

# Empowering the young: Transforming the communities, a case from Pakistan

Asma Khalid<sup>1\*</sup>, Khalil ur Rehman<sup>2</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Academic Manager, Faculty of Rehabilitation & Allied Health Sciences, Riphah International University

Vol. 01, Iss. 01, June 2022, pp. 45-57. doi: [10.52567/ijcb.v1i01.138](https://doi.org/10.52567/ijcb.v1i01.138)

## Abstract

Gender based violence is an important social issue and males are generally considered perpetrators due to prevailing patriarchal norms globally. Most of the global rights movements focus women empowerment which is highly relevant important strategy. However, men engagement has a pivotal role not only in social, cultural, normative multiracial aspects of life but also in terms of gender equity and to end the gender base violence. There are also certain initiatives engaging men and young boys. Therefore, it is important to assess the effectiveness of interventions focused young boys and girls to make them aware on gender-based violence. The aim of this research is to assess the effectiveness of an intervention which focused young boys and girls for awareness on rights, protection issues and empowerment through capacity building on communication and leadership skills. Findings highlighted the involvement of locals, the members of the same communities, played a vital role in successful implementation of the project. The involvement of young boys and girls in their own cities gave fresh energy to the efforts of gender equality. The involvement of teachers and education department also supported the effectiveness of the activities carried out.

**Keywords:** Gender, Adolescence, Youth Engagement, Gender Based Violence, Men Engage, Community Mobilization

---

**Received on:** 04-03-2022

**Revision on:** 11-06-2022

**Published on:** 30-06-2022

### Correspondence:

Asma Khalid

Email: [asma.khalid@aiou.edu.pk](mailto:asma.khalid@aiou.edu.pk)

**Copyright:** Authors retain copyright and grant the IJCB right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 License that allows others to share the work with an acknowledgment of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal

## Introduction

Males are generally involved in gender base violence, many studies viewed them as the perpetrators of violence whereas females are more likely to be the victims (Edwards, 2010). Gender norms and power dynamics expect young men or boys an ideal or a real man, who is powerful, dominant, uncompromising, not seek help, be sexually active, and in control (Fine, 2005). However, to negate such negative norms and thoughts, there are men who do not get fascination through violence or don't feel like showing power as an integral part of masculinity, as majority of men do not condone the use of violence (APA, 2018). In this regard, efforts to engage men and boys to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) have been increasing rapidly throughout the world (Wall & Kristjanson, 2005). Research emphasizes involvement of men and boys as a key violence-reduction strategy (Carlson et al., 2005; Flood 2005; Kilmartin et al., 2008). Therefore, men engagement has a pivotal role not only in social, cultural, normative multiracial aspects of life, more specifically in educational programs, political, religious, social activists and advocates in terms of gender equity and to end the gender base violence (Flood, 2015). Studies indicate men who are engaged parents are less frequently perpetrators of partner violence (Minerson et al., 2011; WHO 2012; Chan 2009). Emerging evidence are also there in which effective strategies have been adopted for universal prevention of gender violence in school settings and effective bystander interventions on university and college campuses (WHO, 2012). Similarly, intervention applied to the health sector achieved better outcomes in FP programs. (United Nations, 2006). "The Do Kadam" intervention comprised gender transformative life skills education combined with cricket-coaching helpful in egalitarian gender attitudes and abhorrence of violence against women and girls (Justus, 2021). Similarly, three community-based skills-building programs to delay child marriage among adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh (Amin, Saha, & Ahmed, 2018). Efforts to engage men in the prevention of men's violence against women show increasing global reach and mobilization, rising community endorsement, and increasing sophistication, amongst all self-efficacy, an awareness of male privilege, support men's violence preventative actions.

Long-term improvements in well-being along with improved quality of relationships among couples could break the cycle of violence. Culturally adapted gender-transformative interventions with men and couples can be effective at changing deeply entrenched gender inequalities (Doyle, 2018). Invitational narrative practice including respect, competency, ethics, restraining ideas, shame, and effects, to engage men in addressing their use of violence towards women and children.

## Purpose of the study

The aim of this research is to assess the effectiveness of interventions focused young boys and girls to make them aware on gender-based violence (GBV). This article is derived from a broader project which focused on men and boys to accelerate efforts to end gender-based violence. This project was completed in Sindh, Pakistan. In this intervention-based project, social issues such as knowledge, attitude, practices, and perception concerning boys and men role in the eradication of gender-based violence and child marriages were focused. This project has conducted many awareness sessions on gender equality, women economic empowerment, gender-based violence, parenting, happy family and positive masculinity across Sindh.

