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ORDINARY MEN'S ENACTMENT OF MASCULINITIES:

Exploration of Construction of Masculinities in Extreme
Poor Households of Northeast Bangladesh



European Union





SUMMARY OF ORDINARY MEN'S ENACTMENT OF MASCULINITIES:

Exploration of Construction of Masculinities in Extreme
Poor Households of Northeast Bangladesh

CARE's programming in Bangladesh is developed based on greater understanding of gender dynamics that critically analyze the underlying causes of marginalization, discrimination and forms of violence against women. CARE has learnt from experience that gender equality can only be sustained through broader changes in the social and institutional environment, which includes changing men's attitude and institutional practices. In response to this, CARE designed the Engaging Men Initiative (EMI) with the aim to challenge conventional gender norms and promote more equitable relationships among men and women. The Engaging Men Initiative is embedded into the European Union funded Food Security for the Ultra-Poor in Haor Project which was launched in northeast Bangladesh in 2009.

In order to engage men and boys in CARE's women's empowerment work, there is a need to identify appropriate strategies and corresponding activities, which is impossible without a strong understanding of the relevant context specific practices of men and their meanings. To reduce this knowledge gap, CARE has conducted an evidence-based study on men's gender-based perceptions, attitudes and practices along with developing a deeper understanding of various forms of masculinity. The study aims to unpack how the construction of masculinities and associated practices relate to, and affect, the different change domains of women's empowerment, namely enhanced decision-making, reduced violence against women (VAW) and strong social movements. Using the insights on different practices and beliefs, this study locates common constructions of masculinities at the community level. The study then tries to unfold how certain forms of masculinity are reproduced in institutional practices, through politics and development practices, while others are marginalized. Improved understanding of how these attitudes and behaviors is closely linked to the construction of masculinity will be very important in helping CARE and its partners to develop strategies to include men as positive change agents and partners for women's empowerment in the future.

Therefore, the broad objective of this research is to generate in-depth understanding of how the construction of masculinities and its practices relates to and affects different change domains particularly in hard-to-reach contexts of rural areas of northeast Bangladesh. In order to achieve this objective, the research is concerned with the following specific objectives:

- *to gain a deeper understanding on the construction of masculinities and practices within the household that influences household decision making in relation to the use and control of assets, choices in relation to family welfare, women's mobility and access to (selected) services, women's participation in political spaces (such as Union Parishad) and development process;*
- *to examine the perceptions of men regarding women's empowerment related work and challenges/barriers of male participation as allies in such work;*
- *to understand male bias/practice of masculinities that act as a barrier to women's participation in the political spaces such as Union Parishad and amongst selected public service provider institutions (local level health and land administration);*
- *to make future recommendations for future programming and improving EMI project strategies/messages.*

Methodology

The present study draws on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the perception, attitude and practice of men and women with regard to gender-based inequalities. These techniques were employed across the three project working districts of Netrokona, Kishoreganj and Sunamganj in Northeast Bangladesh. Quantitative data is collected through a unique survey method which incorporates a specially developed Masculinities Measurement Scale (MMS). The MMS is designed to evaluate changes in men's practices with specific assessment of practices relating to violence against women and women's empowerment. The MMS is made up of eight components, of which the three components of Perception, Attitude and Practice were used for this study. This survey is used to collect information from 900 people from nine villages across the three districts. These 900 people make up 450 couples and are randomly selected from the study area.

In terms of qualitative approach this study employs a combination of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews, case studies and life history interviews. A community profile is generated through PRA methods (village transacts walk, village mapping, mobility mapping and timelines) in order to get a primary understanding of socio-demographic factors that may have influenced gender relations in the villages. As part of this process, a total of 27 FGDs and In-Depth Interviews were conducted in the same nine villages where the quantitative survey took place.

Unfolding Masculinities: Discursive Constructions of Singho Rashir Purush, Valo Manush and Sadharon Purush

Through extensive discussions with both men and women, this study found that the population has formed a construction of

two general types of men, each with their own distinctive characteristics and construction of masculinity. Broadly, these groups are comprised of; *Singho rashi'r purush* (Leo or Real Men) seen as traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinity and *Valo manush* (Good Men) associated with kind-heartedness and respect for all and forming a subordinated masculinity. Through conversations, this study sought to understand which constructions the men and women admired most and how this relates to *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) from the ultra poor community who form a marginalized model of masculinity.

