criticism of girls' interaction with opposite sex by the community members makes the girls lose confidence and pressurize them to stay away from the boys.

"We are preparing for a program at our school --a drama? Two boys from our class came to our home for that. Perhaps many people saw us and thought a lot of things. I was very scared. [I thought], 'Allah! If they (the villagers) see that they (the boys) are talking to me, a lot of people will probably talk behind my back.' Because of them, I mean out of fear of people's criticism, I couldn't talk to them properly. That's why I told them that I will talk to them later at school. ... The neighbors may report to my parents. ... Out of this fear, we (girls) fall behind in a lot of important tasks."

FGD-Girls-3_village B

Peer pressure: Sometimes criticism and teasing by classmates stimulates greater control of adolescent girls' interaction with male class friends.

P6: Even when a female and a male classmate talk with each other regarding an important study subject the other classmates criticize them. ...
P1, 3, 2: The gossip spreads from one class to the next, "You know that girl? She talks with that boy!" Then this will [eventually] reach to our parents' ears. ...
All: Then they will get angry, "What are you doing, leaving aside your studies? What is all this we are hearing about you? Let us not hear this again." I mean because of them our parents don't want to believe us.
P1: I was saying because of them, our parents can't trust us.
P3, 4: Then our parents say such things that make us cry. The words hurt us more than beating. You know what happens then? Then the confidence we have in ourselves, is also lost, damaged.

FGD-Girls-3_village B

Who is most affected by the norm?

Girls who are academically poor and belong to financially disadvantaged families are most affected by the norm regarding interaction with opposite sex. A few girls who defy the norms moving alone frequently and at the same time use mobile phone face harsher sanctions and punishments both by the parents and the villagers. Parents who rely more on the villagers' reports and complaints about their daughters are also more affected by the norm.

A: There are instances when [villagers] complain to their (her) parents when a girl and a boy talk with each other at school. [When] arguments take place [between a girl and her parents] then sometimes they take poison and some of them die.

- ...
- A: *This usually happens after arguments: she argues that they are friends and they talked as friends. She questions the parents' harsh reaction and claims it as unfair. In this circumstance the parents say, 'We do not need a daughter like you. You should take poison.' Some girls cannot tolerate such rebuke and take poison.*
- Q: *Did any such incident happen in your village?*
- A: *Yes, in the neighborhood....about one to three months back. She was senior to me. ... [She used to read in] class X.*

IDI-Girls-9_village C

Decision making regarding marriage of 12-16 year old adolescent girls

Decision regarding timing of a girl's marriage is driven by multiple considerations. First of all, virginity at marriage is of high concern in this society and it is the responsibility of the family to protect virginity of the girl until her marriage. Marriage prospects of girl and **maan-shomman** (reputation/prestige/honor) of a family is tarnished if a girl gets involved in a relationship or even if there is a baseless rumor about it. Thus, child marriage is a village norm, which is internalized by the families and at the same time imposed by the villagers. A girl believed or suspected to have a relationship is thus quickly married off no matter how old she is. As a girl grows up the chances of such damage becomes increasingly feasible. The villagers believe the best proposals come when the girl is still less than 16 years old. Financial status often defines timing of marriage, particularly in disadvantaged families as it is difficult for them to invest in the girl's education and to pay a higher dowry delaying her marriage. Therefore, not marrying a girl as early as possible demands a strong justification. Education is one such justification. Thus, a girl with poor academic performance or a school dropout is an obvious target for child marriage as a family does not see any prospect in continuing her education and keeping her at home by increasing the risks of her romantic involvement.

Qualitative data from the study sites suggest that the nature of decision making regarding marriage is not participatory. Although information about matchmaking may be shared with the mother and/or with other relatives important for the family (e.g., uncle, elder brother, grandfather) the final decision is usually made by the father without consulting the potential bride. The girl is not expected to express any opinion regarding her marriage. Any deviation from this is criticized by the villagers. Such girls are labeled as shameless and impudent and are suspected to have a relationship, which speeds up child marriage without collecting adequate information about the groom.

Most girls conform to this norm. A few girls convey their choice regarding marriage to father through mother or other female relatives. Girls who wish to continue education deferring marriage may engage in negotiation with the parents. The possibility of success of such negotiation largely depends on the girl's academic performance and her reputation regarding mixing with males. Girls who have a relationship may also voice their choice. In such instance, the parents may agree to consider their proposition only if the male involved has family status equal or higher to that of their own. If it is not so the girls may accept the family's decision or may elope with boyfriend (Figure 12).

Empirical expectations

Child marriage is the dominant type of marriage across the study villages. Marriage proposals start coming when a girl is about 12 year old. However, the majority of the proposals come when she is aged between 15 and 16. The main decision maker regarding her marriage almost exclusively is the father. As a rule a girl is not consulted about her marriage. A good proposal is usually never rejected by the parents regardless of the girl's age.

A girl usually gets to hear about a proposal after the father's endorsement of the marriage. Thus, she is not consulted about the marriage. The villagers also tend to believe the girls have no opinion about their own marriage. She is not expected to discuss her own marriage neither before nor after this event. Most of the girls accept the marriage and get married by the age of 16.

P1: The girls do not have any opinion. Their opinion is not sought.

P1-4: Not sought. No, no, no.

P2: Girls' opinion is never sought.

P3: It is not for a girl to say whether or not to give her in marriage.

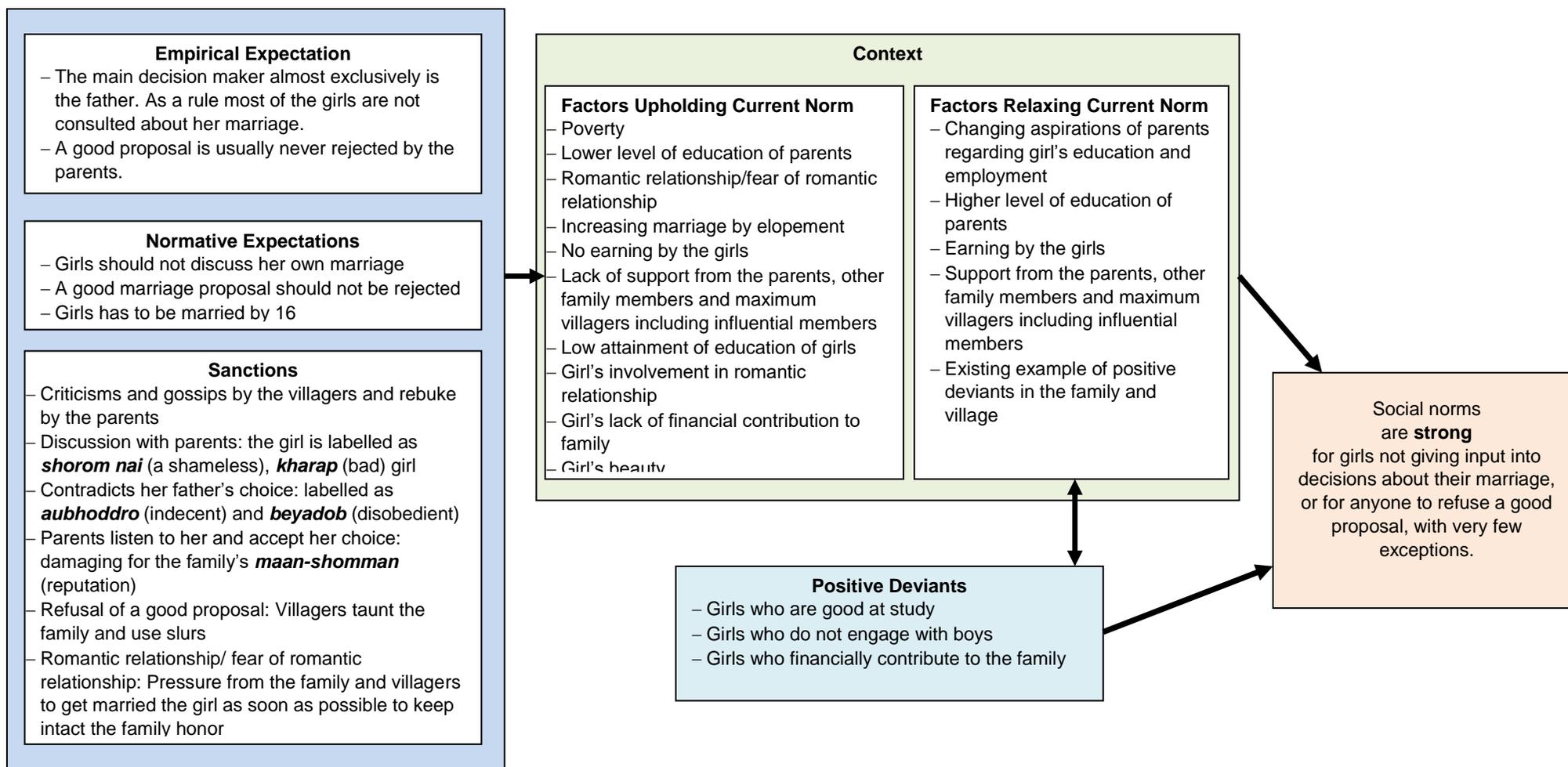
FGD-Mothers-2_village A

On rare occasions when a girl rejects a marriage proposal the parents are expected to ignore her opinion.

Normative expectations and sanctions

The normative expectation of the villagers regarding timing of marriage of a girl is that she should be married by 16.

Figure 12: Conceptual Framework Emerging from the Data on Social Norms Related to Decision Making regarding Marriage



“At fifteen years of age they think that we have grown up a lot... I don't understand why they think so. People in the village think that we have become very big. As soon as (a girl) gets (her) menses, they will think, 'Yes, the girl has come of age she has to be married off now.'”

IDI-AdG-5_village A

If she does not get married by 16, they consider her too old to be a bride. They believe that a girl older than 16 bears the marks of aging on her face and correspondingly the demand is high for girls aged 16 or below in the marriage market.

Most of the villagers do not endorse a girl discussing her own marriage. If a girl discusses her own marriage with her parents she is labelled as **shorom nai** (a shameless), **kharap** (bad girl). If she contradicts her father's choice she is labelled as **aubhoddro** (impudent) and **beyadob** (disobedient). Villagers talk if the girl contradicts her father's decision regarding her marriage. They believe a girl's opinion does not carry any value.

“A girl may have an opinion regarding the groom. She may not like the groom. That does not count. Actually a girl usually does not say, 'I don't like this man.'”

KII-Man-2_village B

Therefore, if the parents listen to her and accept her choice, the villagers consider this damaging for the family's **maan-shomman** (reputation). Family's **maan-shomman** is also affected as the villagers criticise the family and assume a romantic relationship of the girl, which is considered utterly damaging.