## Methods

This research study is based on qualitative exploratory research design and assessment was carried out to understand the effectiveness of training, community sessions, and community and media campaigns related to GBV. Data was collected through six Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with community members (males and females) and 22 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with adolescents, who were Kiran+ were conducted. The intervention was executed by means of media campaign, training of adolescents (Kiran+), master trainers, and community facilitators – community members and teacher- through various gender transformative approaches. Each component played its role for specific purpose to meet the overall objectives of the project.

A list of Kiran+ (male and female), was requested from Organization A, and Organization B who were involved directly into this project to get a sample for the research study. From this list, key informants (Kiran + and community members) randomly invited to participate in discussion/ interview. The qualitative research protocols were followed in true letter and spirit. Organization A and B both facilitated the researchers in the field.

Qualitative data was analysed iteratively using NVIVO software (version 11). Content and thematic analysis of transcripts was done by the researchers. The task of coding and analysis began immediately following the transcription, allowing the identification of data codes through inductive and deductive techniques. The defined codes were organized and sorted by relevant themes for reporting. Sub-themes emerged from the data through an iterative process and codes were refined as needed during the analysis.

## Key Findings

The capacity building of the Kirans (capacitated adolescent boys and girls) was one of the most important components of this project and these capacitated beneficiaries were responsible to conduct sessions in the targeted communities. The following section discusses the research findings with respect to the target respondent group, their capacity building, sphere of effects – individual, familial, and community – facilitating factors and challenges they had faced during the awareness creation, effectiveness of the strategies adopted for the intervention and effects of the sessions upon the community members.

### Kiran+

Kirans were young boys and girls who were selected from schools and colleges for training sessions. Kiran+ were adolescent age boys and girls selected from the already existing pool of the Kirans. Kiran and Kiran+ were provided with the life skills based education and leadership skills in previous interventions of Organization A. The Kiran+ were provided with refresher trainings on the issue of child marriage and gender-based violence and they were assigned to conduct step down sessions in their respective communities.

### Engagement as Kiran+

The process of joining of adolescent boys and girls in the project was explored with the key informants of this research and how they become Kiran+. The findings of this research revealed that in almost all of the cases, Organization A team included these adolescent youth with the consultation of school teachers and upon individual interest of the adolescent girls and boys.

Prior to formal engagement of adolescent youths, consultation and permission were taken from the parents as well. In this regard one of the female Kiran+ narrated her engagement in this project in relation to her previous experience as being Kiran – those were also known as Fatima. She shared,

“It has been almost 8 years, in the start the officials of Organization A given us name of Fatima – as a Kiran- and I am engaged with them since then. Now, I am identified as a Kiran+ and promoted to master trainer.”

This revelation concerning start as a Kiran or Fatima transformed this adolescent as a master trainer where she has been giving training and advocating ensuring rights of adolescent girls and boys. In the same context of concerning engagement of the adolescent, one of the male Kiran+ revealed the process in detail. He shared in the following manner:

“I was doing my matriculation when the Organization A team visited our school. They met with our principal and teachers and introduced the objectives and goals of Organization A’s project. They requested the principal to permit student to become a part of this project. Initially, they [Organization A] trained the teachers and after that they [Organization A] asked principal to permit students for the participation in training programs. So, the Organization A choose us as a Kiran+. After that we attended their trainings and through those training, we learned about Kiran+’ roles and responsibilities.”

#### Capacity building of Kiran+

Kiran+ also explained the trainings’ topics and content and the importance of these topics in their lives and for the betterments of communities. The findings of this study revealed that the key informants of this research attended a wide range of trainings and learnt contents of the training in relation to practical social problems of their communities. It was explained by a male Kiran+ in this manner:

“We came to know how to live in home, how to live with elders, how to speak, don’t make a quick decision, how to behave with siblings, especially female in home, how to speak with parents.”

He categorically revealed the contents of gender training and put emphasis to respect them, understand their educational needs and due rights. The same respondent further elaborated about the training conducted for child marriages, gender-based violence and gender equality and felt self-responsible to educate and aware the people in his surroundings (Male Kiran+).