Singho Rashi'r Purush or the Leo Man (Real Man): A Model of Hegemonic Masculinity

Key Characteristics of a Singho rashi'r purush (Leo Man):

- He is the sole income earner and provides for his family
- He is dominant and his power is shown in his physical appearance
- He has complete authority over his family
- He is physically strong with sexual prowess
- He never shows his emotions in public
- He ensures family honor at all times and restricts the mobility of women in his family

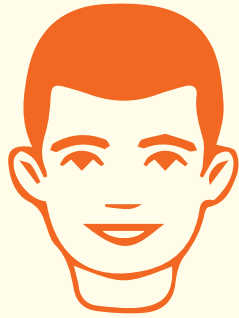
Although *Singho rashi'r purush* (Leo Men) are traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinity, they come from the upper classes and, unlike the Real Man, do not take part in physical labor but earn their income through their power over others. A Real Man, being from the middle or ultra poor community, is seen to enact his power through violence when necessary, including against his wife, whereas a Leo Man never needs to use violence himself.



Valo Manush or the Good Man: A Subordinated Model of Masculinity

Key Characteristics of a *Valo manush* (Good Man):

- He is laborious and tries to earn an honest income
- He always listens and respects others
- He takes responsibility for his family and property
- He offers help to others in times of crisis
- He is patient, soft-hearted and sometimes shows his emotions openly
- He never shows violence to others or punishes his wife
- He does not discriminate between sons and daughters and in-turn they respect him and seek his guidance



This study found that *Valo manush* or Good Men are viewed as oppositional to *Singho rashi'r purush* (Real Men). Due to the patriarchal society in Bangladesh, many of the characteristics of the Good Men are seen as feminine. As Good Men do not use violence or display physical power, they are easily dominated by Leo or Real Men and are therefore viewed as a subordinated model of masculinity.

Sadharon Purush or the Ordinary Man: A Marginalized and Complicit Model of Masculinity

Sadharon purush or the Ordinary Man makes up the majority of the men in the study area. The men and women in the study area harbor a deep respect for the model of Good Men but most of them are drawn to the hegemonic model of the Leo Man or Real Man characterized by power,



aggression and control over others. Many of the study participants explained how for a poor family the world is full of struggle which can only be overcome using force and power to dominate others. As a result, many men aspire to be real men and women want the same for their male counterparts, as indicated by the following quote:

"...I want to help others... want to be a good man ...but how can I help others when I myself starve with my children?"- Akram, Sunamganj

Despite these desires, many *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) refuse to take the risks, such as conflict or violence, associated with being dominant and instead support the hegemonic construction by taking advantage of being a member of the biologically powerful sex. The *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Man) largely belongs to the ultra poor communities and as a result can become a victim of oppression or violence from more powerful men. In this way, *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) develop a construction of marginalized masculinity, which follows the ideals of hegemonic masculinity of dominance within their family but with reduced power outside the household.

The study reveals a society-wide admiration for the model of manhood constructed under *Singho rashi'r purush* (Leo or Real Men) which did not necessarily correspond with any actual man in their community, but dominated their ideals, desires and fantasies. Despite the deep respect many study participants had for *Valo manush* (Good Men), they recognized that in life it was the men who displayed the traditional traits of hegemonic masculinity, in the form of power and control over others, who were the winners in life. This research suggests that the majority of EMI participant men therefore adhere to the hegemonic model of masculinity while at the same time being marginalized by the upper class men. It is consequently important to understand these ordinary men and women's perceptions, attitudes and practices to help understand this model of masculinity further.

Perceptions and Practices

Followed by the investigation of different forms of construction of masculinities in the study area, it also explores manifestation of masculinities in perception and practices of men and women in relation to areas critical for women empowerment. The findings are given below:

Son Preference

The findings suggest prevalence of son preference is still high in the study area. About 41% of both men and women think that men do not discriminate against girls in the family whereas 85.8% men and 73.4% women think that parents with sons are more powerful.