- P1: **[Maan-shomman]** will of course be damaged. This is because the girl has come of age, there has been a proposal, but the marriage is still not taking place. The villagers will ask the parents, 'What is stopping the marriage'?
- P2: They will be criticized.
- P3: The girl will be asked, 'Do you have a relationship'?

FGD-Fathers-3_Village B

They blame both the girl and her parents for that. Refusal of a good proposal is not accepted by the villagers. They taunt the family and use slurs while referring to it.

The villagers believe a good marriage proposal should never be rejected. Thus, despite knowledge on adverse consequences of child marriage young age is not a consideration when a good proposal is received. If for any reason the parents reject a good proposal the villagers criticize the parents. However, father-daughter contradiction, acceptance of daughter's opinion regarding marriage and

refusal of a good marriage proposal are rare in the studied villages. So, the described reactions to these are also rare.

A girl's involvement in a romantic relationship is perceived as a major calamity. This is severely criticized by the villagers. They believe such a girl must be married off immediately to someone of her parents' choice. Girls who actually do not have such relationship, but are suspected to have it (e.g., a girl wants to delay her marriage despite her poor performance in school) are bound to face the same criticism. A school dropout is also supposed to be married off as she is perceived by the villagers to have a romantic relationship and waiting for marrying that man. This is perceived as damaging her and her family's reputation.

Sensitivity to sanctions

High sensitivity to sanctions such as talks, gossips, and criticisms by the villagers were observed as they are deemed to damage reputation of the girls and their families. Most of the girls do not dare to talk to their parents about their marriage fearing criticism of the villagers and angering the parents. For the same reason they accept marriage arranged by parents.

M: You are saying most of the girls do not express opinion about their own marriage because 90% of the villagers criticize this. Could you please elaborate what kind of criticism it entails.

*P1: Whenever a girl expresses her opinion it is considered **aubhodrota** (misbehaving).*

P2: That is perceived as going against her parents.

*P1: She is not listening to the **murubbi** (elders). She is expressing her own opinion instead of accepting the decision taken by the elders.*

FGD-Girls-2_village C

"If [the father] likes the groom, if he likes his family, he'll decide to marry off his daughter despite the daughter's refusal to marry. She'll not dare to refuse the second time after observing the fury on her father's face."

FGD-Fathers-2_village D

Sensitivity to similar sanctions is also high among the parents. This is why most of them still arrange their daughter's marriage by the age of 16. They do not consult the daughter about her marriage. The girls are socialized not to talk about marriage and to accept parents' decision about it. In the rare event when a girl expresses her choice regarding marriage it is often ignored by the parents.

The parents' high sensitivity to sanction is also expressed in their fear of engagement of a girl in romantic relationship if a marriage is not arranged early enough. As a girl from village A said,

"My father believes that they will lose face if I get involved with a male and I elope. This is why he wants to marry me off at an early age."

IDI-Girl-1_village A

Similar notion was expressed by a girl from village D.

"The girls cannot remain unmarried for long as the villagers then say that they are having a relationship."

IDI-Girl-17_village D

Once the parents come to know of or suspect a romantic relationship of the girl they attempt to disrupt it immediately by marrying the girl to another man for protecting family honor. Apprehending development of such a relationship, they quickly arrange marriage for school dropouts and those who do not perform well academically.

M: If these- twelve to sixteen year old adolescent girls, if their parents allow them to walk around by themselves inside or around the village, then it can be the cause of the family losing honor. So what do the people in your village think? Do they think the same in the village, or what?

P1, 2: Yes, that is what they think.

P1: They do (think) so, sister, the same thing is happening in every village.

P3: The same thing is happening everywhere, in every village.

P1: The same thing is happening. (They say) "Marry her off quickly." A lot of problems like this occur.

...

P2: ... If a girl becomes mature (has menarche), stays at home (unmarried) for two or four years she turns into a young woman. As soon as she reaches the age of marriage then rumors start to spread. 'So and so's daughter is not able to get married.'

P2, 4: 'She is of age. Why are they not marrying her off?'

P2: So much gossip runs in a village!

P3: Different people say different [negative] things. They say, 'The daughter of that person is eligible [for marriage], but not being able to get married. They are not marrying her off.'

...

P2, 3: In the village, if they (the girls) graduate grade 10, people think that they have studied too much.

P4: They can breathe with relief if they can marry her off.

P2: As soon as (she) can be married, the burden will be off.

P5: Marriage is everything.

P4: And if they study Master's then they'll think that, 'Allah, these cannot get married!'

FGD-Mothers-2_village A

While most girls are highly sensitive to the sanctions, a girl in a relationship was found to have low sensitivity to sanction. She may ignore the sanctions and convey to the parents that she has a relationship and would not accept the proposed marriage.

How has the norm weakened?

In the past many girls used to get married before 15. Now most girls study and get married at 16 or 17. It is generally out of question that a girl will go to college and remain unmarried. Now some girls from every village go to college. Aspirations of some girls have changed dramatically. They aspire to delay marriage not only to complete higher studies, but also to get employed for helping out the natal family. A few parents are supporting these girls. The villagers now accept that parents may allow their daughter with commendable performance at school and not having any bad reputation for mixing with boys to delay her marriage for her higher studies and job opportunities. These parents are mostly from more educated and wealthy families. However, a few poor families are included in this group.

It seems that there is also greater acceptance of “love marriages” now if the groom is considered suitable. But this does not necessarily address child marriage as the marriage takes place as per the parents’ wish, which tend to overlap with the expected age at marriage in the village. Similarly, marriage by elopement has increased over time. But that usually tends to push age at marriage downwards rather than upwards.

How are norms affected by context?

Girls from financially disadvantaged families are usually married off early due to scarcity of resources for educating them.

P1: This happens mostly in poor families.

P1, 2: They marry off girls all of a sudden.

P1: Girls from the poor families get married at an age like ours. This is because their parents are not capable to allow them schooling for long.

FGD-Girls-2_ village C

Conversely, it seems that at least in village B, in some well-to-do families with relatively educated parents, a girl’s opinion regarding her marriage may be sought.

“The parents who are financially better-off and have higher education may seek the girl’s opinion.”

KII-Man-2_ village B

The girls, however, believe even in such context it might be risky to try to negotiate with parents who to marry. Thus, a 14 year old the daughter of a tailor and an NGO worker from village B said,

“A girl can say when she wishes to marry, but who she’ll marry will be decided by the parents. If I say I want to marry that man, they will assume a relationship with the man and may decide they will not marry me to that man whether or not he is a commendable groom. They may say you’ll have to marry a man of our choice.”

IDI-Girl-15_ village B

According to a 13 year old girl, half of the girls in Village B may tell their parents when they wish to marry. The 14 year old girl from village B believes that her mother is in favor of delaying her marriage as a result of attending a school meeting arranged for the parents on adverse consequences of child marriage. Her parents told her that they are prepared to arrange her marriage after 18 if she does well in her studies.

The data also suggest that a girl's marriage may ultimately get delayed in families that struggle to accumulate resources for paying a dowry.

If the parents have relatively higher education they are more likely to support daughter's aspirations for delayed marriage, higher education and employment. Such parents may have higher aspirations for the girl themselves. A 12 year old girl from Village C (IDI-ADG-8_village C) is such an example. Her parents are well off. The father is much more educated (masters) than an average man in the village. The mother passed G-9. The girl said,

"We received the proposal when I just started in G-8. The groom was in the Border Guard Battalion. They talked to my father and wanted to come to our house. My mother said. 'This is not [something] for now. My daughter is young. What would happen to her career if she gets married so early? What would happen to her big dream?' My father doesn't like this (marrying a young girl) as well. He said, 'My daughter is young. I'll not give her in marriage now. When she grows up I'll marry her to the person she chooses."

IDI-ADG-8_village C

While parents are usually paranoid about romantic relationship and rush to marry a girl if they assume any such possibility, the wealthier and more educated parents are believed to try their best to convince the girl not to continue the relationship so that she can continue her education which is highly valued by these parents.

"If the parents are well established and educated it is only natural that they would aspire to highly educate their daughter. So, they discipline her (make her break up the relationship) and convince the girl to continue education. Those who are not so educated or solvent get the girls married off."

FGD-Girls-4_village D

It is easier for a girl to negotiate marriage postponement in villages where examples exist of women who delayed marriage, had higher education, and got involved in gainful income earning.

Sometimes a girl's birth order may influence timing of her marriage. Thus, the parents of a girl have already refused two good marriage proposals as she is the last child in the family and the parents do not want to let her go yet.

Recently a change in the context is affecting the relationship between education and marriage. Previously, girls' education stopped with marriage. Now, in some instances, education is continued after marriage as well. It is evident from the data that aspirations of some girls and their parents have positively changed regarding girls' education post marriage. Thus, some parents try to negotiate with the groom's family regarding continuation of their daughter's education and sometimes the negotiations bear fruit. In general, this is a positive change. However, if this becomes a widespread practice, the impetus for delaying marriage for the purpose of gaining more education may lose its relevance. Other factors remaining the same this may induce an increase in child marriage.

Who is most affected by the norm?

Girls from financially disadvantaged families

Poor families often cannot afford to bring up the girl and continue investing in her education. In this situation, child marriage is assumed both by the family and the villagers as the best solution for stopping drainage of household resources and romantic relationship damaging family reputation. The parents and villagers seemed highly concerned about romantic involvement of the girl and termed it as ***durghotona*** (mishap).

P1: This girl was in G-8.

P2: They are poor. So, her education was discontinued.

*P1: We **jodomodo** (somehow) arranged her marriage.*

P3: She was a well behaved girl, but the father was worried about poverty.

*P4: This girl came of age and they were going to have another child. His income did not improve. Now, the villagers told him, "You have to marry this girl off as you cannot afford marry two at the same time. So, raise money from the villagers and **par kori dao** (get her married off).."*

FGD-Fathers-3_ Village B

Girls with poor school performance

Interestingly, performance at school counts as an important factor defining child marriage. If a girl is a good student she and her family have better chances of justifying delaying her marriage. In contrast, a weak student is more vulnerable to child marriage. Both the family and the villagers do not consider it worthwhile to keep her in school. Further, making her sit at home is perceived to be fraught with the risks of romantic engagement. So, there is pressure from the villagers to get her married. The majority of the families also prefer this option. Regardless of the girl's age and opinion about timing of marriage

there is a concerted effort in marrying such a girl quickly. Both boys and girls from village D mentioned the importance of school performance in delaying marriage.

“If a bad student says I’ll study, I don’t want to get married now –The family and the villagers will assume that she certainly has a romantic relationship, which is making her disagree to marriage. They will argue, “You are not a good student. You are repeatedly failing to pass your exam. So, there is no reason not to marry you off.”

FGD-Girls-4_ village D

In contrast,

“If the girl is good in studies the parents will listen to her and will not marry her off if she objects.”