In the same context recalling the contents of training, another male Kiran+ said: “First two days training was on early child marriage. After that we took a break for some time and then new project “Yes I Do” was started in which we were engaged. In which we were trained about community mobilization in which they taught us that how we can mobilize and sensitize community about the harms of early child marriage (Male kiran+ FGD).”

On the other hand, female Kiran+ also recalled the similar contents of the trainings like child marriage, advocacy, law concerning child marriages, parenting, positive masculinity, gender equality, gender-based violence, harassment and teen age pregnancies. In this regard, one of the senior Kiran+, who has been doing her master from the university, revealed that:

“My first training was on child marriages, laws about child marriage and the consequences of child marriages. After that the training on advocacy was delivered to us. We received training on advocacy, positive parenting, positive masculinity, gender equality, gender based-violence, violence, harassment and laws related to harassment and consequences of harassment. We also attended training on self-safety that how we can save ourselves from harassment and how we can counter such things (Female Kiran+).

The difference between the Kiran+, who were in university and the Kiran+ who were student of intermediate, was evident from the contents shared by the respective respondents. Newly selected Kiran+ had shared fewer contents and upon inquiry it was clear that the matter was related to the number of training and the engagement with communities. Those who had shared a much-detailed account of the training contents were engaged repeatedly in the communities to conduct the sessions as compared to newer ones.

On the other hand, female Kiran+ key informants shared that gender roles and gender equality contents of the training were important for them. According to them, gender equality and girls’ rights should be treated equal to boys and girls may not face violence as being girl. Other female Kiran+ also shared that puberty and happy family contents of the training were important for them to learn new information and how we as girls can cope with things happened in puberty.

#### Change in knowledge of Kiran+

As mentioned in the previous sections that Kiran+ male and female had recalled the contents of the training. They extensively shared that how these trainings influenced their knowledge. They have given very clear understanding concerning all the topics and contents of the trainings. Indeed, for some of the topics they were having very much clear knowledge like child marriages, gender-based violence, and happy family as compared to other topics like parenting.

With regards to early marriages, male and female Kiran+ had very clear knowledge that young people should not get married at a young age. They also know that it is not only against the law that the girl or boy may get marriage before age of 18; rather it has other issues which limit, restrict and negatively influence the children who may get marry before the age of 18. Due to child marriage one can loss his/her chance of education, can have early age pregnancies which ultimately harm the health of mother and child. Similarly, they were having knowledge that due to child marriage girls usually acquire the roles and responsibilities which burden their growth and cause psychological pressure upon them. In fact, children are not supposed to have such responsibilities which may harm their psychological and physical wellbeing and health. In this regard one of the female key informants said:

“The child marriages deprive girl’s right to get education. The girls neither mentally nor physically prepares for the marriage. So, the society put on her the burden of raising the children and taking care of the husbands. In addition to this, the biggest threat of the child marriage is the young age pregnancy. The baby may also face the blood or calcium deficiency as well (Female kiran+).”

Since male and female Kiran+ attended the trainings, they considered themselves carrying responsibility to deal with family matters which create gender inequality or promote harmful gender practices. They contextualize their self-understanding and positioning in relation to knowledge which they had acquired in trainings. It is persistent to state that the training had

developed their capacities how to behave in the family affairs and matters. For this they had given credit to the training about the “Happy Family”. In this regard one of the female Kiran+ said,

“The basic concept of the happy family’s training was that if we are living in a family what should be the appropriate behavior that we should adopt.”

Male and female Kiran+ mentioned that in the happy family, member may share economic burden, the voices of the members should be heard, family member may sit together and spend time with each other, they may have consultation on the family matters may trust and love each other. In addition to this, the knowledge from the trainings also provided them confidence to conduct the session in community. One of the females Kiran+ said,

“After the sessions I told the content of trainings to my family. So, my family members [my mother, father and siblings] gradually started listening and understanding my view points as well.”