73.4% women and 85.8% men think parents with Sons are more powerful

Both men and women consider sons as the candle of lineage and, in contrast, daughters are considered as the arrival of a bundle of responsibilities and tension for their parents. And men still believe boys are the symbol of strength. Findings from the quantitative survey reinforce the qualitative findings. In practice, men would still prefer sons

for family lineage, though the number of women is identified as responsibly taking care of the old aged parents. This stronger son preference has direct and indirect influence in many other significant areas in relation to women empowerment, as the study reveals.

Marriage, Family life and Violence Against Women

Early Marriage

Son preference and lack of recognition of women's potential by men influence many aspects of family lives. For instance, most of the men would marry their girls or sisters off during economic hardship as a prime duty. The following quote is a critical reflection of a father suggesting that even when there is a high level of awareness, people are forced to apply early marriage as a strategy to mitigate poverty pressures:

"By advertizing and motivating people not to marry off daughters before 18 years of age, government and NGOs are creating problems for parents. Formerly, we could lessen our economic burden by marrying off daughters at an early age, but now many people come to thwart our initiative, for which parents are to bear the burden for few more years."
-Atique, Netrokona

Similar to this perception, the practice of early marriage is also high where 65.4% of male respondents said they would marry off their daughters below eighteen years if they find a 'better groom' for their daughters. The pressure of acting as a real man seems to act as a conduit to early marriages. On one hand, a father, to become a real man, would marry off his daughter earlier to perform his duties. On the other hand, a groom would opt for early marriage because it is easier to control a young bride. These two factors contribute to the early marriage prevalence, while cementing the Real Man construction too.

Marriage registration is one of the key provisions as explored in this study to safeguard women's rights and entitlements within marriage. Quantitative survey reveals that 79% men and women perceive that they are well informed about the marriage registration and it is important to ensure women's rights in conjugal life.



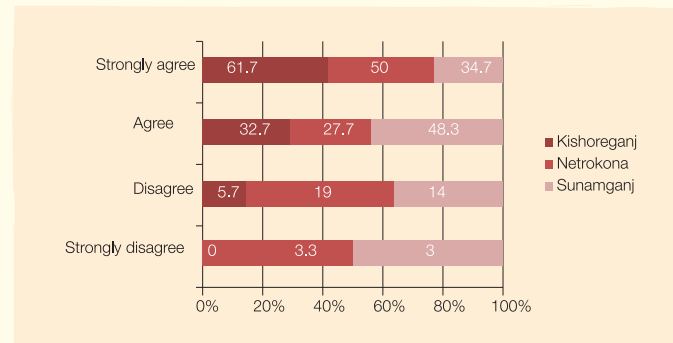
While policies and provisions are put in place to tackle practices that conform to hegemonic masculine standard, at the same time, the pressure of feeding in to the demand of masculinity construction and practices lead to exploit the provisions. In practice, there are several impediments about the marriage registration process. Muslim participants think there is a protection against polygamy while registered, or conceive this as incentive of religion. But due to the corruption of the process, rather than protecting someone's rights, the process is exploited and early marriages facilitated in many of the cases. Marriage registration is higher among Muslims and Christians than that of Hindu families. Although awareness is high, the pressure of becoming a real man from the groom or father's point of view, people irrespective of religious differences are exploiting the system. They tend to avoid original age registration or in many cases do not attain registration at all during the marriage.

Dowry and Marriage Transactions

Dowry and construction of Real Man are interwoven in the context of ultra poor households. Generally people perceive dowry as a right for sons, as they are taking the 'burden of a girl'. Dowry is welcomed by the groom's family also because this practice brings resources under his or his family's possession. Although the quantitative findings suggest a different perception of men, revealing that 65% percent of men disagreed that they have the right to take dowry during and after marriage.

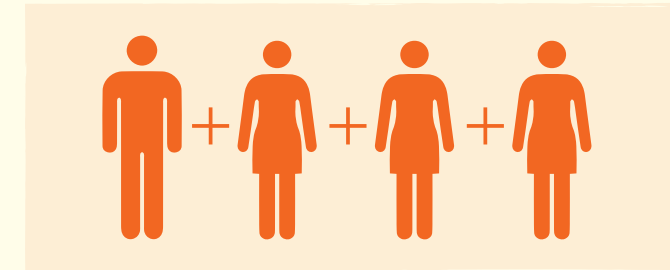
FIGURE 1 DISTRICT WISE PERCENTAGE OF GENDER STATEMENT ON TAKING DOWRY DURING AND AFTER MARRIAGE BY MEN (n=900)

Statement *Men usually take dowry during and after marriage*



There are different forms of dowry practice. In Sunamganj, the groom's family is accustomed to giving a portion of their family property to the bride to pay the bride-price. However the demand for dowry has increased and the custom of re-paying the bride price has decreased. Poverty often comes up as one of the main reasons of practicing dowry, but in reality the money which comes from the bride's family is rarely spent for mitigating family needs. Peer pressure of taking dowry is high among men. 56% of men taken dowry in their own marriage and 64% have received it during their son's marriage.

