



Workshop on

Gender Based Violence and Women's Safety at Public Places

April 1-3, 2019

CRi
Centre for Research
and Information



Report on
Workshop on Gender Based Violence and Women's Safety at Public Places

Venue
Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Youth Development, Savar

Organized by
Centre for Research and Information in collaboration with UNDP Bangladesh and Centre
for Men and Masculinities Studies (CMMS)

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Executive Summary

Centre for Research and Information (CRI), the secretariat of Young Bangla in collaboration with Center for Men and Masculinities Studies (CMMS) and UNDP Bangladesh, organized a three-day long residential workshop on Gender-Based Violence and Women's Safety in Public Places. Representatives from 31 Young Bangla member organizations from 8 divisions participated in the workshop. The workshop was primarily designed to enhance basic understanding of gender, gender based violence and violence against women while developing campaign strategies and action plans for women's safety at public places through a participatory process. Using self-reflexive dialogues as the core of the workshop methodology, resource person from National Human Rights Commission, UNDP, CRI and CMMS also used different methods including presentation based discussions, psychodrama, interactive sessions, small group activity and panel discussion. Participants were encouraged to contribute from their grass root experiences in developing strategies to prevent sexual violence at public places and identifying relevant stakeholders along with approaches. Immediate outcome of the workshop suggests enhanced understanding and commitment of the participants to run a nationwide campaign to prevent sexual violence in public place. Suggested strategies and approaches include research, advocacy, policy dialogues and awareness raising activities to work with multiple stakeholders including youth, students, policy makers, local government representatives, transport sector leaders and workers, passengers, law enforcing agencies, ride sharing authorities, etc.



1.1 Background

Empowerment of women in Bangladesh is being noticed and well recognised by the international community. Nonetheless, the journey of the women of Bangladesh has never been a smooth one. From social taboos to conservative attitudes, they had to face a number of obstacles to arrive where they are today. Their participation and contribution in sectors such as politics, businesses, sports, armed forces have transformed Bangladesh into a middle income country. In the past decades, millions of women have come out of the confinements of four walls and participated in the labour force. Unfortunately, women in Bangladesh has been experiencing different forms of violence within domestic settings as well as public spheres. Bangladesh has the challenge to preventing violence against women which negatively impact individuals, families and overall development of the country.

Center for Research and Information (CRI) the secretariat of Young Bangla, has been hosting a large network of youth organizations and volunteers. During previous networking sessions, Young Bangla members have identified gender

based violence as a burning issue which needs to be addressed sooner than later. Later, CRI felt that a workshop would be a good platform to further explore the issue of gender based violence and draw a set of actions to launch a campaign throughout the country. Center for Men and Masculinities Studies (CMMS) and UNDP Bangladesh were generous enough to offer their support in organizing the workshop. The workshop on Gender-Based Violence and Women's Safety at Public Places was held at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Youth Development. Thirty-one youth leaders from eight divisions participated in the three-day long residential workshop.



1.2 Objective

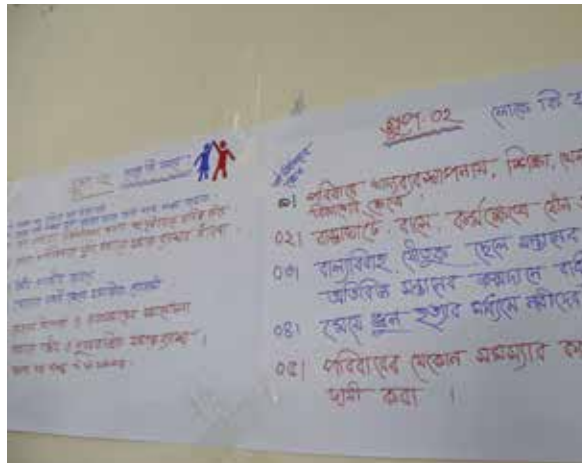
The overall objective was to sensitize the youth leaders about gender based violence (GBV) and draw out a set of strategies and actions as part of a campaign plan for women's safety in public places which will ultimately be led by Young Bangla members.