#### Change in attitude and practices of Kiran+

The findings of this study reveals that the transformation in the attitudes and practices of Kiran+. They appeared as a face of change and the success of the project. The knowledge they acquired in the training and the roles they had played in the communities shaped, transformed and gave them chance for the re-defining of gender and worldview, at least at the individual level. This research study keenly asked the questions to learn how they had played their role as being Kiran+ in personal, familial and societal spheres. In all the way, they had placed themselves as energetic, motivated and with full of confidence. They admitted that Organization A has provided them a platform where they can prove their abilities and foresee their future based on struggle and rights. It was mentioned by one of the female Kiran+,

“I see myself as today in comparison to myself of 5-10 years before. I have gone through the changes which I have never imagined. I am very much confident person now, I got a lot of knowledge and encouragement, and we have learnt to face people and respond the questions”. In this aspect, Kiran+ see their self-positioning in the society which is completely different from the position determined by the traditional harmful gender-based practices. However, the most significant change which came into their attitudes from these trainings were the courage to build their paths and ensure their rights to acquire the self-defined goals, status and position for themselves.

The positive change in the attitudes of the Kiran+ guided them towards the practices that not only helped them in their lives but also positively shaped the lives of their siblings and families. During the interview they explained that how that positive change has converted them into a person who is responsible, aware, and motivated to uplift their family. One of the female Kiran+ said,

“Even after getting first training, I felt confident; Since then I had started to take care of my younger siblings and bringing them to schools and shopping grocery independently.”

A female Kiran+ revealed her story:

“I have four brothers and I am the single sister. Most of the times, I had conflicting relations with my brothers. They used to restrict me and even were not willing for my outdoor movement. However, since I had attended training, I learnt and

acquired knowledge. The most important thing I felt confidence to speak with them and convince them rather to have conflict with them. I reshaped my relationship with them and discussed the issues. Ultimately, the relationship turned much more positive and now they are supporting me for my education and activities which I carry out as a Kiran+.”

The data gathered from the male Kiran+ also revealed that these trainings significantly transformed the attitude and practices of the male Kiran+ as well. The most significant change was reported the confidence and ability to talk with communities. Apart from this they were having clear standing and understanding that child marriages should be eradicated, gender-based violence should not be practiced and the rights of adolescent’s girls and boys should be ensured. They were also in a great favor of female education and their economic wellbeing’s. In other words, they were true supporter and categorically reflected the title of the project where emphasis was given as to engage men and boys to counter gender-based violence. One of the male Kiran+ revealed the story from his family where he had not only taken the responsibility to care for younger siblings but he also ensured equal education for his sister. In this regard he shared,

“Before training I was didn’t show any interest in my younger siblings’ education. But after training I started giving more attention to their education and started giving them tuitions by myself .”

Another male Kiran+ shared that:

“My sisters didn't go to school and they could not study because of the environment. The family used to say that the environment is so bad, it doesn't allow to study, that's it, then the information I got from this training, after that I gave all the facilities to my sisters and look after for all her matters. Brought them those books which are available in the school and from those books started studying again .”

The effects of the trainings are also evident from the transformation of gender roles, particularly, the roles adopted by the male Kiran+. Some of the respondents shared that since they had attended the training, they feel responsible to support their mothers and sisters in household chores. The male Kiran+ do not take supporting in household chores against the masculinity as they supposed to feel before attending the trainings. They also expressed satisfaction with the transformed gender roles and self-image. In this regard one of the key informants revealed:

“Earlier, we were irresponsible at home and we didn't have consciousness to support our sisters and mothers. Since, we got the training, we learned about the concept of gender equality and equity, like helping in cooking, washing clothes and some other support. When our mothers and sisters used to do these work, we started working with them. Meaning we also realized that if we want to make our home a happy family, we have to work together. This means we are all equal at home and we have to help each other and then we can become a happy family.”

The capacity building of the male and female Kiran+ also compel them to self-organized and be conscious about their future. Therefore, some of the Kiran+ respondents shared their future goals and associated positive development in themselves with as an effect of training. In this regard one of the male Kiran+ said,

“Training created awareness in us that making goals in life are very important to achieve something. Since, then I had planned what I have to do in my life. After changing my own self, I conveyed this message to my siblings and relatives.”

#### Roles and responsibilities of Kiran+

Female and male Kirans were engaged to conduct the awareness sessions in schools and community. This project provided a great learning opportunity for them and boosted up their moral and confidence. All the Kirans+ appeared confident and discussed their roles in great details. They also shared mechanism of their work. All the acquired details helped us to analyze their importance with reference to the objectives of the intervention and we found that Kirans proved to be very effective intervention. One female Kiran said,

“During the training the trainer boosted our confidence and were much motivated to share the message to others. I arranged session with females, for that purpose.”