Polygamy



Among men **87.2%** agreed that they would like to have multiple wives

The study reveals there is an increasing rate of acceptance of polygamy in the study area. Quantitative data suggests a very high rate of acceptance of polygamy among men, as 87.2% agreed that they would like to have multiple wives. The link between son preference and polygamy is also evident from the quantitative data, as 86% of the men said that they would consider multiple marriages for their sons to increase the chance of getting a male child. This indicates the interconnections between polygamy and the capacity of men as a real man to have a male child. Both males and females in high percentages promote multiple marriages. Polygamy is justified to get male child by a large proportion of female and male respondents. However, the quote suggests the younger generation has some understanding of the consequence of the polygamy:

"Two marriages?(giggling)...Impossible!... Look, there is a proverb - if you have a rivalry with anybody, make him marry twice or more. If you can, he will burn in fire forever and your revenge will automatically be taken. Look, such practice was there in the past when our grandfathers had lots of land and only a few people to feed. It is not possible anymore."-Salam, Kishoreganj

Reproductive Health Care

In general, both men and women acknowledge the necessity and importance of a husband's caring attitude towards women during pregnancy. However, further exploration of the notion of care suggests that men are aware of the significance of seeking health care for women during pregnancy, while there is still a prevailing perception that women must continue regular household chores during pregnancy. Qualitative exploration with women indicates that the younger women desire to be cared for during pregnancy, whereas the older women do not expect care from their male counterparts. Similarly, in practice, it is seen that the husband's concept of his responsibility to take care of his wife is still limited to allowing her mobility to health care centers.

Wife Battering

Men in ultra poor households still perceive wife battering as a usual practice as the quantitative findings indicate. Around 71.2% of men believe, being dominant is the way for a man to ensure control over women. Furthermore, 88% respondents think husbands have the right to scold wives and 73.4% agree that husbands often need to be aggressive and physically punish their wives if necessary. The same discourse is nurtured by women that men should control them.

"Women should obey their husbands... a husband has the right to protect as well as to rule over his wife...and most of the time problems arise when both the husband and the wife argue with each other...in such situations, one should maintain silence... the wife should do this"
- Karimon, Netrokona



Around **71.2%** of men believe, being dominant is the way for a man to ensure control over women

In practice wife battering is a common phenomenon that men tend not to admit. The number of women reported to have suffered physical abuse is higher than the number of males who agreed to abuse their female counterparts. This indicates that there may be a feeling of shame that exists in men to admit that they have committed an act of violence in public.

Eve Teasing and Sexual Harassment

Perception about eve teasing and similar negative practices reveal that not all responsibilities perceived by men are derived from hegemonic construction of masculinities. It was found that protection and care responsibilities by men are either viewed differently or are often ignored while discussing about prevention and protection of women from eve teasing and harassment of women in public spaces. During FGDs, men pointed out that women themselves are responsible for sexual harassment and abuse. It is a woman's responsibility to be careful while going out of their house. Most of the male participants opined that while they are not opposed to women's mobility, 'a good girl never becomes the victim of eve teasing or sexual harassment, as she knows how to move alone in public'.

"A girl should keep herself safe from evil eyes, for this she should wear decent clothes and maintain normal purdah. With these she can do anything she wants for her prosperity"- Faruq, Sunamganj

In contrast, women opposed most of the men's responses and suggested that, even a woman wearing a veil can be a victim of eve teasing or sexual harassment. They also mentioned the school going girls experiencing such harassment. This indicates that men in general view women as sex objects and do not recognize the need to protect women from harassment in public areas as their responsibility. In practice, it is also revealed that men are ready to talk about sexual harassment in their comfort zone but also discouraged to act on it due to the fear of being attacked by 'muscle men'.

