

ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS TO ADDRESS **VIOLENCE** IN SCHOOLS

FINDINGS FROM A FORMATIVE
STUDY IN BIHAR AND TAMIL NADU



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FOREWORD

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG-FIRE), in partnership with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), carried a formative study to explore strategies to engage with adolescents, particularly boys, in combating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The findings and recommendations of the study are now presented.

Conducted in four blocks - two each from Rohtas (Bihar) and Villupuram (Tamil Nadu) districts, and using an exploratory, qualitative methodology, the study attempted to understand forms of SGBV, primarily within school spaces, and identify entry points and mechanisms both within the government education system and aided minority institutions, that can be utilized to carry out interventions designed at prevention of occurrences of SGBV.

The findings indicate unequal gender norms and notions of masculinity & femininity within the household (division of roles, norms around visibility and mobility, and educational preferences for boys and girls) and within school spaces (norms reiterated by teachers, dealing with romantic relationships, and denial and counter currents) as the most fundamental and overarching factors behind violence in schools as well as within communities.

A comprehensive response suggests various strategies at multiple levels within schools and outside the school space - working directly with boys and girls, with a focus on boys; building gender perspectives for teachers, school administration, and SMCs; working in communities with parents to open avenues for communication and building gender perspectives; and infrastructural development, increasing awareness for basic rights and entitlements.

I hope, the findings and recommendations of the study help civil society organizations in effective planning and designing concrete strategies to combat SGBV in schools.

Vengatesh Krishna

Executive Director,

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The formative study on Engaging Adolescents to Address Violence in Schools was undertaken in the states of Bihar and Tamil Nadu to understand the scenario and possible entry points for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in schools. This study did not involve any engagement with children, but focused largely on other stakeholder perspectives on the issue.

Foremost, we are deeply grateful to all our participants who voluntarily and patiently participated in the study. We are thankful to all our support staff in all the study districts who adjusted through multiple plan changes and long days of fieldwork.

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Research Team Members

Sharmishtha Nanda, Priyanka Banerjee and Priti Prabhughate

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEMS	Gender Equality Movement in Schools
ICPS	Integrated Child Protection Scheme
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IHRE	Institute of Human Rights Education
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
OBC	Other Backward Classes
RTE	Right to Education
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SMC	School Management Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is premised upon the socially ascribed gender differences between males and females (UNHCR, 2011). It has been historically traced to the existence of structural inequalities in power relations. The term gender-based violence is useful for it helps locate the violence firmly within the predominant discourses surrounding gender roles in society and traces it to the socialization processes that firmly establish the norms and definitions of what it means to be a man or a woman (UNECAP, Elimination of Violence against Women in Partnership with Men, 2003).

Therefore, the prevention of SGBV requires attention to changing social norms, particularly gender norms, to promote gender-equitable attitudes and reduce acceptance of violence (Gidycz, et.al, 2011; McMohan, et.al, 2011). Among the many strategies that are being used to fight SGBV, one of the common overarching themes has been the need to engage with young boys and men. Influencing boys during formative periods of their lives is critical to changing their attitudes about gender roles and treatment of girls and women, which in turn can play a role in reducing the overall chances of SGBV. In this context, schools provide a compelling setting to engage children (both boys and girls) and influence their knowledge, behaviours and attitudes toward gender, equity and power.

With this broad purpose of exploring strategies to engage with adolescents, particularly boys in the fight against SGBV, NEG-FIRE and ICRW undertook a formative exploratory qualitative research study to understand forms of SGBV experienced by adolescents in schools and identify entry points to combat SGBV, primarily

within school-spaces. Following were the broad objectives of the study:

- To understand the multiple forms and experiences of sexual and gender-based violence faced by adolescent boys and girls, primarily within school spaces.
- To identify and map various approaches being used within schools for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.
- To assess existing entry points and mechanisms, both within the government education system, as well as outside that can be utilized to carry out interventions designed at prevention of occurrences of sexual and gender-based violence.
- To assess opportunities and risks of specifically working with adolescent boys within school settings, aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence.

The study used an exploratory, qualitative research design with an integrated framework approach to understand the experience of SGBV, its prevention and opportunities for redressal in the chosen sites. The study was conducted in two districts – Rohtas (Bihar) and Villupuram (Tamil Nadu). Within each district, two blocks were purposively selected – one to represent a district head-quarter and another a remote block away from the district head quarter to allow variation in the context and data within the district. From each block, two schools were chosen – one school closer to block head-quarter and another remote. A total of 8 schools were chosen in the two states, out of which four were middle schools, while two were higher secondary schools. The study was conducted in two broad categories of schools in

both the sites, in government schools and aided minority institutions managed by the Patna Jesuit Society in Bihar and the Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore in Villupuram to understand forms and experiences of SGBV in schools.