Similarly, the male Kiran said,

“Our responsibility was to create awareness in our society”.

In the context of roles and responsibilities of Kiran+ this study reveals that at first level Kiran+ plus targeted their families and tried to influence their knowledge, attitude and practices. While at the second level they always shared information about their vital role for the improvement of knowledge, attitudes and practices of the community people. As it was mentioned by a female Kiran+,

“After the sessions I told the content of trainings to my family. So my family member [my mother, father and siblings] gradually started to understand my views and then they had supported me to conduct community sessions with peers.”

In the same context, a male Kiran+ further added,

“Being a Kiran we were assigned the role to apply the training knowledge in our surrounding and I started it from my family. It was my responsibility to discuss early child marriages and its consequences to our family members. And after that we were responsible to convey the message to our neighbors, relatives and to the wider community and society.”

The data reveals that the interventions were carried out in structured way to trace the progress of the activities. Apart from the moral responsibilities which Kiran+ were carrying to conduct community sessions and to create awareness. They were also given targets and were monitored to ensure performance of their effective role in the communities. These targets were like to convey the message to 100 people or conduct certain number of sessions in the communities. Such targets and accountability have improved the sense of responsibility among Kirans. It has also been observed that this accountability and connectivity with teacher and organizations’ officials played a significant role in their personal capacity building and same time framing their world view. Specifically, it is important to highlight that they had developed their social capital and human capital which has been helping them to continue their further education and acquire knowledge particularly related to the topic discussed above. One of the male Kiran+ said:

“When we received the trainings, our challenges had been increased. The organization gave us small targets like at the start we had to convey all these

messages to 100 peoples in the village. We went door to door and tried to convince people.”

Same as like female Kiran+, male Kiran+ were also set targets to conduct 3-4 sessions for community awareness. They were free to adopt any strategy as mentioned by a female Kiran+ who approached community notables for conducting the sessions in the communities. The same way, male Kiran+ shared that they used to engage their friends and community members to gather participants for the sessions. In this regard one of the male Kiran+ said, “The mechanism was that we requested people to attend the session with the help of friends and community’s members.”

As mentioned above, that Kiran+ were also supposed to conduct the sessions in schools to convey a message to fellow students. In the school sessions, they taken help from their teachers. For all such sessions they used to prepare and carry printed material such as pamphlets, leaflets with themselves. Some of the Kirans looked too interested and involved in their work that they even tried to measure the change by conducting surveys in the community. In this regard, one of the females Kirans said:

“We were given target to convey the message to hundred people. We also conducted the surveys of those hundred people to study the change in them. Initially these surveys were individual as it was my curiosity to know either people are listening or understanding my message or not. Either they are observing the message or not. I have started conducting small surveys, when I visited my relatives, I checked the effect of these sessions on them.”

#### Challenges and hurdles for Kiran+

The females and males Kiran+ shared barrier and hurdles which they had faced during their work. First of all, Kiran+, as being adolescent girls and boys, were perceived as too young by community to talk and conduct sessions on such sensitive and taboo issues. The women community argued with female Kiran+ that “you are too young to carry these kinds of discussions.” Another female Kiran+ added,

“Look at them! They are too young and what type of message they are giving; visiting our houses and spreading the kind of information which we never heard before, we are not in the view to permit our daughters to join these trainings or sessions.”

In the closed society of Pakistan, the above-mentioned challenge was not only for young girls, but young boys also faced similar reaction from the community. One of the Male Kiran+ stated, “We [Kiran+] were not having appropriate age to discuss these matters with elders.”

It clearly shows that community was not ready to discuss with such young adolescents to whom they consider nothing and not worth to listen.

Secondly, getting permission from the parents to be Kiran+ was also a challenge for some of the female Kiran+. Although they were having support from their teachers but still it was not an easy task for them to convince their parents. It was perceived that to be Kiran+ was something additional and separate from the regular study and one should not be engaged in such activities. As it was shared by a female Kiran+:

“I faced a lot of challenges as my father is very strict regarding education, like he said if you want to study just focus on the study. He is against the co-curricular activities, when I talked to my father and briefed him about the program and seek

permission to attend the training, he upfront refused me to join such training. Then, I talked to mother, and she talked to father, and he only permitted me to attend two or three trainings.”