FGD-Boys-2_ village D

Girls aged 16

In these four villages most of the girls are married off around 16. Multiple factors contribute to the perception that 16 is the ideal age for getting a girl married. A major factor is the fear of being criticized by the villagers and losing **maan-shomman** (*honor*) due to the tendency of developing romantic relationship at this age.

“Now girls cannot be married off later [than 16]. If a girl is still unmarried the villagers would say, ‘She must be having a relationship. She must be waiting for the boy.’ They say similar things. Our villagers are not good people.”

IDI-Girl-17_ village D

“Having a boyfriend speeds up parents’ efforts in getting a girl quickly married before the relationship becomes known to the villagers or before they elope damaging her and the family’s reputation.”

KII-M-2_ village B

Explaining how paranoid the parents become regarding a daughter’s romantic relationship a girl said,

*“If parents get to know that a girl from the neighboring house is having a relationship and then see their daughter talk to a man they’ll panic and taking this for a relationship. They’ll get concerned about their **maan-shomman** and will finally get her married.”*

IDI-Girl-16_ village D

The other strong argument in favor of marrying girls at 16 is that the villagers consider that after 16, a girl’s face bears marks of aging. They believe demand for 16 year old girls is usually high in the marriage market. This also reduces the size of the dowry demanded. So, they argue this is the best time to marry them off.

Girls receiving a good marriage proposal

If there is a good marriage proposal the age of the girl usually becomes immaterial to the villagers and parents. A man serving in the law enforcing agency is highly valued as a groom. Parents usually do not refuse such proposals.

Good looking girls

The data also suggest that beautiful girls attract good marriage proposals quite early in life and are given in marriage early.

Who enforces norms around child marriage related decisions?

From the text above it is clear that the community plays a critical role in defining when a girl will get married. The ***moy-murubbi*** (elders) are particularly important in protecting and enforcing social norms. Within the families parents, grandfathers, and even elder brothers enforce social norm around marriage.

P1: [My daughter] rejected the proposal. At the beginning my husband did not agree to this marriage. But later he married her off by force.

P2: He got her married by force. ...

P1: Five of his nephews approached him. They argued that the groom is good...

*P3: He is **kormik** (hard working).*

*P1: He is **kormik**. You don't have a son. You'll get a son if you give your daughter in marriage. He will toil as a son and he'll look after the family.*

FGD-Mothers-3_village C

Exceptions

Though rarely, but some girls express their aspirations regarding delaying marriage. Most of them open up either to a female relative or to the mother expecting that the information will be conveyed to the father, who is the main decision maker regarding marriage. A very few girls talk directly to the father. The usual reasons for wanting to delay marriage are: romantic involvement; aspirations for continuing education; aspirations for getting employed and becoming financially independent; aspirations for making financial contribution to the family and thus improve financial condition of the family. The participants from the mothers' FGD in village C gave a couple of examples of such girls, who have reached womanhood.

P1: Take, for instance, the two girls from that household. One of them got married after G-12. The other one has passed masters. She did not get married yet.

P2: There are a few girls like that.

FGD-Mothers-4_village C

In case of romantic involvement the parents agree to delay marriage only if the man's financial and social standing is either comparable or higher than their own family status. Delaying marriage for continuing education, getting employed and becoming economically self-reliant is feasible only when the girl is a good student and does not engage with boys. Such flexibility of the parents are usually observed in families, where both parents have relatively higher education than their peers. They value education and do not want to deny their daughter the opportunity if she has the potential. Such parents often appreciate their daughter's ambition for employment and economic independence. As understood there is still only a small group of parents who supports these goals of their daughters. Thus, for example, 15 year old Sathi from village D wants to complete Masters and get a job before she gets married. Her parents are not wealthy, but both have relatively higher education (SSC and G-9). Two years ago when marriage proposals started to come for her, her parents declared, *"We are not going to get her married now. She will continue her studies, get a job and only then she'll get married. [At this point in time] there should be no discussion about her marriage in the house."*

When Shathi informed her parents that she wants to complete Masters degree. Her father laid out the conditions clearly, "In that case you cannot do anything bad. You need to study well and achieve good grades." Shathi agreed to that. Ever since then she devotes all her time to her studies.

There are some young girls who aspire, for example, to be physicians. Take for instance Salma. She told her mother, "Don't marry me off yet. My father has died. So, I'll study more, I'll bring up my brother, and I'll feed you." She continued her education and now she has become a nurse. She did not marry yet. She is a good girl. If her mother tries to arrange her marriage she stops her. She says. "When the time comes I'll marry of my own choice."

KII-Woman-4_village C

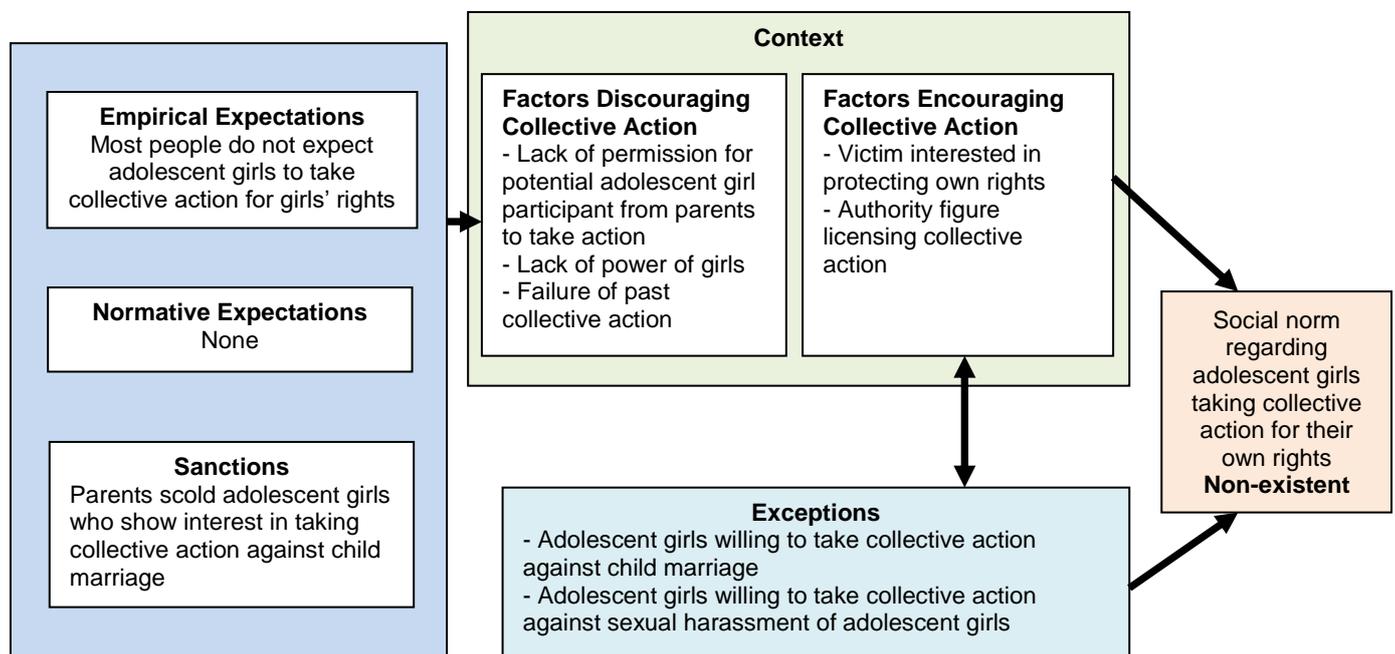
The quote above suggests that at least some villagers may be empathetic towards a girl who is determined to support her family in financial crisis by delaying her marriage.

It is much easier for a girl to convince their parents to delay her marriage when there is precedence in the village or better still if it is in the family. Thus, for example, Koli from village C, a 15 year old girl wants to get married at 25. She has discussed this with her friends, but not with her parents or other relatives yet. She was inspired by her aunt, who told her parents that she wants to marry four years later when she will be financially independent and received her family's approval. There are about 10 women in the village, who continued their education and remained unmarried.

Collective action for girls' rights

Exploration of the current norm on adolescent girls taking collective action for girls' rights found that the current norm is against adolescent girls taking collective action for their rights. Empirical expectation, normative expectations, and sanctions are all against adolescent girls taking collective action. Spontaneous positive deviants and contextual factors that can weaken the current norm were seen in play. Conceptual framework provided below illustrates these interactions and the findings from this framework are summarized below (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Conceptual Framework Emerging from Data on Social Norms Related to Adolescent Girls Taking Collective Action for Girls' Rights



Empirical expectation

Interview data indicated that most girls do not take collective action. This expectation was reported by adolescent girls, fathers, and mothers. Adolescent boys did not report any empirical expectation regarding girls' taking collective action for girls' rights.

Adolescent girls reported in FGDs that when there are instances of sexual harassment, the parents of adolescent girls seek justice from the greater community, but adolescent girls themselves do not as either individuals or as a collective.

M: But what to most girls of the village do? When something like this (harassment) happens, what do most girls do? Do they demand justice from people? From

the people of the village?...Do girls your age go (to the community) and demand justice?

P2: *No, not girls. The girl's parents go. Girls don't go.*

FGD-Girls-1_village A

Male key informants from all four villages repeated the same empirical expectation. They informed that groups of girls do not protest the marriage of their classmates, or take any steps regarding its prevention. One male key informant reported that girls do not take any collective action at all for any violation of their rights.

No. That they are classmates, that 3-4 of them are studying in the same grade- one of them is getting (being forced into) marriage... that four of them (a small group) will protest all together, that they will take step- they don't have any knowledge of the sort"

KII-Man-1_village A

Q: *Have you seen any adolescent boys or girls in this village work for anything related to them, or their issues? Take, for example, their rights to study, or their rights to stopping child marriage or for participation of youth- have you seen them (work towards) any subject like this? Have you seen them work?*

A: *No, no. We don't have that.*

Q: *Adolescent boys or girls?*

A: *No. No adolescent boy or girl. No, no, we don't have that.*

KII-Man-3_village D

Female key informants also reported the empirical expectation that girls do not collect together to take any action on issues regarding their rights. They specifically identified that though adults of their areas sometimes take collective action to prevent early marriage, no such action taken by groups or collectives of adolescent girls was observed. One female key informant identified that it is possible that the "youth" might not have had the courage to take collective action.

