

The Formulation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Behaviour Among Young Men in Bangladesh

Policy Recommendations

Handout 2

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Policy Recommendations

Gender Awareness and Understanding:

- 1.1 A comprehensive education and sensitisation programme for young men regarding gender disparities and inequalities, masculine violence, and sexual harassment should be developed and implemented.
- 1.2 A range of confidential support and counselling systems developed for feminised males (*kothis* and *hijras*) and other MSM that includes sensitising male counsellors and health providers to their needs and supporting and promoting the services that already exist. Appropriate agencies with technical knowledge and expertise need to be identified to provide training resources and to support such initiatives.

Policy Recommendations

Friendship and Intimacy:

- **2.1 A peer education system based on friendship networks where young men are trained to share information, tolerance, and gender sensitisation strategies with their friends.**
- **2.2 Many effective programmes have already been developed and can be adapted and replicated.**
 - **A comprehensive review of current literature, tools, and resources will need to be conducted.**
 - **A range of discussions should be initiated with young men (and women) to develop a programme framework that incorporates the required information.**
 - **Parents and other socialising agents need to be included in the design of such programmes.**

Policy Recommendations

Sexual Knowledge and Awareness:

- **3.1** These sex education and information packages need to be designed for specific age groups as a phased system and delivered in culturally sensitive ways that can reach both literate and non-literate young men. Programmes need to be developed in a participatory fashion involving both parents and young people.

- **3.2** Many curricula, such as those already being taught in India and Egypt (originally developed by the Centre for Population and Development Activities), could be adapted to the Bangladesh context. Such curricula combine “Life Skills” training in specific vocational skills that will promote employment in later life.

Policy Recommendations

Sexual Knowledge and Awareness (cont.):

- **3.3** Technical support and funding should be given to a nongovernmental organisation in Dhaka to develop and test a free telephone help-line service that offers anonymous and confidential advice and information from trained counsellors. Such services would address questions on reproductive and sexual health, sexual abuse, rape and psychosexual concerns, educational and career options.
- **3.4** A range of appropriate NGOs involved with young men should be identified and supported to deliver such confidential advice and information services.
- **3.5** See Recommendation 1.2 regarding a range of confidential support and counselling systems developed for MSM.

Policy Recommendations

Sexual Messages:

- **4.1 See Recommendation 1.1 under Gender Awareness and Understanding pertaining to a comprehensive education and sensitisation program for young men.**
- **4.2 See Recommendation 2.1 under Friendship and Intimacy pertaining to a peer education system based on friendship networks.**

Policy Recommendations

Sociocultural and Family Expectations:

- **5.0 See Recommendation 1.1 under Gender Awareness and Understanding, pertaining to a comprehensive education and sensitisation program for young men regarding gender disparities and inequalities, masculine violence, and sexual harassment. These materials will need to be adapted to make them appropriate for parents and other socialisation agents.**

Policy Recommendations

Sources of Knowledge:

- **6.0 Parents, community and religious leaders, and *kobirajs* need sensitisation and access to appropriate information and knowledge.**
 - **While specialised training and education packages can be adapted from existing materials or developed to provide accurate information, different forms of media and formats will need to be adapted for parents.**
 - **Such forms of education will need to acknowledge different levels of literacy and the concerns that many parents, religious leaders, and others have with regard to explicitness in sexual and reproductive health information.**

Policy Recommendations

Impact of Knowledge:

- **7.1 Sexual and reproductive health clinical services that specifically address the needs of adolescent males should be developed through partnerships with adolescent health programmers, projects that work with youth or street children, or those provided through local community centers.**
- **7.2 STI management and treatment staff should be sensitised and trained to understand the issues of anal STIs and other problems and develop appropriate protocols for providing sympathetic advice and treatment to MSM.**