1.3 Participants

The participants of the workshop were 31 representatives (16 male 15 female) from Young Bangla member organizations who won Joy Bangla Youth Award of 2015, 2017 and 2018. These youth leaders were brought from 8 divisions to add a regional and local context and enrich the learning and sharing through aligning the local context of the issue. (A list of participants is attached with this report)

1.4 Workshop methods and tools

The workshop was facilitated by resource persons from CMMS and CRI in cooperation with UNDP resource persons. Besides, eminent human right activists, lawyers, and policy makers attended the workshop as panel discussants. The three-day workshop was participatory in nature. The facilitators, participants and organizers were engaged in interactive sessions, discussions, debate, group work, presentations, and lots of activities. (A list of resource persons is attached with this report)





2.1 Gender and gender based violence

Understanding of the concepts of gender, sex and gender-based discrimination were one of the major focuses of the workshop. In the opening session of the workshop, Bithika Hasan, Gender Expert, HRP-UNDP made a presentation (Power Point Presentation is attached as annexure) on 'Basic understanding on gender'. Through an interactive discussion, the participants brainstormed and identified typical gender stereotypes prevailing in the society. They also made insightful remarks on gender roles which are decided by the society, e.g. girls will do the household work and boys will do the outside work. Participants also discussed the general definition of equality and equity and asked questions for better understanding of the concepts of gender, sex and gender-based discrimination.

Sayed Saikh Imtiaz, Chairperson, CMMS facilitated the session on gender based violence. The facilitator first generated a discussion based on some of the arguments taking place in the opening session on gender. The participants opined regarding gender-based discrimination and rights of women in the present context of Bangladesh. One group of participants claimed that girls/females of Bangladesh are enjoying positive

discrimination at the moment. However, most of the participants agreed that women in general are still behind men and are discriminated based on their gender identity. The participants were then engaged in a group work to explore the root causes of discrimination and how those discriminations affect the life of girls. Later, there was an interactive discussion on the findings of the group work.

In the small group, the participants brainstormed to find the answer of the following:

What are the different forms of discrimination faced by girls/women?

What are the different forms of violence faced by women?

Why women face violence?

Why dowry is taken?

Why the parents are unwilling to spend on girl's education?

What are the reasons of child marriage?

What are the various reasons of domestic violence?

Facilitator Sayed Saikh Imtiaz and Tahia Rahman, Research Fellow CMMS, shared the findings of a research study conducted by CMMS. The study identified that in Bangladesh ten forms of discriminations/violence women are usually subjected to. The presentation was followed by an open discussion. Next, Tahia Rahman, presented the findings of an action research conducted in a rural area of Bangladesh. The study looked into the perceptions/views that trigger discriminatory practices towards women. The action research also showed that targeted interventions can change the perceptions of people in regards to women and their rights.

2.2 Men, masculinity and reproduction of gender based violence

The session started with the operational definition and a general understanding of man, masculine and masculinity. The discussion revolved around the aspects of masculinity (as perceived by people in general) and also how the manifestation of masculinity produces gender based violence. It was argued that masculinity is associated with exercise of power. Later an activity session was done for better understanding of man, masculine and masculinity and woman, feminine and femininity. To express masculinity male often demonstrate muscle. The table game activity was done to help the participant reflect the pointlessness of proving masculinity. It was also discussed that giving privileges to women (i.e. reserve quota in job) is acceptable and empowering women is not undermining of male rather an act of balancing for the greater good of a nation.

2.3 Duty bearer, influence factor and existing rights framework

Shankor Paul, Communities and Minorities Expert, UNDP discussed about the role of duty bearers (state/institutions) to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the right holders (individuals). He also talked about international, regional and national frameworks on rights with particular focus on gender. He explained what are our rights as human beings, as Bangladeshi and as women according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the constitutions and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The participants had a discussion with him on the differences of the duties and rights and different types of rights such as political, civil, social, economic rights, etc.

2.4 Women's safety at public places

An international media scan was presented before the participants with a view to give ideas of how different campaigns (anti-sexual harassment groups and campaigns such as Safe cities campaign, Imprint movement, I saw harassment, Harass map, Harass tracker, Black noise etc.) were conducted in different parts of the world, what were their approaches, what are the best practices they can adopt. Tanzuma Miti, presented a scan of print media reports on harassment against women in public places. Next, Tahia Rahman presented findings of a research on women's safety in public place. The survey, done on more than 600 women of different ages, found about occurrences of violence against women in public places. It found that almost 96% of the girls and women who go outside become the victim of sexual violence regularly in public places. It also found out the spots in public places where the occurrences mostly take place. Next, a psycho drama was performed by the participants on instructions of Rifat Ara, (a research fellow, CMMS). Some of the male participants were asked to act like the females who are victimized in public places like roads and streets and the female participants acted like the perpetrator who teased the male participants. Then Sayed Saikh Imtiaz facilitated a discussion on the previous day's group work findings. The discussion was about who are to be targeted as actors in the awareness campaign and how can we include them and what preventive mechanism needs to be developed, and also the attitudes and behaviors those are needed to be changed.