Q: *Take, for example, have you seen any adolescent girls or boys in this village make a group and work towards their rights?*

A: *No. No adolescent girls' or boys' groups have gotten together in a group and worked. I have not seen (so) yet.*

Q: *You know, sometimes about education rights, or someone is facing child marriage- have they ever worked together for (to prevent) these?*

A: *No, no. (They) Didn't do anything like this here yet.*

KII-Woman-1_village A

Q: *Like you (adults) prevent (child) marriages. Just like that, if one of their female classmates is about to get married, then all of them together went as a group and discussed with the (child bride's) parents. Has anything like this happened in your village?*

A: *No. Even if they went from my school... they didn't go. Or maybe the youth did not have the courage. (They) Did not go.*

KII-Woman-4_village C

Normative expectations and sanctions

It can be inferred from the data that the community at large does not expect girls to take collective action to prevent the violation of girls' rights. Mothers and fathers did not report any normative expectation regarding girls' taking collective action for girls' rights. However, adolescent girls reported that they anticipate that the community may express positive reactions should they attempt to take collective action for their rights, specifically against sexual harassment. This contradicts the widespread perception that a good girl never talks back to the harassers. Thus the girls are commonly advised not to react to the harassment.

However, adolescent girls anticipate that the community will appreciate or may not say anything negative against a girls' group taking collective action against a girl being sexually harassed.

M: Say, for example a girl has faced eve teasing (sexual harassment). Now she is asking for justice from the people of the village- that "I want justice."

All: Yes, yes.

M: Unmarried girls (adolescent) are banding together and asking for justice as one. What will the village people think of that?

All: They will think of it as good. They will get judgment (for the group of adolescent girls).

P4: They will see it as good because one girl is facing a problem and they (other adolescent girls) want to solve it. People of the village will think good of this.

FGD-Girls-2_village C

M: ... But most of the girls in your village, do they, in case of these occurrences like this, like you said in the school (when) you went for justice, did the village people not mind it?

P4: (They) did not say anything, no.

FGD-Girls-1_village A

Adolescent boys also hypothesized that if a girl is not willing to get married early and friends support her, then the people of the village will belittle these friends and their opinion will not be taken into account.

"Everybody will scold and say that, 'You are small, stay small (with small children). Why are you poking your nose in that business? You also have sisters. We will see (what you can do about it) when you (have to) marry her off.'"

FGD-Boys-4_village C

It was also reported that though there are adolescent girls who may want to take collective action to safeguard their rights to prevent early marriage, they cannot due to lack of permission from parents.

M: Is there a single person (adolescent girl) who is doing something for the (other) girls?

P1: We don't see any such (person)...

P4: They don't do so in our village because most girls do not override what their parent say.

FGD-Boys-3_ village B

Exception

Exceptions to the current empirical and normative expectations were found in the village A. Adolescent girls reported in an FGD that they have taken collective action against both child marriage and sexual harassment. Collective action taken against sexual harassment was found to be successful and against child marriage was found to be unsuccessful.

It was found that in one instance of sexual harassment, a group of girls initially approached the headmaster of their school, who advised them to take action by themselves. Therefore, the girls approached and talked with the parents of the perpetrator. The boy has not since disturbed the girl. Hence, it was found that permission from an authority figure may provide adolescent girls the impetus to take collective action. Moreover, this instance demonstrates that collective action by girls may be an effective method to stop violation of girls' rights to safety in similar cases.

"P4: We went in our school (to ask for justice). One of that is that there was ragging in our school. There was a boy- we were walking by. A boy, I mean he wrote a letter and threw it at my friend with a piece of brick (wrapped the letter around a small piece of brick and threw it). Now, who will we tell it to? At first we told our headmaster. Then (our) headmaster told us to go and tell by ourselves. Then we all went (to the boy's home) and told his parents. Since then he hasn't disturbed (her) again. This was one incidence from school."

FGD-Girls-1_ village A

Girls in village A also took collective action against child marriage of one of their peers. The girl had expressed to her classmates her intention to not be married and had expressed her aspirations regarding her career. Upon knowing of her situation and aspiration, her classmates collectively went to persuade her family to stop her marriage. Though the attempt was unsuccessful, this incident points to two major opportunities for collective action: the victim's aspirations and expression of wish to escape early marriage may be a key player in initiation of collective action to protect her rights; and, parents of the adolescent girls subjected to child marriage have the power to ignore such collective action against child marriage.

"P4: I mean, she had wishes to study. Everyone says- you know, she's a friend? She badly wanted to study. She was studying with the hope to become a doctor. After that, when her parents, I mean they (groom's family) came to see her, we went then and asked him (the father) that, "Uncle, don't give her in marriage. Your daughter has a lot of (high) hopes. Do not destroy them." He didn't understand. Then we went on the day of marriage (as well), he didn't understand. Then we left."

FGD-Girls-1_ village A

Reference Group

It was found that the reference group for adolescent girls in being able to take collective action for their rights was their parents and other figures of authority such as school headmasters. Permission and/or encouragement from these reference groups allow license to adolescent girls to take collective action.

5. Discussion

The baseline survey data enable us to check whether the arms of the CRCT were balanced and the baseline status of the outcome indicators for TP. Qualitative data provide us with deeper understanding of the social norms that TP intends to change to ultimately reduce child marriage and rich and thick description of the baseline status of indicators of interest. First of all, the findings show that judged by the background characteristics of the adolescent girl sample and the community sample, the study arms are more or less balanced except for in terms of religion of adolescent girls and community females and males, and primary occupation of community females. Thus, the analysis of impact will involve controlling for this factor.

In line with divisional statistics on child marriage our baseline survey finds very high rates of child marriage in the study sites. Thus, 25% of the women aged 20 to 24 got married before reaching 15, while 63% got married before the age of 18. It is noteworthy that a significant proportion of boys (7%) also had child marriage in these sites. Median age at marriage by age categories suggest a slow increase in this indicator both among women and men, which is in line with national statistics.

Both in quantitative and qualitative studies girls reported high aspirations for education. Thus, according to the survey 85% of them aspired to study beyond Grade 12. Almost no girls (<1%) wished to marry before 18. These high aspirations are not in tandem with the current levels of education of young women. Upper secondary school completion rate is just 26% (BBS, 2016). This gap suggests a huge unmet need for education.

Qualitative data suggest aspiration to delay marriage is linked to high educational aspiration. Most of the girls wanted to complete education before getting married. As they considered it unrealistic to expect permission from the marital family to continue education the only way to achieve their aspiration regarding education was to delay marriage. Despite this understanding, girls rarely negotiate marriage timing with their family as talking about own marriage is stigmatized in the community and takes a toll in the form of criticism by the community members and rebuke by the family members. On rare occasions, a girl may win over the parents' support in delaying marriage by negotiating higher education if the girl is good academically; has no romantic relationship; does not interact with males much; and focuses on negotiating higher education rather than delayed marriage.

About one in ten girls earned an income at the time of the baseline survey and a similar proportion owned assets that could generate an income, while one in five had savings. Despite low participation in income earning about eight girls in ten reported that their opinions were considered in household financial decisions. This is surprising given the tradition of not involving women much in household financial decision making. Approximately 41% of the currently-married girls aged 15-19 years participated in decision making regarding major household purchases in 2014 in Bangladesh (BDHS, 2014).

Majority of the girls perceive menstruation as something shameful and embarrassing. There are many superstitions linked to menstruation impeding girls' mobility. All girls reported using safe absorbents and disposing the absorbents safely. Knowledge on safe period, STI, and sources of RH services was particularly low among the girls. It is not acceptable to openly talk about reproductive and sexual health and particularly with the opposite sex. It is noteworthy, while 42-51% of girls felt confident that they could access SRH services if needed, 65% and 61% of girls could not name two places where they could receive such services, respectively. The qualitative data suggest that adolescent girls lack knowledge on where to obtain reproductive health services. Overall, the findings regarding SRH knowledge indicate that although the importance of ensuring reproductive health may be recognized and cultural stigma around menstruation may have been weakened, but the knowledge on where to seek these services might not be known to majority of the adolescent girls.

About one-third of the girl sample has high gender inequitable attitudes regarding gender roles, while about one-fourth reported low gender-inequitable attitudes. Majority of the girls (65-69%) endorsed control by family regarding mobility, dress code and who she can talk to. Support of girl-beating was higher among community men than among girls. Endorsement of gender discrimination was lower among men compared to women, which may be treated as counter-intuitive. This may be due to higher social desirability bias among men. These findings indicate the importance of sensitizing the girls and the community members on gender and particularly on adolescent girls' rights.

Girls' autonomy in terms of mobility is quite limited. A high proportion of the girls (70%) reported that they can visit friends/relatives in another village/town. Among the girls who could visit, about 73% required permission during the last visit and 83% were accompanied by an adult. Three in five girls can visit market with permission and with an adult chaperon. In terms of visiting health facility/provider and

fair/park three in five girls reported that they were able to visit those places. Majority of them required permission during the last visit and were accompanied mostly by an adult. A little less than a half of the girls were able to visit distant neighborhoods in the village with permission and with an adult. The qualitative study substantiates these findings.

However, education related mobility of the girls has radically increased due to special relaxation of restrictions, which allows girls to attend school and/or coaching in group or alone, inside or outside the village. Returning from coaching classes in the evening with a chaperon is largely accepted now. While a girl going to the village shop or market alone was something unheard of previously, it is now accepted in some villages to allow the girls to obtain supplies for school (10% of girls went to market alone for any purpose). Despite increase in girls' mobility over time there still is scope for improvement. The girls' options and attendance of public gatherings (61%) have also widened although they have to be accompanied to such events. However, mobility without any concrete purpose or for pleasure without a chaperon is strictly denied to a girl.

Social norm around a girl walking in and around the village alone

Among the five girls interviewed in each village, one to three girls walk in and around the village alone for pleasure. A girl walking alone within and around the village is criticized by the villagers as a bad girl. Some try to discipline her by rebuking. Some lodge complains to her parents. They demand that the parents take necessary measures for stopping such bad behavior. Most of the parents' scold, rebuke, and some beat the girls for transgressing mobility related norms for the girls. The villagers tend to believe that these girls are either involved in a romantic relationship or seeking to get involved in such relationship, which make them act in an unacceptable manner. This is why they strictly deal with the girls who walk alone for pleasure. This is a strong social norm and most people abide by it. In contrast to the other social norms explored in this study this particular norm has no exemption.

Social norm regarding a girl's interaction with opposite sex

Increase in educational attainment among girls and studying in mixed-sex schools have created many opportunities for unmarried adolescent girls to interact with males. Most of the girls do interact with males, usually keeping within the boundaries set by the community. Generally speaking, girls' interaction with opposite sex is perceived as something risky. Still, such interaction is approved under

certain conditions. The girls are allowed to interact with male relatives, male classmates, and schoolmates. Interaction with the two latter categories is permissible only if it relates to academics. Interaction with males cannot be frequent or lengthy or in private. Both the family and the community members are vigilant about interaction of the girls with the opposite sex. The sanctions are imposed by the family, community members, and peers. The sanctions by community members include, gossiping, criticizing, rebuking, and stigmatizing the girl and her family, putting pressure on the family to discipline the girl and getting her married, hampering marriage prospect by telling the potential groom's side about the girl's bad behavior. Sanctions by the family members include scolding and beating the girl, increasing vigilance and restrictions on her, and marrying her off quickly for protecting family honor. Thus, trying to promote interaction between the adolescent girls with the opposite sex without addressing negative attitudes of the community members and the sanctions may be fraught with higher risks of child marriage.