Primary data was collected using focus groups discussions with teachers and parents, and key-informant interviews with a range of stakeholders like school Principals, officials from education departments and NGO representatives to understand the nature of violence seen within and outside schools spaces and the various strategies that are being used to address it. Additionally, desk review was conducted to identify and map various program that have been implemented to prevent SGBV, and evidence for these program across India and the globe to articulate various models and strategies used by them.

Data revealed several forms of SGBV experienced by school going boys and girls. Broadly, it ranged from violence experienced by students within school spaces, in the form of corporal punishment, peer-to-peer violence and verbal and sexual abuse to violence outside schools spaces, such as lack of safe passage and harassment of girls while coming to school. Additionally, the lack of usable and safe toilets for girls was also reported in Bihar, resulting in frequent absenteeism and was identified as a deterrent for girls to continue education.

The study findings unearthed several interconnected causes for the experience of violence. These ranged from problems of poverty and migration among families that often led to children being left unsupervised, neglect of children growing up in disturbed familial environments, marked by alcoholism of fathers or broken and violent relationships between parents to the role played by mass media and technology, in exposing children to violent and age-inappropriate content. Finally,

the all-pervasive role of gender norms such as those related to division of labor within the household, dressing, lack of mobility outside the household, differential standards of education, differential standards of disciplining girls within school spaces etc., was found to be crucial in the exercise and perpetuation of different forms of violence across study sites. The data showed that gender norms did not operate only in private lives of young girls and boys but were also reinforced in schools through various practices and actions of teachers, such as teachers endorsing the use of corporal punishment for disciplining boys or expecting girls to dress in a certain way.

While the formative research did not come across any institutionalised response to violence within schools where the study was conducted, the findings document several ad-hoc mechanisms that are being used to respond to violence such as one-to-one counselling, existence of platforms such as moral science classes, morning assembly, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), particularly in minority aided schools and a functional School Management Committee (SMC) in Bihar. Moreover, in a few schools, heads of institutions played a crucial role in responding to violence in the schools by ensuring infrastructure in schools (toilet, gate, compound wall) or even warning teachers against misconduct towards students.

Interviews with various stakeholders and desk review highlighted the different mechanisms, tools and modes that can be used within school spaces to facilitate mainstreaming of 'gender' and 'gender equality', develop awareness around the nature and forms of SGBV and strategies to counter it. Given the centrality of schools in the lives of young boys and girls, the formative study suggests several entry points that can be used within school spaces to fight SGBV, such as working with school principals, teachers and other existing platforms such as

PTAs and SMCs that could be further explored to tailor programs appropriate to engage these stakeholders. On a broader level, entry points like the SSA could be considered as a place to integrate and train teachers on gender curriculum.

The role of gender norms and the multiple levels—schools, families, communities at which these norms are constantly reinforced and play a vital role in framing gender roles, experiences, and response to violence, makes it vital to think of a violence prevention program that is more systems/institution driven and comprehensive in its approach. However, for a comprehensive, multi-level approach, partnerships with existing program in the community need to be further explored.

Based on the findings of the formative research, the following recommendations are made:

- Working with boys and girls to further validate the formative research and culturally fine tune curricula and check for acceptability to program delivery and entry points
- Capacity building of school teachers, school management and administrators on issues of gender and SGBV to ensure buy-in and to help mainstream gender within schools
- Utilising various provisions under the RTE Act to ensure infrastructure needs are met
- Developing a theory of change to proceed with designing program to prevent SGBV in schools is a must. Although the report suggests several indicators to measure success, clear articulation of the intent and goals of the program are essential to suggest precise indicators of success

INTRODUCTION

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is one of the most common and dangerous forms of human rights violation across the world, yet one of the least discussed globally. It refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is premised upon the socially ascribed gender differences between males and females (UNHCR, 2011). SGBV has been historically traced to the existence of structural inequalities in power relations. It is linked to existing gender stereotypes and discriminatory norms that legitimize and perpetuate this violence (Shahrokh. T and Edstrom.J, 2005). The term gender-based violence is useful for it helps locate the violence firmly within the predominant discourses surrounding gender roles in society and traces it to the socialization processes that firmly establish the norms and definitions of what it means to be a man or a woman (UNECAP, Elimination of Violence against Women in Partnership with Men, 2003). Violence, in this context, emerges as a policing mechanism, to establish, perpetuate and reinforce gender orders and roles in society, and punish any perceived transgression using force and coercion (UNECAP, Elimination of Violence against Women in Partnership with Men, 2003).