Access to and Control over Resources and Entitlement

Ordinary men's perception on restraining women's access to resource and entitlement is an indication of reproduction of real man as a form of hegemonic masculinity model. As is evident from the analysis of following important domains, men in general tend to believe women's participation in decision making, both in public and private settings, is secondary.

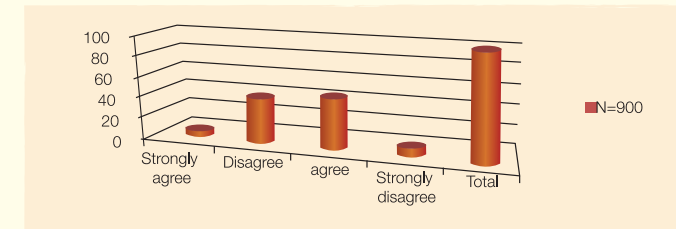
Access to Education



The study reveals that both fathers and mothers tend to think that education offers the possibility of a happier life for a female child. However, both qualitative and quantitative explorations suggest that the three perceptions: return of investment from education, convenience of controlling less educated women and prime responsibility of father predominantly define and shape whether a girl can access her right to education. The following quantitative data reveals men's perception on girl's education:

FIGURE 2 PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ON GENDER STATEMENT REGARDING WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION (n=900)

Statement	Percentage
Men like to save money for their daughter's wedding not for her education	88%



In practice, ultra poor households sometimes see a benefit of education as they might access jobs created by NGOs in the locality. However, highly educated girls are still considered a burden due to lack of availability of grooms willing to marry them. Similarly, boys from ultra poor households have to work from a young age and consequently they also give less value to educated women as wives. Therefore, there are fewer incentives for fathers and grooms in ultra poor families to support girl's education.

In some cases, it became evident that fathers are ready to support their daughter's education, but only after marriage.

Decision Making in the Family and Household

Men's perception regarding decision making in family and household indicates a clear notion of male superiority over female members. Findings from FGDs reveal that men still think they have the right to dominate and control the family decisions, including welfare and status issues. Therefore, men should play the principal role in maintaining the household income and making other important decisions in buying, selling or mortgaging land and other tangible properties. Quantitative findings also confirm the qualitative findings, where 88% of the respondents think it is men who should make the important decisions within the family.

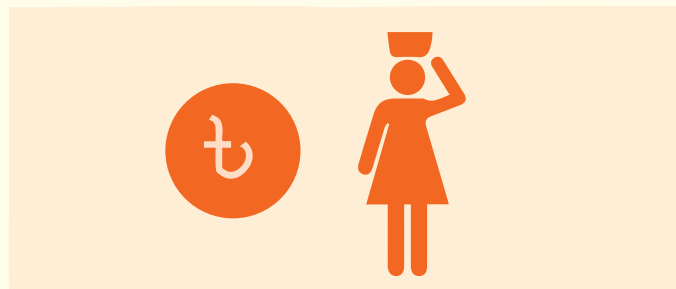
In reality, according to the study findings, men in the study area are always considered as the decision maker, the 'breadwinner' in the household, even if women earn. Women have very little say (if any), in respect of the decisions regarding the maintenance of household resources, farming, harvesting, and buying or selling of crops to mention a few. Even when women are consulted on these matters, they are usually suggested what to say. Women reported that only in few cases they were able to give different opinions. The respondents stated that in a few cases, before taking important decisions like daughter's marriage, selling or mortgaging in or mortgaging out of land, or the selling of cattle, husbands consult with their wives, but often they take decisions without informing their wives. In most cases, it was found that the woman's earnings were used for the family's welfare instead of buying land or property.

IGA Participation

Male respondents in this study do not consider women's participation in income generating activities outside of domestic domain as a desirable option, though they showed a positive attitude towards such activities. Almost all men (with very few exceptions) think that women's income should also be controlled by their male counterparts or should be spent for the family welfare. Women's perception in this regard is similar to men's. For example, a female respondent opined:

"Mainly the man earns for the family...so he keeps control of all the maintenances and expenses..."
-Tahmina, Kishoreganj

It was seen that in fact, most men do not accept women's participation in income generating activities outside of their households, though in some cases they have allowed women to be involved in activities in the same village. A woman working independently in an income generating activity is very rare to find. In most cases, women perform their household activities whereas men oversee the IGAs which are based outside of the domestic domain. However, in some cases women are involved in group based IGAs that require them to move out of their household. These works are mostly based in their village or nearby villages, where women from the same neighborhood collectively participate.