Social norm around bicycle riding and playing by girls

Most of the girls do not ride a bicycle and do not play games considered appropriate only for boys' as most of the villagers do not endorse any of these. Sanctions against these activities of the girls include gossip, criticism, making remarks expressing doubts about the girl's sexual identity. These sanctions imposed mostly by the villagers and especially by the elders, family members, and adolescent boys. However, although this has not been mentioned in the data explicitly, it is important to note that opportunities for girls to play and compete in football, cricket or handball tournaments nationally and prospects of being recruited in the national team have opened lucrative earning opportunities adding an incentive for the families to allow girls to engage in such sports. In fact, the current Bangladesh national football team has four members from a village in Rangpur (Prothom Alo, Aug 13, 2019).

Social norm against adolescent girls' riding the cycle has been relaxed in some areas. Attainment of education is a major driver for this relaxation. There is high variation in this indicator by village. Thus, for example, such relaxation was the strongest in village D, which does not have a higher secondary school requiring girls to go to another village to attend school. In this village one in two girls rides a cycle. In contrast, no girls do that in village C, which has its own secondary school not requiring girls to go a long distance for schooling. The strongest reference group for girls riding cycle is the parents. The role of positive deviants in demonstrating the benefits of cycling to school and coaching leading to

improvement in access to education was strong. There is evidence that parents in such a girl's neighborhood started seriously considering buying bicycles for their daughters for study purposes.

While the current norm is against allowing 14-16 year old girls or girls who had menarche to play both traditionally feminine and masculine games, these girls are allowed to play both types of games in the yard or in the school playground. They are essentially forbidden to play in an open place. According to the government's education policy the schools allow these female students up to G-6 (ages 12-13) to play. The fathers expressed their readiness to accept that the older girls will play boys' games inside the school. Thus, it seems that these communities are actually ready for a positive change.

Social norm regarding participation of a girl in decision making regarding own marriage

Most girls do not participate in decision making regarding her marriage. Talking about own marriage is considered as a mark of shamelessness, impudence and disobedience. The family and the community members do not allow such dialogue. Such girls are criticized and rebuked by the villagers. Her opinion is usually disregarded by the family. If otherwise, the family is criticized by the villagers for failing to conform to the norm. Marriage negotiation by a girl makes the family and villagers assume that she has a romantic relationship, which gives rise to gossip, labeling the girl as 'bad', and speeding up of her marriage. Therefore, girls rarely discuss their marriage with their guardians. Only girls actually having a relationship or desperate to delay marriage in the interest of higher studies may try to negotiate marriage in this non-conducive environment. The outcomes of such negotiations depend on whether the boyfriend is approved by the family; and whether the parents are also invested in daughter's education, believe in her potential to successfully pursue higher education instead of getting involved in a romantic relationship.

Social norm regarding collective action of girls

The girls reported surprisingly high self-efficacy in reaching their goals. As expected an overwhelmingly high proportion of the girls reported high connectedness with their parents (93-97%). Nine in ten girls reported good communication and negotiation skills and a similar proportion of girls claimed strong cohesion among adolescent girls. About one in ten girls participated in any event related to girls' rights.

A very high proportion of them reported high efficacy in undertaking collective action. Judging by the quantitative data it may seem that there is hardly much room for improvement in these indicators. However, our qualitative data do not support these findings. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of qualitative informants has neither seen girls taking collective action, nor has any normative expectations on this. A total of two instances of collective action by adolescent girls were found from one village, and one of these attempting to prevent early marriage of an adolescent girl failed making the girls not any more initiatives. It was found that parents of adolescent girls and socially powerful adult members of the society may be more successful in preventing child marriages and protecting rights of the girls. Positive outcomes may be achieved if they join forces with the girls.

Pulling findings on social norms together

From the exploration of social norms it was found that empirical expectations, normative expectations, sanctions, and people who impose the sanctions are common to all norms under investigation with little variation (Figure 14). Thus, the common assumption is that most of the girls in the community align with the social norms and do not approve any deviations. The elderly people in the community, the parents and even the adolescent boys imposed sanctions against any violation of the norms. Sanctions may be verbal including rebuking, scolding, criticizing, defaming, slandering, teasing, taunting, stigmatizing or ostracizing not only the girls, but also her family. Threats of physical chastisement by the community and family and actual physical abuse by the family members are not uncommon. When attempts at disciplining her fail the ultimate solution of the problem is deemed to marry her off immediately.

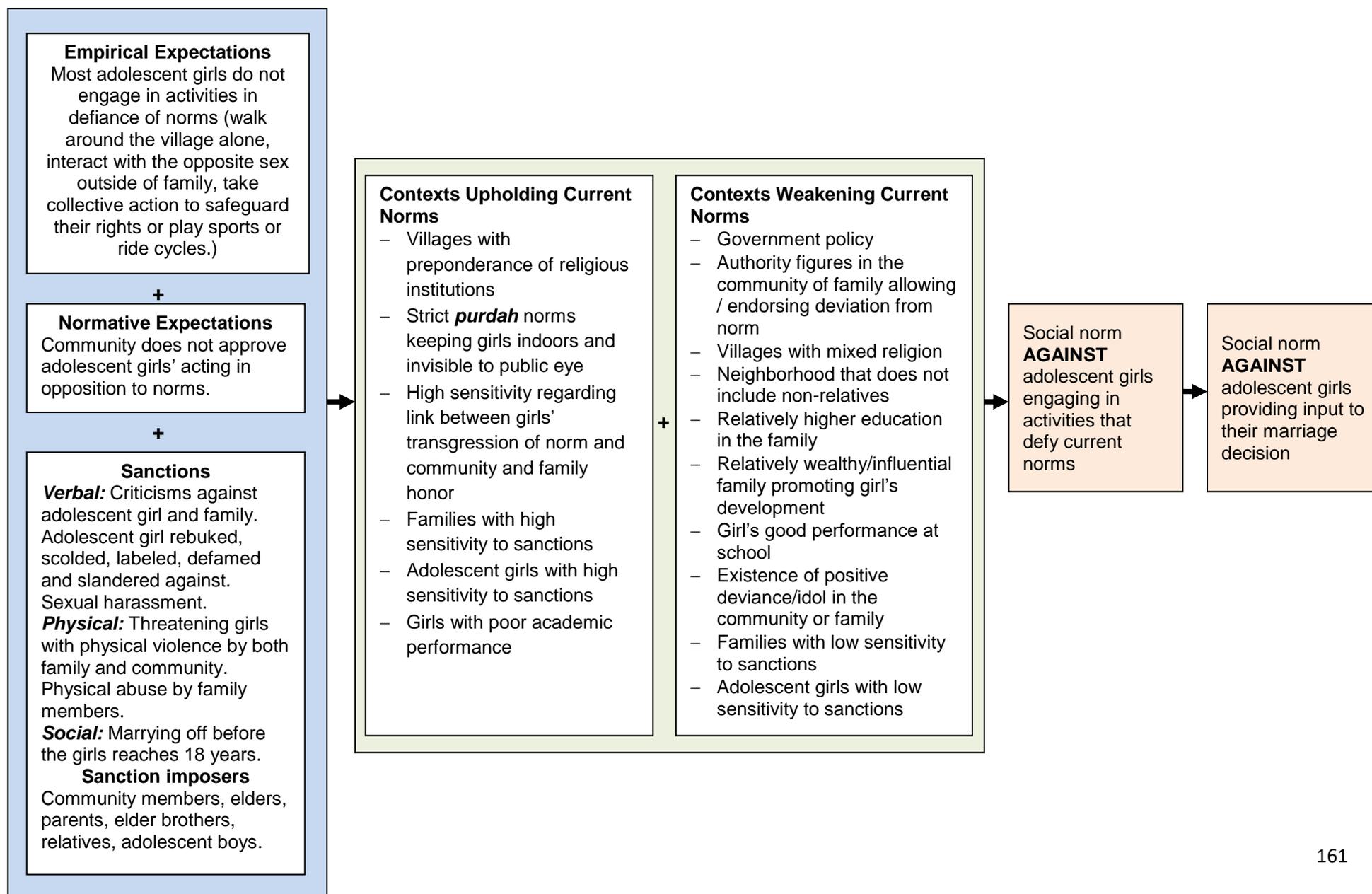
These social norms particularly strong in communities with relatively higher number of religious institutions (e.g., mosques, *maktabs* and *madrassas*) accompanied by strict *pardah* norms for females. Communities with strong honor culture linking practices of the females to honor of the community, family and individual also tend to strengthen these norms. Further, families and girls highly sensitive to the sanctions for defying these norms are more likely to closely follow the norms. Interestingly, these norms apply more to girls with poor academic records.

Government policies may weaken certain social norms. Thus, for example, we observed that as a result of the government circular to arrange girls' sports in primary schools the girls have been allowed to participate in annual sports and there was no disapproval of this in the communities. On the contrary, this has made men from one village ready to accept engagement of female students from secondary

school in sports if the government makes it mandatory. Thus, the government may become an important catalyst in changing social norms.

Presence of an authority figure in the community endorsing deviation from norm often weakens existing social norm. Communities with mixed religion, i.e., Islam and Hinduism, in this case tend to have relatively weaker social norms. Relatively wealthier, influential families with higher education are often more likely to adopt new ideas and behaviors and thus often allow girls from their family to deviate from the norms. Existence of an idol in the community or in the family sometimes encourages girls and their families to endorse new behaviors. Families and girls with lower sensitivity to sanctions are more likely to defy social norms. All of these inhibit deviation from social norms in majority of the girls and do not allow them to participate in decision making regarding own marriage.

Figure 14: Conceptual Framework Emerging from Data on Social Norms



Presence and comparative strength of norms

From investigation of the social norms in the four villages, it can be deduced that four norms, walking around the village alone, interacting with the opposite sex, decision giving regarding marriage, and riding cycle and playing sports- operate at various levels of strength and the norm of taking collective action for girls' rights does not exist (Table 30).

Norms operating without any exemption

It emerged from data that a girl walking around the village alone just for pleasure is not considered justifiable and sanctions are harsh against it. Defiance of the norm of not doing so is minimal suggesting lack of adolescent girls' agency in mobility in this regard. Thus, this norm seems to be strong.