Facing criticism from their immediate and extended relatives was the third main hurdle for female Kiran+. As per cultural norms and settings, this is the common perception that being girls, they have limited roles and indulging into the awareness creation on the sensitive topics is not allowed. Therefore, close relative takes it as a matter of family honor and respect. As mentioned by a female Kiran+,

“Our relatives were too much against these trainings and awareness creation in the communities. For them it was an issue of family honor and respect. They used to ask my parents why she is visiting people’s houses and going door to door.”

Fourthly, religious understanding of the community on child marriage was another barrier which Kiran+ faced while working in the community. One of the male Kiran+ explained the issue:

“The major concern of the participants was always about perceptible disagreement of religion and country laws regarding early child marriage. They said “we have been instructed by the religious scholars that when a boy or girl reaches puberty, we should arrange his/her marriage and you are telling us that according to medical science and the law of country, the boy/girl should not get marry before reaching to 18 years of age.”

Overall, religious and cultural barrier were too complicated and deep rooted in the conscious of the community and there is a need to have rigorous efforts to change the mind sets of people living in the rural and semi-urban areas. One of the female Kiran+ said,

“People usually didn’t like our discussion when we talked about the issues faced by their family member; their children and their brothers and sisters. They particularly dislike the discussion when we talked about their daughters and sisters to get them education and care their health. They disliked us when we talked about the rights of female; about the female right of education, right of choosing profession, their shelter rights etc.”

## Discussion

The purpose of all interventions in this project namely media campaign, training of adolescents (Kiran) on gender transformative approaches, was to bring change into normative practices and replace harmful gender norms with positive deviance practices regulate at household and community level. The core thematic areas were gender equality, women economic empowerment and positive masculinity. In this study, we assessed the effects at different level (individual, household and community levels) and how each intervention contributed effectively to achieve desired objectives of the broader project as discussed above.

It is interesting to note that the sessions conducted by Kiran+ challenged communities’ previous concepts specifically concerning to violence. Before these sessions they never had contextualized their actions as perpetrator, specifically talking about the actions of male. In this regard one of the male community members shared:

In these sessions we learnt about violence, like a man abuses his wife. So, at first we didn't know what violence was and when we got here [to attend the session] we found out that violence really is something. Psychological violence means that

if we hit our wives in front of the children, it will settle in the minds of the children.”

From the above quote it is noted that on the first hand they got a chance to revisit their own understanding of violence and probability to avoid such violence, and on the other hand they had contextualized violence in front of children and its possible effects in the future lives of the children. Similarly, they also had in mind its effects on the relationship as being father and children what perception and understand they would have in future life. So, in this context these sessions have given them the chances to revisit their understanding and consider their action for the betterment of individual and familial relationship.

The key informants of this research recalled significant amount of knowledge concerning the topics of child marriages, its laws and its effects on the health of children. They were fully aware why child marriage should not be practiced and what had happened in their communities and how it negatively influenced the health of mother and children. In this regard, one of the female community members shared,

“We got a lot of information such as one should not get married at a very young age. Early pregnancies and have more children, the mother gets affected.”

Another female community members gave example from her surroundings and shared a story:

“The women participation in these sessions were high as they have seen gender-based issues in their surroundings. Recently a young girl of 13 year got married. She had given a birth to a baby girl in the very first year of her marriage. Next year, She again got pregnant and during delivery she died. Because she did not had adequate care, she was too young and weak to bear the delivery related issues.”

It was interesting to note that that community women were linking one social problem with the others and articulated the narration in a way which shown a clear understanding how they understand social problem revolve around the suppression of women. One of the community women linked gender-based violence with child marriage in the context of roles and responsibilities which one girl as a wife supposed to perform at household level.

The findings of this research also revealed that community people had clear understanding about the topics like happy family and rights for girls to get education and may participate in economic activities. Community people contextualize that education is important for girls and they should be given equal chances to complete their education. For this purpose, parents are needed to trust upon them, let them go for education and finding the jobs. In this regard, one of the male key informants revealed that, “the girls should be trusted to get education.” In the same context, a female community member contextualized the women and girls’ economic empowerment and its importance for a family. She shared that when women and men both work and earn money, then ultimately it positively influences households. It brings economic prosperity and better future for children. Then parents can have better resources and can give better education to the children.