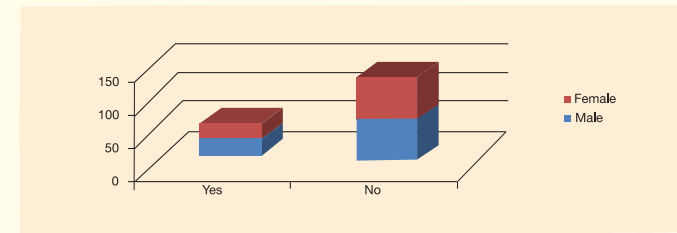


There is an underlying reservation on women's engagement in the public sphere of men. The effect and strength of such

social criticism is also evident from the quantitative findings given in the following graph:

FIGURE 3 PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN REPORTING ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES (n=900)

Question *Did/do/would you advise men to allow women to have outside jobs?*



The following quotation of a male respondent demonstrates how strongly women's work at public settings is associated with the family honor:

"I support girl's education... girls can do anything after completing their studies, if it is permitted... but I will starve...will die, but never let my daughters to do any odd jobs or laborious work...it is a matter of honor..." -Amir, Sunamganj

Access to and Control over Resources and Entitlement

Men's perception with regard to access and control over resources reinforces male superiority over female. They consider work related with control over resources and households as exclusively men's domain, because women naturally understand less than their male counterparts in any respect. Most of the male participants do not feel women are strong enough to safeguard material resources. Moreover, they think if women have exclusive control over important economic resources, they do not obey their husbands.

Similar notions have been seen in case of daughter's property rights. The majority of the Hindu men said that they do not think daughters should have rights over their parent's property though the Muslim men consider daughters' rights over their parents' property as an important issue. On one hand, the Muslim women feel that claiming property rights might create problems in their relationship with their brothers. On the other hand, all the men said that they would share the property "if their sisters wanted their share" revealing less willingness to ensure their sisters' inheritance rights.



In actual fact, whether the resources are owned by the husband or wife, men explicitly or implicitly always want to have control over those resources. Generally it is the husband who decides whether the assets of his wife should be sold or used for family needs. The crops produced on the land of wives are also sold and distributed based on the husband's decision.

Women usually have the possession over cattle that they get from their parents which they might need to sacrifice to mitigate family demand. However, decisions related to when and whether assets should be sold to meet family hardship is solely a man's area of decision. The furniture given during marriage as a gift or dowry is also considered the husband's possession.

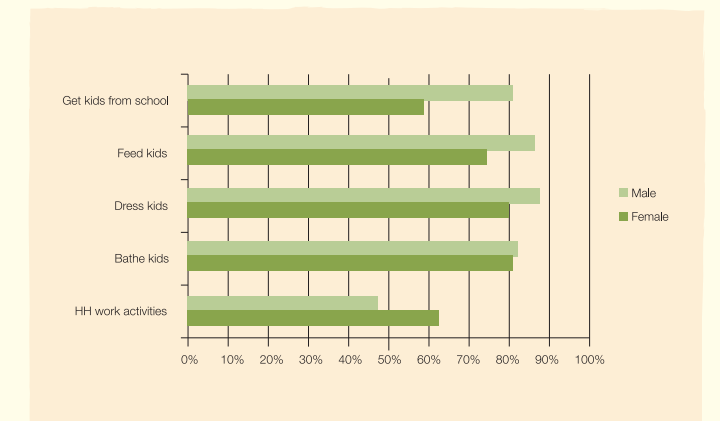
Participation and Mobility

The discursive model of 'Ashol purush' (Real Men)- a model of hegemonic masculinity, has overtly emphasized on excluding women from the public domain. The ordinary men, as seen in perception and practice in the following domains, reveals that the real/ ordinary men conform to this criteria:

Household Activities

Interviews with men reveal that they are still reluctant to admit their participation in household work in public. The same group of men still perceives women's work in the household as not of any worth or value, particularly those who do not directly generate any economic return. They also think helping female counterparts degrades a man's social position within the household and society.

FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN REPORTING ON PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES (n=900)



From the graph above, it is evident that practice is similar to perception, where men, to some extent are more accommodative to child care responsibilities than household chores.



88% of the respondents think it is men who should make the important decisions within the family

Mobility

Sadharon purush (Ordinary Men)'s perception with regard to women's mobility points towards men's anxiety about controlling women's sexuality. It seemed that most men belonging to extreme poor category would only allow their wives to go outside as they had no other alternatives. There are a few men who think the situation is changing and now-a-days, if required, women could also go to medicine shops or to visit the doctor. They also agreed that, for a number of purposes, women may also go to the UP office. However, the majority opined that if they had an alternative, they would not have allowed their women to go there. A woman going to a local bazaar (market) is completely unacceptable to men, though many men said women may go to big markets if they need to shop for their children or buy clothes and other necessary items for themselves. A male respondent stated:

"New brides and young women are not allowed to go outside the home...but children and old women can easily go outside...it is an issue of family honor...prestige"- Jalal, Netrokona

Men's perception about women's mobility being centered on sexuality and control over sexuality is also confirmed from the statements of allowing women in public places only if women maintain purdah.

Actually, it is evident from the statements that women's mobility is accepted by men due to economic factors. A large section still does not want women to work in the public sphere. Men are forced to accept changes in terms of women's mobility and participation due to their economic hardship. Almost all of these *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) still feel pressure to reproduce the age old practices. Such pressure is so strong that one can say with confidence that unless it is addressed, *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) will stop women from being involved in these new practices as soon as there economic condition changes.

Women's Participation in Development Works

Majority of the men identified their wives participation in development works as a method of developing tension in their existing gender relation with their wives. However, they welcome such participation for those women who are distressed or who do not have a male family member to support them. They think that women may participate in development activities if it is within their own village. Most men think their wives should participate in development activities if the groups consist of only women, even though a male member from the NGO visits them or talks with them. They also opined that if a woman has a huge problem, she should participate in work outside her home. However, they do not prefer their wives to participate in development works. Men's perception on women's participation in development related works is confined to an allowable boundary for the purpose of family welfare only. This boundary hardly acknowledges freedom of choice for women.

In practice men in the study area have shown a mixed reaction about women's participation in development works. Though a majority of the poor men did not want to criticize NGO work publicly during FGDs, during informal discussions they have expressed their concern over this. Women's financial contribution to their family brought this change in practice though men's attitude towards this is still very negative. In a few cases, while husbands are trying to accommodate women's participation in development work, there is a fear of social criticism, as highlighted by the following statement:

"Are you a disabled person? Why did you let your wife go outside and do men's work?"
- Monir, Kishoreganj

Political Participation

"Women are so simple that they cannot even maintain their households, how will they participate in a complex game like politics?" - Hanif, Sunamganj

This quotation echoes the findings of the study on men's perception of women's political participation. In the studied areas, *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) generally consider politics as men's domain and do not like to see women playing any active role in it and contesting with the men for power. Most men believe that women working in a leadership role where they are above male members cannot perform better than men, as women are perceived to be physically weaker and vulnerable to insecurity. They also thought since politics is now dominated by muscle power, women can only survive if they are assisted by their male family members.

Most men said that female UP members should not attend public functions unless there is any special need or emergency meeting. If they need to attend they must be accompanied by their male family members. Men perceive that the participation of female UP members should be confined to areas of women and children development, and health and rehabilitation activities. Women should not participate in areas such as infrastructural development issues, relief and rehabilitation activities, social justice and

law and order issues, as these are subject to power politics or, in other words, they belong to the male domain. For much participation of women in politics means participation in voting during election. In practice, women's voting powers are influenced by their male family members. It is either the husband or sons who mostly decide where their female family members will cast their votes. Such notions imply that political leadership of women must also be guarded by ordinary men.