Norms operating with some exemptions

All the other norms had some exemptions. While for an adolescent girl aged 12 to 16 years the norm is not to interacting with the opposite sex; not to ride bicycle or to play boys' games; not to participate in decision making regarding own marriage there are some exemptions made in each norm. Thus, for instance, a girl may interact with a boy if the purpose is related to education. Bicycle riding is accepted in some villages for going to school/coaching and thus saving time. Girls in primary school are allowed to play boys' games if the school is the organizer. A girl doing well in school and not mixing with boys may negotiate continuation of schooling delaying marriage without any penalty. There are some other exceptions as well. However, they do not operate across norms. Thus, it seems that education is a strong impetus, which allows deviation from all the social norms explored here.

In some villages there are signs of readiness to widely accept bicycle riding for the purpose of education and playing of boys' games in school by female secondary school students if the government makes it mandatory.

Although romantic relationship and elopement are highly stigmatized and closely linked to jeopardizing family honor their incidence seems to be on the rise. It was also clear from the data that reconciliation was often reached with the family soon after the marriage.

Table 30. Types of norms by exemptions

Norm without exemptions	Walking around the village alone for pleasure Interacting with the opposite sex
Norms with exemption	Riding and playing Participating in decision making regarding own marriage

Norm not in operation

From examination of evidence generated from qualitative investigation, we deduce that adolescent girls taking collective action for their rights does not exist as a social norm as. Indeed, out of the four villages studied, adolescent girls from one specific neighborhood from one village reported having attempted some collective action. While there is empirical expectation that girls do not take collective action to safeguard their rights, there are effectively no normative expectations concerning the same. Hence in the absence of injunctive norm and lack of crystallized sanctions, the social norm is not formed.

Limitations

There may be some limitations to the Conceptual Framework Emerging from the data on social norms (Fig. 14). As we zoom out from the micro-level data to come up with an overall picture we lose the details and much of the nuances and variations from village to village. However, this overall conceptual framework allows us to appreciate the main features of norms, their status, how they function, and what are the potential entry points for change.

6. Implications for policy and practices

Some key implications of these findings for policy and practices have been mentioned below:

1. Rates of child marriage in Rangpur remains one of the highest among the divisions of Bangladesh highlighting need for special attention of policy makers and program implementers.
2. Effective campaigns are needed around requirement in Islam for obtaining informed consent from the potential bride in marriage for changing the norm of silence of the girl in decision making regarding own marriage and creating an environment conducive to discussion.
3. Campaigns using female champions in education may be effective in the communities. Campaigns by schools may work as school teachers seem to be a strong reference group for the parents.
4. Simultaneously employment opportunities for girls after schooling must be widened. In this case as well campaigns using champions in employment need to be conducted for convincing the communities and parents of the benefits of female education and employment, which may also improve prospects of good marriage. Campaigns conducted by schools need to be encouraged.
5. There is evidence that in some villages the fathers are ready to approve participation of the girls from secondary school in traditionally masculine games within the boundaries of school. They suggested this can be easily achieved if the government made it mandatory.
6. Riding bicycle is not a taboo at least in one of the villages. In one village, demonstration of advantages in using it is pushing the other parents to seriously consider buying their daughters bicycles. At least in villages, where secondary schools are not available such demonstrations could easily be arranged for increasing use of bicycles by the girls.
7. The campaigns mentioned above need to be implemented at national, community and school levels.
8. Girls' movement needs to be built for collective action for protecting girls' rights. It is important to sensitize the community, parents and adolescent boys regarding girls' rights and agency and get the boys and parents involved in such actions for achieving the goals.

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7. Annex

Annex A. Village profile for qualitative component

Village A

Village A is an elongated crescent shaped village surrounded by farming land. The road connecting the *upazila* to the union is paved while the roads within the village are dirt roads. The neighborhoods are located at a distance from the main road of the village. To go from one neighborhood to another, residents must take the isles surrounding agricultural lands or take the narrow, dirt roads passing adjacent to other peoples' homesteads. There is a big field to the south of the village where boys hangout and play. There are some educational institutions within the village including: one pre-primary school by the Zakat foundation, one BRAC school, one primary school. There is no secondary school and college within this village. The village has no marketplace. There is a big market in a nearby village where the residents of this village meet their daily needs. There is one community clinic within the village.

Most residents from village A are engaged in farming. However, most villagers do not have their own land to cultivate. Some of them lease land and cultivate while others work as agricultural laborers on others' land. A small proportion of women are also involved in agriculture. Some women work as tailors and as NGO workers. Women from a few impoverished households work in garments factories in Dhaka and about 12-13 work in government Food for Work Program. Children from impoverished households engage in seasonal work as day laborers to harvest potatoes. Compared to the other studied villages, fewer children work in the fields in village A.

An overwhelming majority of the villagers are Muslims, with the remaining comprising of Hindus. There are four mosques and two temples in village A. Most adolescent girls in this village wear a scarf to cover their head when walking around. Those studying in Madrasa wear *burkah*. Girls walking within the village and especially within their neighborhood were not seen to be covering their heads. Adult women wear *burkah* when travelling outside the village, but those who work as agricultural laborers cover their heads with only the free end of the saree. Most adult women cover their head when walking within the village.

Village B

In village B, the road from *upazilla* to union level is paved while the roads within the village are dirt roads. As the village is situated right next to the Rangpur to *Pirgacha* main road, the road communication is good. However, the roads within the village are all dirt roads. This village has high population density and the neighborhoods are all close to each other. There are two primary schools, one secondary school, two madrasas and three coaching centers in Village B. The village has one marketplace situated at the entrance to the village where the residents meet their shopping needs. There is one community clinic in the village.

Most residents of village B pursue agriculture for livelihood. More residents of this village work as agricultural day laborers than in other villages. Most adolescent boys and some adolescent girls, who are from impoverished households and whose family don't have their own land, work on the fields during potato harvesting season. In some instances the whole family get engaged in potato harvesting. Men work as seasonal workers as rickshaw-pullers or in garments. Very few people are involved in business. Some work in agribusiness such as potato, maize and rice. Some operate a grocery shop, or furniture store. Among salaried profession, some are teachers. There is one agricultural officer and one village doctor in village B. Among the females, some work as tailor, others as lay laborers in agriculture and a few from impoverished households work as garments factories in Dhaka.

The villagers are exclusively Muslims. Many adolescent girls go to and fro school and outside the home with wrapped headscarves. All adolescent girls studying in the Madrassa wear *burkah*. More girls and adult women from this village wear *orna* or headscarf than in the other villages studied. When women go outside the village they wear *burkah*, but those who work as agricultural day laborers wear the free end of the saree on their heads.

Village C

The road from the union to the *upazila* to union is paved while the roads within the village are dirt roads. The village is elliptical in shape. Clusters of densely packed households are separated by empty fields and therefore neighborhoods are separated by quite a distance. Though there is adequate road communicability between *para1* and *para2*, the roads to and from *para3* and *para5* are in bad condition and the distances are large.

Educational institutions within the village include one primary school, one secondary co-ed school at a corner of the village and some mosque-based educational institution (number unknown). There are no colleges (grade 11-12) or other educational institutions. Most adolescent girls within the village study in schools within the village. Many adolescent girls from *para5* go to school in village B village as these are comparatively closer to their homes. There is no marketplace within the village. The nearest marketplace is approximately 1.5 kilometers away, and there is only one dirt road to access the market. There is one community clinic within the village.

Similar to village A while most residents of village C are engaged in agriculture most don't own land. The landless or land-poor villagers work on leased land or as day laborers on others' land. Some men are engaged in small, agribusiness such as potato, rice and maize. A few men hold salaried jobs, among them most are teachers and a few are *dolil lekhok* (deed-writers).

Compared to the other three villages, more women and children of this village work as day laborers for agriculture. They mostly work in potato fields during harvest period. Some also work on fields during the paddy harvesting season. Compared to other neighborhoods, more women from *para3* are engaged in agricultural day laborers. A few women from *para1* and *para4* work as agricultural day laborers. Some women work as tailors and as health workers with NGOs or the government. Some women are engaged in politics and there is a collective of four women who run a tea-stall and grocery. A few women from impoverished households work in garments factories in Dhaka.

The population of this village is 100% Muslim. There are ten mosques in this village. Some adolescent girls, particularly those who are deemed good-looking and have religious restrictions from the family wear headscarf on the way to and from the secondary school within the village. Those going to the next village to study were all found to be wearing a headscarf or *orna* (2.5 yards of fabric used to cover the chest and body on top of salwar suit) and those who go to madrassa wear *burkah*. Adult women wear *burkah* when travelling outside their own neighborhood or village, but those who work as agricultural day laborers wear the free end of the saree on their heads.

Village D

Village D is divided into three parts by a road, a rail line and large agricultural fields. Households to the east of the rail line comprise *para1* and households to the west of the rail line are part of *para2*. The main road to *Pirgacha* runs through *para2* and therefore access to the *upazila* and nearby village is easy. The

road from the *upazila* to the union is paved, but the roads within the village are dirt roads. There is one Zakat Foundation school, one public primary school, one madrassa and three coaching centers in this village. There is no secondary school or college in this village. There are some small grocery stores within the village where daily needs can be purchased. The village has no marketplace, and the distance to the nearest Bazaar is approximately 1.5 kilometers and the community clinic is situated nearby the Bazaar.

In village D, majority of the residents' main source of livelihood is agriculture. Both men and women were found to be working as day laborers. Women of *para1* are mostly engaged in agriculture as day laborers and women in *para2* are mostly engaged in sewing and embroidery, fan-making, running grocery shops, etc. Adolescent girls and boys of impoverished households work to harvest potatoes in season, though the number is less than in village C. Some villagers work in garments factories in Dhaka, and this is much larger compared to the other three villages. Some work as rickshaw-pullers in Dhaka. A few people are engaged in business and service. The number of van and auto-rickshaw drivers is higher in this village than in the other three villages studied.

Most adolescent girls travel and go to school wearing headscarves. Those who go to the madrassa wear *burkah*. Fewer adolescent girls are veiled in village D than in village B. When travelling out of the village, women wear *burkah*, but those who work as agricultural day laborers cover their heads with free end of the *saree* to go to work.