Women are the primary targets of this form of violence, which includes acts such as wife abuse, sexual assault, dowry related murder, marital rape, malnourishment of female children, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and sexual abuse of female children (Heise, L. et al, 2002). However, gender-based violence is not restricted to only women. Over the last couple of decades, frameworks have evolved to recognise not just women's but also vulnerabilities of men to SGBV and how violence is used as an instrument to oppress women,

men, as well as young boys and girls, if they are perceived to be working against established social norms (Sexual Violence Research Foundation, 2011; Shahrokh. T and Edstrom.J, 2005). Thus, SGBV is common irrespective of age or sex and takes place worldwide, in all kind of settings, such as homes, schools, workplaces and communities (Challenging Gender based Violence Worldwide: CARE's program evidence. Strategies, Results and Impacts of Evaluations 2011-2013).

Prevention of SGBV against women and girls requires attention to changing social norms, particularly gender norms, and for this, it is necessary to promote gender-equitable attitudes and reduce acceptance of violence (Gidycz, et.al, 2011; McMohan, et.al, 2011). To address SGBV, young boys and men need to be perceived as actors in solution-making. Influencing boys during formative periods of their lives may be critical to changing attitudes about gender and treatment of girls and women and reducing SGBV. It is increasingly recognised that primary prevention approaches, i.e. those that seek to prevent or stop violence before it starts, are critical to achieving a long-term reduction in SGBV. However, these processes must begin at early ages, when notions on gender and violence are still being formed (Achyut, P, et.al, 2011).

In this context, schools provide a compelling setting to engage children (both boys and girls) and influence their knowledge, behaviour and attitudes toward gender, equity and power. In the Asia-Pacific region, emerging evidence shows that school-based interventions are a promising area of primary prevention programming across the region (Achyut, P. et, al, 2011). Schools as institutions play a

significant role in the lives of adolescent boys and girls that has a potential to either reinforce or challenge harmful gender norms. Teachers and school curricula significantly contribute to reinforcing gender roles in the way girls and boys are expected to behave and are rewarded for conforming to socially prescribed gender roles and vice versa. For example, a recent study by ICRW in five Asian countries has documented how schools through their practices often reinforce gender roles and stereotypes. The study noted that teachers reminded girls to behave like 'girls', and participation in sports was encouraged more for boys and not for girls (Bhatla, N, et.al, 2014).

Reinforcing gender inequities perpetuates SGBV, as males exert power (physical, sexual, and psychological) over their female peers and less powerful males in and around schools (USAID, 2008). Gender based violence impacts both the health and educational status of students, whether they are affected directly as victims or indirectly as bystanders. The consequences of SGBV include a lack of motivation among students, failing grades, absenteeism, and increased numbers of dropouts. Research indicates that SGBV also demoralises students, affecting their ability to achieve their educational goals (USAID, 2008). Therefore, it is of vital importance to engage with school going adolescents in the fight against SGBV.

Engaging adolescent boys in school settings is an effective means to change prevalent gender norms and question other cross cutting inequalities, for schools provide a variety of tools in the form of curricula, teaching and other staff, as well as scope for different extra-curricular activities that can be channelized. Also, schools provide a unique entry point to help shape ideas of healthy relationships and balanced power equations, in environments where children and adolescents learn and

develop social and behavioural norms (Hill, Amber; contreras, M; Backe, E; Policy Brief, Global Women's Institute). Thus, schools, as powerful socialization setting, emerge as a platform to reach many children (Achyut, P, et.al, 2016).

OBJECTIVES

The study focused on exploring the following objectives and questions:

- To understand the multiple forms and experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, faced by adolescent boys and girls, primarily within school spaces.
- To identify and map various approaches being used within schools for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.
- To assess existing entry points and mechanisms, both within the government education system, as well as outside that can be utilised to carry out interventions designed at prevention of occurrences of sexual and gender-based violence.
- To assess opportunities and risks of specifically working with adolescent boys within school settings, aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence.

The exploration of these broad questions was through a formative research that included literature reviews, available assessments of existing SGBV programs (if any) and discussions with key stakeholders working in the field of SGBV. We have preliminarily determined to focus on school and school-going children. The findings of this study will be used to develop an intervention that will be piloted among young school-going boys with the aim of preventing SGBV in the next generation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as an exploratory, qualitative study with an integrated framework approach to understand the experience of SGBV, its prevention and opportunities for redressal in the chosen sites. The study aimed to develop a high-level understanding of the issue and inform the future working and intervention strategies. At this preliminary stage, the study did not interact or engage with students, for it is standard practice to engage with children in a longer, preferably workshop setting, with psychological aid or referral mechanisms in place to maintain the sanctity of the engagement and dignity of children's experiences. The timeline, the research design as well as the scope of the current study did not provide for these mechanisms, and hence children were not engaged with at this stage.