The acquired knowledge from the sessions significantly changed the attitude and practices of the communities. Some of the community members shared their stories where they had changed their actions since they learnt about the consequences of harmful practices. The data also revealed that male community members were very keen about the rights of the girls. They appeared as advocators of girls’ rights. They were having positive understanding about the girls’ education, jobs and were against child marriages. They had acknowledged that previously they

were having wrong practices and girls' education was not their priority. But now, they realized the importance of education for girls and were willing to support the girls for continuation of their education and their empowerment.

## Conclusion

The research study conducted to find out the effectiveness of project interventions of Organization A. It has come across during the study that the involvement of locals, for example members of the same communities, played a vital role in successful implementation of the project especially capacity building and awareness raising activities. Specifically, the trainers, teachers, community facilitators and young Kirans all were engaged for their communities. This created the local level ownership on the one hand and localized strategy with cultural considerations on the other. This helped in effective dissemination of knowledge and local acceptance at the same time.

Most of the activities of the project were carried out with in community settings. The community facilitators were not given any pre-decided dates for the community sessions rather the whole planning was left on them which helped them feel empowered to decide the schedules and communicate to the Organization A as per their convenience and availability. Finally, a very important role in the project was given to adolescent boys and girls (Kirans). This involvement of young boys and girls gave fresh energy to the efforts of gender equality. The Kirans, reported that the issues of violence and inequality were observed and faced by them on regular basis and the awareness about these helped them understand the underlying causes. It was clearly evident that youth worked very hard to support the project objectives.

Kirans usually faced an objection of being too young to talk about these issues and the community members being engaged for community sessions expected something in response from the implementing organization. On the basis of the findings of the study, it can be suggested that the process of implementation of these activities may be continued for sustainable change in the society. Further to this, some future studies are also required based on further intervention to identify the sustainable solution especially, the sustainability of the network of young advocates named Kirans.

## Bibliography

- American Psychological Association. (2018). Health disparities in racial/ethnic and sexual minority boys and men. Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/pi/health-disparities/resources/race-sexuality-men>.
- Amin, S., Saha, J.S., & Ahmed, J.A. (2018). Skills-Building Programs to Reduce Child Marriage in Bangladesh: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63 (3), 293-300.
- Carlson et al., (2005). Strategies to engage men and boys in violence prevention: A global organizational perspective. *Violence Against Women*, 21 (11), 1406-1425.
- Chan, K. L. (2009). Sexual violence against women and children in Chinese societies. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 10(1), 69–85.
- Doyle et al., (2018). Gender-transformative Bandebereho couples' intervention to promote male engagement in reproductive and maternal health and violence prevention in Rwanda: Findings from a randomized controlled trial. *PLoS One*. 13(4), doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0192756
- Edwards, A. (2010). *Violence against women under international human rights law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fine, C. (2005). *Delusions of gender: How our minds, society and neurosexism create difference*. UK: Icon Books.
- Flood, M. (2015). Work with men to end violence against women: a critical stocktake. *Cult Health Sex*, 17(sup2), 159–176.
- Flood, M. (2005). Changing Men: Best practice in sexual violence education. *Women Against Violence*. 18, 26–36.
- Justus, R. (2021). Do Kadam Barabari Ki Ore (Do Kadam) [Two Steps Towards Equality]. Social Norms Learning Collaborative Publisher.
- Minerson T., Carolo H. , Dinner T., & Jones C. (2011). *Engaging men and boys to reduce and prevent gender-based violence: Issue brief 2011*. Status of Women Canada (Prepared on Behalf of the White Ribbon Campaign).
- Kilmartin CT, Smith T, Green A, Heinzen H, Kuchler M, Kolar D. (2008). A real-time social norms intervention to reduce college mens' sexism. *Sex Roles*, 59, 264–273.
- Murphy, M. J. (2010). An Open Letter to the Organizers, Presenters and Attendees of the First National Conference for Campus Based Men's Gender Equality and Anti-Violence Groups (St. John's University, Collegeville, MN, November 2009). *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 18(1), 103–108.
- Wall, D., & Kristjanson. L. (2005). Men, culture, and hegemonic masculinity: understanding the experience of prostate cancer. *Nursing Inquiry*, 12, 97-97. doi: doi-org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1111.j.1440-1800.2005.00258.x.
- WHO (World Health Organization) (2012). Understanding and addressing violence against women: Intimate partner violence.
- United Nations (2006). *Ending violence against women: from words to action. In-depth study on all forms of violence against women*. Report of the Secretary-General. New York, United Nations General Assembly, 2006.