3.1 Planning a campaign to prevent violence/harassment against women

Throughout the sessions, the participants showed their keen interest in playing a role to end all types of harassment against women in public places. It was an anonymous decision that all types of violence need to be abolished from public sphere. The participants argued that they need to work to eradicate the rate of violence by including men in the process, target those good men who do not raise their voice when harassment happens. If one good man raises his voice, others will also support him. It is important that these good men are encouraged to rise against injustice and take preventive mechanism which helps to stop violence before it occurs. Secondly, it is needed to target the bad men who are the perpetrators and thirdly to support the victims mentally, physically and financially to overcome the trauma. The participants worked out a set of strategies for the campaign.



3.2 Strategic plan

Objective

- To end all forms of gender base violence outside home

Expected changes

- Protest when harassment occurs in public places
- Support harassed, not accusing women when they protest
- Not supporting the perpetrator knowingly or unknowingly
- Leaving seats for women in public transport
- Making women friendly educational institutions
- Making women friendly public transport both micro and macro (bus/train/city service/leguna/easy bike/auto rickshaw)
- Making women friendly public places (shopping centers, fairs, roads/intersections, parks)
- Making women friendly public transport
- Making women friendly ride sharing service
- More media report focusing on perpetrator, not on the victim

The participants worked in groups according to eight divisions and work on the issue of harassment at particular spot/or locations in public places. They worked in groups to identify the authorities (micro, meso and macro level services) they are going to ask for help and which individuals, groups or institutions are going to work with. Next, the groups developed a plan of action they can implement in their own localities.

Targeted public spots

1. Education institution
2. Market, shopping mall, parks etc
3. Big public transport
4. Small transport (Leguna, Tomtom, etc)
5. Ride sharing.
6. Street, junctions etc
7. Social, print and electronic media

3.3 Making women friendly educational institutions

Target groups

- Victim
- Perpetrator
- Teachers' associations
- Guardians' associations
- Primary school
- High school
- College
- University

Relevant stakeholders

- UNO
- District Commissioner's Office
- Zilla Parishad (District level government)
- Public library
- Shishu (Children) Academy
- Shilpakala (Arts) Academy
- Civil society organizations
- Law enforcement agencies
- Local government/administration
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)

Suggested interventions

Local level actions

- Holding workshop/seminar in schools and colleges
- Team building in schools and colleges
- Team mobilization
- Holding guardian and teachers' association meeting
- Training for teachers, religious leaders (imams, principals)

National level actions

- Deliver religious speech on GBV policy
- Discussion event to sensitize policy makers to
- Include GBV/VAW issues in the curriculum (MoE, MoWCA)



3.4 Making women friendly public places (shopping centers, fairs, parks, streets/roads/intersections)

Target groups

- Shopping center owners' association
- Shop owners' association
- Sells persons
- Local youth club/organizations
- Religious leaders
- Park authorities

Suggested interventions

Relevant stakeholders

- District Commissioner's Office
- Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)
- Paurashava(Municipality)
- City Corporation
- Zilla Parishad (District level government)
- Union Parishad (Union level government)
- Upazila Parishad (Sub-district level government)
- Law enforcement agencies
- Members of Parliament
- All media outlets
- Women organizations
- National Human Rights Commission
- Human rights organizations
- Ministry of Commerce
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- MoWCA

Local level actions	National level actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting survey to do situational analysis of public places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy discussion to aware policy makers and other relevant stakeholders to contribute on ending GBV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying harassment prone hotspots in public places 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running awareness campaign in those violence prone hotspots ● Sensitize shopping center owners 	

3.5 Making public transport women friendly

Target groups

- Bystander people
 - Helper
 - Drivers
 - Commuters
- Transport labour associations
- Transport owners' associations
- Ride sharing service providers
- Local youth club/organizations
- Bangladesh Road Transport Authority

Relevant stakeholders

- District Commissioner's Office
- Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)
 - Paurashava
 - City Corporation
- Zilla Parishad (District level government)
- Union Parishad (Union level government)
 - Upazila Parishad (Sub-district level government)
- Law enforcement agencies
 - Members of Parliament
- Civil society organizations
 - Ride sharing companies
 - Ministry of Railway
 - Ministry of Shipping
- Ministry of Road Transport and Highway

Suggested interventions

Local level actions

- Sensitize owners, drivers and helpers through workshop/seminar
- Campaign through local youth volunteers in bus/train/launch terminal
- Sensitize ride sharing service owner's