Table A1: Village Profile for the four villages in the qualitative study in Rangpur

Variable	Village A	Village B	Village C	Village D
Population	1,178	1,469	2,092	2,003
No. of Households	273	329	438	441
Road type from Upazila to Union	Paved	Paved	Paved	Paved
Road type within the village	Dirt roads	Dirt roads	Dirt roads	Dirt roads
Bazaar or marketplace	0	1	0	0
Community Clinic	1	1	1	1

Electricity available (% HH)*	92.00 (23)	96.00 (24)	91.67 (22)	84.00 (21)
Main source of livelihood	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Religion, % (N)				
Muslim	88.12 (1038)	100.00 (1469)	100.00 (2092)	98.90 (1981)
Hindu	11.88 (140)	0	0	1.10 (22)
Others	0	0	0	0
Religious institutions				
Mosque	5	4	10	3
Temple	2	0	0	0
Educational Institution (No.)				
Pre-primary school (Zakat Foundation/ BRAC school)	1	0	0	1
Primary school	1	2	1	1
Secondary school	0	1	1	0
Madrasa	0	2	4, Mosque-based education system	1
Coaching Centre	0	3	0	3
NGOs Active in Village	BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, TMSS and SDF	BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, TMSS and SDF	BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, TMSS	BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, TMSS and SDF
No. of youth clubs	0	1	1	1

*: From Survey data

Annex B

Table B1. Reported self-efficacy of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019. N = 1,244

Items	Arm												Full sample (N=1,244)			
	Control (N=430)				LTP (N=398)				FTP (N=416)				Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident
Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident	Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident	Not at all confident	Somewhat Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident					
Achieving life goals despite challenges	7.21	14.88	26.98	50.93	4.02	13.32	28.89	53.77	3.85	14.90	26.20	55.05	5.06	14.39	27.33	53.22
Achieving desired education	3.72	12.33	20.23	63.72	1.51	7.04	22.86	68.59	1.92	5.29	22.12	70.67	2.41	8.28	21.70	67.60

Accessing healthcare if ill	30.93	37.44	16.98	14.65	24.62	35.93	22.86	16.58	26.44	32.93	20.91	19.71	27.41	35.45	20.18	16.96
Leaving home if needed without permission	22.33	32.33	18.14	27.21	25.38	21.86	22.11	30.65	20.67	28.13	25.00	26.20	22.75	27.57	21.70	27.97
Speaking about girls' problems in community	5.58	25.35	30.47	38.60	5.28	20.10	28.64	45.98	4.81	18.51	27.64	49.04	5.23	21.38	28.94	44.45
Refusing marriage if not desired	6.51	17.44	23.02	53.02	5.53	11.06	24.62	58.79	3.61	15.63	24.76	56.01	5.23	14.79	24.12	55.87
Working for money or in income generation if wanted	3.49	4.42	40.23	51.86	3.02	4.02	30.65	62.31	3.13	3.85	36.06	56.97	3.22	4.10	35.77	56.91
Working for money or in income generation if family objected	30.00	13.72	44.88	11.40	25.88	12.56	47.24	14.32	20.91	17.07	46.15	15.87	25.64	14.47	46.06	13.83
No item dropped																

Table B2. Attitudes of community women and men aged ≥25 years about menstruation at baseline, Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N=626)

Items	Arm															
	Control (N=215)				LTP (N=214)				FTP (N=197)				Full sample (N=626)			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Menstruation is a shameful and embarrassing situation for girls	18.60	13.02	26.51	41.86	13.08	18.69	28.97	39.25	16.24	16.24	27.41	40.10	15.97	15.97	27.64	40.42
One should not enter into the kitchen during menstruation because of unclean rituals	17.21	16.74	27.91	38.14	19.16	20.09	27.10	33.64	12.69	22.34	29.95	35.03	16.45	19.65	28.27	35.62

A mother can discuss menstruation with her daughter	3.72	5.58	23.26	67.44	3.27	7.48	26.17	63.08	1.02	7.11	19.80	72.08	2.72	6.71	23.16	67.41
Items dropped																
A father can discuss menstruation with her daughter																
Contraceptives should not be made available to unmarried girls and boys																

Table B3. Attitudes of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 regarding gender, Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Arm						Full sample (N=1,275)	
	Control (N=443)		LTP (N=412)		FTP (N=420)			
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Gender roles								
A woman's role is to take care of her home and family	28.44	71.56	26.21	73.79	20.71	79.29	25.18	74.82
A woman has to have a husband or son or some other male kin to protect her	13.77	86.23	17.96	82.04	19.29	80.71	16.94	83.06
It is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss	48.98	51.02	48.06	51.94	41.90	58.10	46.35	53.65
A man should have the final decision about important household issues	62.08	37.92	59.47	40.53	59.29	40.71	60.31	39.69
Only when a woman has a child, she is a real woman	58.69	41.31	52.43	47.57	49.52	50.48	53.65	46.35
A wife should always obey her husband	38.60	61.40	42.48	57.52	39.52	60.48	40.16	59.84
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	67.72	32.28	63.59	36.41	59.29	40.71	63.61	36.39
Dropped items								
Women/girls should work outside								
Control by family members								
A family member is justified in -								
Telling a girl which friend she can or cannot talk to or see	36.57	63.43	33.74	66.26	33.33	66.67	34.59	65.41
Not allowing a girl to go outside alone	19.64	80.36	20.39	79.61	19.05	80.95	19.69	80.31
Telling a girl what kind of dress she can or cannot wear	29.57	70.43	27.43	72.57	27.14	72.86	28.08	71.92
Telling a girl what to do all the time	34.99	65.01	28.40	71.60	24.52	75.48	29.41	70.59
No item dropped								
Justification of girls beating								
A girl deserves to be beaten when she talks to a boy	74.72	25.28	79.13	20.87	78.33	21.67	77.33	22.67
A girl deserves to be beaten when she goes out to play	85.55	14.45	88.83	11.17	86.67	13.33	86.98	13.02
A girl deserves to be beaten when she stays out late	65.91	34.09	71.12	28.88	68.81	31.19	68.55	31.45

A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't help in household chores	76.07	23.93	76.70	23.30	77.38	22.62	76.71	23.29
A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't obey elders	35.21	64.79	37.86	62.14	37.14	62.86	36.71	63.29
A girl deserves to be beaten when she fights with others in class	35.21	64.79	37.86	62.14	37.14	62.86	36.71	63.29
A girl deserves to be beaten when she fights with brothers and sisters	62.98	37.02	60.19	39.81	60.48	39.52	61.25	38.75
A girl deserves to be beaten if she replies back when harassed by boys	94.81	5.19	92.72	7.28	94.05	5.95	93.88	6.12
Dropped items								
A girl deserves to be beaten when she doesn't complete her homework								

Table B4. Attitudes of community women and men aged ≥25 years regarding gender, Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N=626)

Items	Arm												Full sample (N=626)			
	Control (N=215)				LTP (N=214)				FTP (N=197)							
Gender Roles	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A good woman never questions her husband's opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them.	8.37	19.07	40.47	32.09	6.54	18.22	37.85	37.38	6.09	19.80	37.56	36.55	7.03	19.01	38.66	35.30
A woman's role is taking care of her home and family.	3.26	7.44	26.05	63.26	5.14	12.62	21.03	61.21	4.57	6.09	20.30	69.04	4.79	8.79	22.52	64.38
Sports like football, cricket, and cycling are not for girls.	18.14	22.33	19.07	40.47	17.29	17.29	20.56	44.86	15.74	17.26	23.35	43.65	17.09	19.01	20.93	42.97
Women/girls should work outside.	22.79	21.40	35.81	20.00	26.17	21.50	28.50	23.83	21.32	23.35	33.50	21.83	23.48	22.04	32.59	21.88
Items dropped																
A woman has to have a husband or sons or some other male kinsman to protect her.																
It is important for a man to show his wife/partner who is the boss.																
A man should have the final decisions about important household issues.																
A woman is the one who decides when to have sex with his wife.																
Only when a woman has a child is she a real woman.																
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.																
A wife should always obey her husband.																

A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.																	
Gender Discrimination																	
It is important that sons and daughters have equal education	0.47	1.86	13.95	83.72	0.93	4.21	21.50	73.36	2.03	3.55	22.34	72.08	1.12	3.19	19.17	76.52	
Daughters should be sent to school only if they are not needed to help at home.	60.47	25.58	9.30	4.65	59.81	28.04	7.94	4.21	55.33	30.96	10.15	3.55	58.63	28.12	9.11	4.15	
If there is a limited amount of money to pay for tutoring, it should be spent on equally on daughters and sons.	0.47	5.12	22.33	72.09	0.47	3.74	27.57	68.22	1.52	3.05	31.47	63.96	0.80	3.99	27.00	68.21	
Since girls have to get married they should not be sent for higher education.	50.70	20.47	18.14	10.70	50.47	19.16	21.50	8.88	40.61	23.35	23.86	12.18	47.44	20.93	21.09	10.54	
Items dropped																	
It's better to have more sons than daughters in a family.																	
Women should equally engage in politics as men.																	
Control by family members																	
A family member is justified in -																	
Telling her which friend she can or cannot talk to or see	13.95	16.74	29.30	40.00	18.22	17.76	28.04	35.98	10.15	20.30	33.50	36.04	14.22	18.21	30.19	37.38	
Not allowing her to go outside alone	8.84	6.98	31.63	52.56	9.81	9.81	37.85	42.52	4.06	6.09	43.15	46.70	7.67	7.67	37.38	47.28	
Telling her what kind of dress she can or cannot wear	9.77	8.84	29.77	51.63	13.08	10.28	32.71	43.93	6.09	9.64	38.07	46.19	9.74	9.58	33.39	47.28	
Telling her what to do all the time	11.16	7.44	41.86	39.53	14.02	10.75	44.86	30.37	8.63	13.71	46.70	30.96	11.34	10.54	44.41	33.71	
No items dropped																	

Justification of girls beating																	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she talks to a boy	28.37	32.09	26.05	13.49	30.84	32.71	25.23	11.21	27.92	34.52	27.41	10.15	29.07	33.07	26.20	11.66	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she goes out to play	30.70	39.07	22.79	7.44	36.45	37.85	19.63	6.07	23.86	42.64	25.38	8.12	30.51	39.78	22.52	7.19	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she stays out late	23.26	37.21	26.05	13.49	23.83	39.25	24.77	12.15	16.24	42.64	28.93	12.18	21.25	39.62	26.52	12.62	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she doesn't help in the household chores	31.63	41.86	20.47	6.05	36.45	35.51	22.43	5.61	28.43	39.59	27.41	4.57	32.27	38.98	23.32	5.43	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she doesn't complete her homework	20.47	27.91	39.53	12.09	24.77	33.18	30.37	11.68	14.21	37.56	35.03	13.20	19.97	32.75	34.98	12.30	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she doesn't obey elders	11.63	26.51	35.81	26.05	16.36	24.77	35.98	22.90	10.15	26.40	39.09	24.37	12.78	25.88	36.90	24.44	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she fights with the others in class	21.86	35.35	35.81	6.98	24.77	34.11	32.71	8.41	19.29	36.55	39.59	4.57	22.04	35.30	35.94	6.71	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she fights with brothers and sisters	26.51	35.81	33.95	3.72	24.30	43.93	27.57	4.21	22.34	41.12	33.50	3.05	24.44	40.26	31.63	3.67	
A girl deserve to be beaten when she replies back when harassed by boys	61.40	28.37	7.91	2.33	63.55	26.17	6.54	3.74	58.88	31.98	8.12	1.02	61.34	28.75	7.51	2.40	
No item dropped																	

Table B5. Communication skill of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1,275)