Based on the discussion of perception and practices of men on some of the significant areas to women empowerment, it is evident that, even though *Sadharon purush* (Ordinary Men) do not fiercely protest women's participation in the public domain, rather apparently facilitate such changes, a close reading of men's practices towards women's control over resources, decision making and political participation outlined above clearly indicates how these men are conforming to the hegemonic masculinity model of *Ashol purush* (Leo Men or Real Men). In no way are they ready to accept any sharing of power and authority with women in this regard. Moreover, as men consider themselves the superior sex in the society, they are able to restrict women's mobility in the name of purdah. Furthermore, there is very little initiative taken by men to resist negative practices like wife battering and eve teasing or sexual harassment, and son preference was found as a covert practice that ultimately leads to a rise to other evil practices like polygamy, marriage transactions or dowry and fake marriage registration. The 'Ordinary Men' model as a discursive construction of masculinity also fulfills the criterion of complicit masculinity.

As a form of complicit masculinity, the 'Ordinary Men' model do not show any fierce resistance to women empowerment issues, while there are exceptions of men's practices regarding female education, sexual and reproductive health care during pregnancy, women's participation in income generating activities and development works definitely show signs of improvements for women. Though getting economic benefit is the primary reason behind such support from men, government's policy towards women's education and growing employment opportunities also strengthens the process.

Critical Factors Enabling Men to Transcend Practices of Hegemonic Masculinity

Some critical factors that helped men to defy certain hegemonic practices of masculinity are identified through an in-depth analysis of case studies identified during the research. These factors are demonstrated in light of CARE's women empowerment framework below:

Agency:
a woman's own aspirations and capabilities

- Successful practice of women's agency to address masculinity crisis of supreme authority of family
- Higher performance of women and girls in education or leadership role in community or family
- Higher aspiration of women and girls
- Men's ability of self-reflection and self-negotiation

Structure:
the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices

- The idea of fatherhood and husbandhood was formed by instilling humane and moral values in childhood
- Recognition of alternative practices of masculinity
- Economic benefit
- Demonstration of increased social status and power through female role models
- Access to support structures such as NGOs which helped in addressing the masculinity crisis

Relations:
the power relations through which she must negotiate her path

- Space of communication and negotiation between husband and wife, father in law and daughter in law, mother and father as well
- Supportive relationship either in family or community

There were some constraining factors as such: less supportive in-laws about education and work participation of daughters-in-law; conservative attitude in the name of religion to restrict women's mobility and engagement in public sphere by neighbors and communities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the analysis of the perceptions and practices, it can be broadly concluded that the perception of the *Sadharan purush* (Ordinary Men) category tends to reproduce hegemonic forms of masculinity, which reinforces age-old patriarchy. With regard to the relationship with women, people belonging to the ordinary men category conform to the standard dictation of *Asho/ purush* (Real Men or Leo Men) as they try to confine women to the household domain while they also overtly emphasize men's superiority over women in connection with the control of resources, decision making and political participation of women. It is understandable that men embodying such masculinities will feel crisis relating to women's mobility, women's participation in development work, women's participation in income generating activities, wife battering and sexual harassment. Thus, men are compelled to try to control women's visibility and emphasize women's purity.

Though, some changes have been located to the traditional hegemonic practices, particularly concerning girl's education, taking care of wife during pregnancy, women's mobility and women's participation in income generating activities, one must be careful in reading them as sustainable changes as we find that existing practices with regard to other change domains actually conform to the hegemonic masculine practices. Gaining economic benefit may have primarily driven certain changes in men's perception and practices along with other policy interventions to support women, such as promotion of girl's education, expansion of employment opportunities for women and development of social capital through NGO interventions. This created an avenue for the new generation of women to enter into development works and income generating activities. One must continually re-examine the adequacy of the development strategies and outcomes, to transform the practices of masculinity in establishing women's rights and autonomy, employed by the government and NGOs.

Based on the analysis of enabling and constraining factors and evidences generated by CARE's program, following are some of the recommendations that can form the basis of transformatory approach to work with men and boys.

- 1. Identify role model based on specific practices, for example** if dowry is a practice that requires urgent attention in a particular area, a man who did not practice dowry can be identified as a role model.
- 2. Celebrate the role model's practices in community dialogue with men and women** based on the story of the role model to initiate self-reflection among men.
- 3. Use fatherhood as an entry point to change certain practices** like early marriage by applying specific community dialogue tools based on real life examples.
- 4. Celebrating alternative ways to gain social honor, prestige and power** by identifying examples of female counterparts' achievements.
- 5. Creating awareness among women to address the crisis of masculinity** and to instill confidence in men to conduit positive change.