National level actions

- Policy discussion event to aware policy makers on particular policy issues





4.1 Policy advocacy on preventing gender based violence at public places

This session was designed to help the participants know about the existing policy frameworks to curb GBV and what could be done to reduce GBV. The session progressed through a panel discussion where the human rights activists, development practitioners and law makers shared their insight on VAW. They discussed about country's laws and acts, the gaps in addressing gender based violence and scopes of policy advocacy in future. They also mentioned that the country has number of laws to protect women against violence although there are challenges to enforce those laws. The panelists highly appreciated and encouraged the participants for acting as a change maker in their community.

Kazi Reazul Hoque, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), appreciated the works the youth organizations are doing at the moment. He mentioned that the country has made huge progress and achieved success in women's empowerment. The country has number of laws to protect women against violence but there is

problem in application. He encouraged the youth participants to act as social change maker.

Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoze discussed different aspects and gaps regarding the existing laws. She was vocal about the difficulties women victims generally face while seeking justice. Sometimes victims don't get any lawyer by her side to fight for her. Some of the courts do not have women friendly environment. She also questioned the role of police while filing complains. At the moment there is no law on sexual harassment in public place (drafting in process).

Sharmeela Rasool, Chief Technical Adviser, UNDP, shared her view that laws alone cannot prevent violence; the people of the country need to be aware and sensitive enough to prevent the violence. She also talked about the importance of SDG 17 goals.

MP Aroma Dutta, MP and ex-member of NHRC, in her speech mentioned that there are many laws but the implementation is not quite effective. The legal system itself is not women friendly. She encouraged the participants to become human rights defender. Another MP, Waseqa Ayesha

Khan, had made some suggestions i.e. inclusion of youth leaders and religious leaders in community level interventions, establishing Child Affairs Desk in police stations to prevent sexual harassment. Nazim Razaq, MP in his remarks emphasized on making people aware about the laws and acts and the need to arrange more campaigns on gender based violence with more male members working in the campaign.

4.2 Specific action points identified by the participants:

- Making provision of stringent action against police personnels who harass victims
- Including gender issues in secondary and higher secondary level curriculum
- Involving local governments representatives in awareness campaign
- Installing complain box in the recreation and shopping centers
- Increasing reserve seats for women in public transport
- Cancellation of license if violence is reported against driver
- Registration no to be written inside vehicles (public transport)
- Including women sefty issues in the test for driving license
- Installing complain box in primary, secondary schools and madrasahs
- Regular ministerial meeting to monitor women's sefty situation
- Including youth leaders in local committees to discuss the issue of sexual harassment
- Gender sensitive ride sharing policy
- Including transport sector leaders in district level committee led by District Commissioners (DCs)
- Cancellation of route permit if violence is reported
- Adding content on preventing harassment and self-defense in school textbook
- Introducing reporting mechanism against violence in the ride sharing applications
- Arranging training for transport sector members (owners, drivers and helpers) on women's safety in public transport
- Introducing ranking system for shopping centers(women friendly environment)
- Increasing the numbers of reserved seats for women in all public transports
- Circulating a list of numbers to seek for help (at district level)
- Keeping instructions on women's sefty inside public transport
- Separate and increased seats for women in small transports (Leguna, Tomtom)
- Providing stickers of helpline in all transports
- involving District level BRTA to ensure women safety in transports





List of resource persons

1. Dr. Syed Shaikh Imtiaz, Chairperson, Centre for Men and Masculinity Studies (CMMS)
2. Kazi Reazul Hoque, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
3. Aroma Dutta MP, Former Member, NHRC, Member of Parliament
4. Waseqa Ayesha Khan, Member of Parliament
5. Nahim Razzaq, Member of Parliament
6. Fawzia Karim, Advocate, Bangladesh Supreme Court
7. Sharmeela Rassool, Technical Expert, Human Rights Programme, UNDP
8. Bithika Hasan, Gender Expert, Human Rights Programme, UNDP
9. Shankor Paul, Communities and Minorities Expert, UNDP
10. Tahia Rahman, Executive Director, Centre for Men and Masculinity Studies (CMMS)
11. Rifat Ara, Centre for Men and Masculinity Studies (CMMS)
12. Israt Farzana Tanni, Research Officer, Young Bangla
13. Tanzuma Islam, Program Officer, Young Bangla
14. Sabbir Bin Shams, Executive Director, Centre for Research and Information (CRI)

List of participants

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