Items	Arm						Full sample (1,275)	
	Control (N=443)		LTP (N=412)		FTP (N=420)			
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
I understood what the other side was saying	6.77	93.23	2.67	97.33	2.38	97.62	4.00	96.00
I understood what was important to the other side	18.28	81.72	15.05	84.95	14.29	85.71	15.92	84.08
I think the other side understood me clearly	9.71	90.29	4.61	95.39	4.76	95.24	6.43	93.57
The messages exchanged were easy to understand	6.77	93.23	3.64	96.36	2.62	97.38	4.39	95.61
The other side responded to my questions and requests quickly during the interaction	12.42	87.58	10.44	89.56	8.81	91.19	10.59	89.41
I was willing to listen to the other side's perspectives	7.90	92.10	6.80	93.20	8.33	91.67	7.69	92.31
When the other side raised questions or concerns, I tried to address them immediately	8.58	91.42	5.58	94.42	5.24	94.76	6.51	93.49
I was nervous talking to the other side	91.20	8.80	92.96	7.04	89.76	10.24	91.29	8.71
I felt comfortable interacting with the other side	8.13	91.87	6.31	93.69	10.24	89.76	8.24	91.76
The other side seemed comfortable talking with me	4.74	95.26	4.85	95.15	6.19	93.81	5.25	94.75
Dropped items								
We clarified the meaning if there was a confusion of the messages exchanged								
The conversation ran smoothly without any uncomfortable silent moments or I did not notice any uncomfortable silent moments								
One or both of us kept silent from time to time								
I felt the other side trusted me								
I felt the other side was trustworthy								

Table B6. Confidence of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 regarding negotiation, Rangpur, by arm, 2019. N = 1275

Items	Arm												Full sample (N=1,275)			
	Control (N=443)				LTP (N=412)				FTP (N=420)							
Confidence about -	Not at all confident	Some what Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident	Not at all confident	Some what Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident	Not at all confident	Some what Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident	Not at all confident	Some what Confident	Fairly confident	Strongly confident
Negotiating with parents/ guardians about own education	2.48	7.00	18.28	72.23	0.97	5.83	17.23	75.97	1.67	5.24	20.00	73.10	1.73	6.04	18.51	73.73
Negotiating with parents/ guardians about own marriage	8.35	20.09	24.83	46.73	5.10	13.11	35.44	46.36	3.81	16.90	28.81	50.48	5.80	16.78	29.57	47.84
Negotiating with your parents/ guardians about own mobility	3.16	16.25	24.15	56.43	1.70	13.59	24.03	60.68	2.62	12.86	26.90	57.62	2.51	14.27	25.02	58.20
No item dropped																

Table B7. Group cohesion among adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019. N = 1275

Items	Arm						Full sample (N=1,275)	
	Control (N=443)		LTP (N=412)		FTP (N=420)			
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Overall, I am very attracted to this group	7.45	92.55	8.98	91.02	10.48	89.52	8.94	91.06
I feel like I belong to this group	4.06	95.94	4.85	95.15	4.52	95.48	4.47	95.53
The friendships and associations I have with other people in my group mean a lot to me.	8.80	91.20	10.44	89.56	10.48	89.52	9.88	90.12

If the people in my group were planning something I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing.	6.77	93.23	6.31	93.69	7.62	92.38	6.90	93.10
If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my group.	4.06	95.94	4.61	95.39	5.71	94.29	4.78	95.22
I think I agree with the most people in my group about what is important in life.	8.58	91.42	8.25	91.75	11.43	88.57	9.41	90.59
I believe my group mates would help me in an emergency.	4.51	95.49	5.58	94.42	5.48	94.52	5.18	94.82
I feel loyal to the people in my group.	3.61	96.39	5.83	94.17	4.52	95.48	4.63	95.37
I borrow things and exchange favours with my group mates.	6.09	93.91	7.28	92.72	6.43	93.57	6.59	93.41
I would be willing to work together with the others on something to improve my group.	4.74	95.26	4.85	95.15	5.71	94.29	5.10	94.90
I like to think myself as similar to the people who are in this group.	8.13	91.87	7.04	92.96	8.10	91.90	7.76	92.24
A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in this group.	10.38	89.62	11.65	88.35	14.76	85.24	12.24	87.76
I regularly stop and talk with people in my group.	7.90	92.10	7.04	92.96	5.48	94.52	6.82	93.18
Items dropped								
I visit with my group mates in their homes.								
Given the opportunity, I would like to leave this group.								
I rarely have group mates over to my house to visit.								

Table B8. Confidence on collective efficacy village people of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019. N = 1275

Items	Arm															Full Sample (N=1,275)				
	Control (N=443)					LTP (N=412)					FTP (N=420)					Not sure at all	Som ewh at uns ure	Neit her sure nor uns ure	Some what sure	Comp letely sure
Percentage of girls are sure about-	Not sure at all	Som ewh at uns ure	Neit her sure nor uns ure	Some what sure	Com plete ly sure	Not sure at all	Som ewh at uns ure	Neit her sure nor uns ure	Some what sure	Comp letely sure	Not sure at all	Som ewh at uns ure	Neit her sure nor uns ure	Some what sure	Com plete ly sure	Not sure at all	Som ewh at uns ure	Neit her sure nor uns ure	Some what sure	Comp letely sure
The girls and others in your community could prevent child marriage	4.97	4.97	2.48	46.05	41.53	3.16	4.37	2.43	46.84	43.20	4.29	1.43	4.29	48.57	44.29	4.16	3.61	2.12	47.14	42.98
The girls and others in your community could prevent violence against girls	5.87	3.16	2.48	49.89	38.60	4.37	4.61	0.73	46.36	43.93	5.48	3.81	1.43	45.24	44.05	5.25	3.84	1.57	47.22	42.12
The girls and others in your community could try to achieve girl's right	6.55	4.29	2.26	48.53	38.37	4.37	3.88	2.91	47.82	41.02	3.57	2.14	2.14	42.86	49.29	4.86	3.45	2.43	46.43	42.82
The girls and others in your community would help each other during needs	0.45	2.26	1.35	31.60	64.33	1.46	0.97	0.49	26.46	70.63	1.19	0.48	0.24	22.62	75.48	1.02	1.25	0.71	26.98	70.04
No item dropped																				

Table B9. Connectedness of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 with their parents in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 1275)

Items	Arm						Full sample (N=1,275)	
	Control (N=443)		LTP (N=412)		Control (N=443)			
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
You feel very close to your parents	6.77	93.23	3.88	96.12	3.81	96.19	4.86	95.14
Your parents spend time with you	9.48	90.52	5.58	94.42	6.19	93.81	7.14	92.86
You can approach your parents for any problem that you face	7.67	92.33	6.07	93.93	6.43	93.57	6.75	93.25
Your parents care about you	2.93	97.07	1.21	98.79	1.67	98.33	1.96	98.04
Your parents help you with your homework	5.64	94.36	5.83	94.17	7.14	92.86	6.20	93.80
You feel comfortable to talk to your parents	10.61	89.39	5.34	94.66	7.62	92.38	7.92	92.08
You are very important to your parents	4.97	95.03	2.18	97.82	2.86	97.14	3.37	96.63
No item dropped								

Table B10. Gender discrimination in the family of adolescent girls aged 12 - <16 in Rangpur by arm, 2019 (N = 102)

Items	Arm						Full sample (N=102)	
	Control (N=38)		LTP (N=37)		FTP (N=27)			
Percentage of girls disagreed or agreed with -	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Your parents pay attention to your problems as much as they pay attention to your brothers' problems	5.26	94.74	8.11	91.89	7.41	92.59	6.86	93.14
Your parents listen to your opinion as much as they listen to a brother's opinion	10.53	89.47	16.22	83.78	22.22	77.78	15.69	84.31
Your parents treat you equally to your brothers in terms of how much work you have to do for the family (total time for household labor, field work, etc)	47.37	52.63	35.14	64.86	37.04	62.96	40.20	59.80
Your parents consider your study as important as your brother's	15.79	84.21	13.51	86.49	0	100	10.78	89.22
Dropped items								
Your parents give you similar freedoms for your mobility as they give your brother								

Table B11. Social Norms among girls

Statement	Statement
Items retained	Items dropped
Most people in my village will not approve if a girl goes to the bazaar alone.	Most people in my village do not approve of girls who study after marriage.
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl rides a bicycle for leisure (i.e. not to go to school)	Most people in my village will approve if a girl studied as long as boys.
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl plays football or other outdoor sport.	Most people in my village will approve if a non school going, unmarried girl works outside home to earn money.
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl walks alone to visit her friend in her free time	Most people in our village will approve of a girl under 18 getting married if her family honour is at risk
-	Most people in my village will approve if a girl expresses her opinion regarding her marriage to her parents.
-	Most of the people in my village will not approve if a boy regularly cooks food for his family
-	Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl speaks openly about menstruation
-	Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl advocates for girls' needs in the community.

Table B12. Perceived Social Norms' of community members towards adolescent girls

Statement	Statement
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Items retained	Items dropped
Most people in my village will approve if a non-school going, unmarried girl works outside home to earn money.	Most people in my village will not approve if a girl marries before she is 18.
Most people in my village will approve if a married woman goes out of house to work.	Most people in our village will approve of a girl under 18 getting married if her family honor is at risk.
Most people in my village will approve if a girl expresses her opinion regarding her marriage to her parents.	Most people in my village will approve if a girl had a love marriage.
Most people in my village will not approve if a girl goes to the bazaar alone.	Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl rides a bicycle for leisure (i.e. not to go to school)
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a boy regularly cooks food for his family.	-
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl speaks openly about menstruation.	-
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl advocates for girls' needs in the community.	-
Most of the people in my village will not approve if a girl walks alone to visit her friend in her free time.	-

Table B13. Perceived Social Norms' towards parents' behaviour regarding adolescent girls

Statement	Statement
Items retained	Items dropped
Most people in my village will approve if parents allow their daughter to express her opinion regarding her marriage	Most people in my village will approve if parents marry off their daughter before she is 18.
Most people in my village will not approve if parents allow their daughter to go to the bazaar alone.	Most people in my village will approve of parents' marrying off their under-18year old daughter if the family honor is at risk.

Most of the people in my village will not approve if parents encourage their son to regularly cooks food for his family.

-

Most of the people in my village will not approve parents allow their daughter to speaks openly about menstruation.

-

Most of the people in my village will not approve if parents allow their adolescent daughter to advocates for girls' needs in the community.

-

Most of the people in my village will not approve if parents allow their adolescent daughter to ride a bicycle for leisure (i.e. not to go to school).

-

Most of the people in my village will not approve if parents allow their adolescent daughter to play football or other outdoor sport.

-

Most of the people in my village will not approve if parents allow their daughter to walk alone to visit her friend in her free time.

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