SAMPLING

Using a purposive sampling strategy, the study was conducted in two districts - Rohtas (Bihar) and Villupuram (Tamil Nadu). As per the initial plan, West Champaran district had been selected for the study in Bihar. But due to heavy flooding in the region, the site was changed to Rohtas district. In each district, two blocks were selected - one district head-quarter and another block further to the district centre to make the sample representative within our resource constraints. Then, from each block, we selected two schools - one closer to block head-quarter and another remote. Out of the four schools chosen in each study site, two were middle schools, while two were higher secondary schools. Consent was sought prior to all focus group discussions and interviews.

The study was conducted in two broad categories of schools at both the sites, in government schools and aided minority institutions managed by the Patna Jesuit Society in Bihar and the Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore in Villupuram.

In the selected districts, blocks and schools, respondents were selected for discussion and interviews as per the sampling strategy mentioned in Table-1.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

All the FGD and KII notes were translated by the note takers and reviewed by the moderators to check for completeness and accuracy. While translating and checking, the team ensured that the identity of the respondents was masked. Similarly, KIIs were translated, and checked for completeness and accuracy. Subsequently, the FGD and KIIs notes were manually coded around the following themes, each thematic area was then further analysed to understand site-wise or sub-group wise variation and linkages between themes were analysed to understand the various facets of violence, intervention needs, challenges and entry points for future programming:

- Common problems faced by children cited (socioeconomic problems that hinder schooling).
- Infrastructural deficiencies within school spaces.
- Prevailing gender norms in the study sites
- Forms of violence within schools
- Prevailing forms of violence outside school settings
- Triggers/causes of violence

- Forms of disciplining prevalent in school and community settings
- Systemic and other mechanisms of violence resolution within schools.
- Usual mechanisms of addressing violence within families and communities.
- Existence and functionality of SMCs within schools: their roles, functions and challenges faced.
- Resource materials, evidence and lessons that exist from existing programs engaging school and community on the issues of gender, violence, or any other issues
- Entry points - structure, platforms - in schools and community for engaging with school-going children to address SGBV
- Programmatic recommendations for engaging with school going children to address SGBV
- Potential challenges and risk to conducting programs on SGBV

TABLE-1: SAMPLING STRATEGY

RESEARCH ACTIVITY	SAMPLE SIZE	SAMPLING APPROACH
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teachers	6-8 members per FGD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Female group FGDS • 6 Mixed group FGDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 8 FGDs were held with teachers, out of which only two FGDs in Bihar were gender disaggregated. The rest of the FGDs were conducted in mixed male-female groups. • All the available teachers of the selected schools were invited to participate in the focus group discussion.
FGDs with parents and members of SMCs	6-8 members per FGD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Female group FGDS • 5 Mixed group FGDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 8 FGDs were held. In Bihar, three out of the total of 4 FGDs were held with only mothers, while the rest were conducted in mixed male-female groups. • Out of a total of 8 schools covered, SMCs were found active only in one school in Bihar. In the three remaining schools in Bihar, SMCs exist only on paper. In Tamil Nadu, the aided minority schools have sought a stay order from the courts on SMCs and hence these are non-functional in these schools. In the remaining schools in Tamil Nadu, SMCs are non-functional. • Hence, in all the schools except for one in Bihar, discussions were conducted with parents of students studying in these schools. • All the available parents and SMC members of the selected schools were invited to participate in the focus group discussions.
FGDs with parents and members of SMCs	8	Principals of the selected schools were invited for the KIIs.
KIIs with district and block education officers	6	The District Education Officer, Block Education Officer and his deputy were approached for interviews.
KIIs with NGO representatives	7	In discussion with NEG-FIRE and web search, we made a list of NGOs working on issues of gender and violence and/or school in the study district. Representatives of four NGOs were approached: REAP, Corstone and Nehru Yuva Kendra in Bihar and Kalvi Kendra, Scope India, Childline and IHRE in Tamil Nadu.

SECTION-1

CONTEXT SETTING

CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE IN BIHAR AND TAMIL NADU

There were palpable differences observed in the articulation and nature of violence in both the study states. Gender unequal norms are not unique to any one society or region. But the awareness, nature and manifestation of violence differ from state to state and region to region. While broadly these variations can be attributed to the differential social and cultural norms prevalent in different regions, the extent and manifestation of violence in any society is also deeply rooted in the political culture and institutional morphology that is unique to every society. Forms and variants of violence can differ markedly in societies, depending upon the level of awareness that ordinary citizens may have in identifying certain behaviours and norms as violent, the general health of institutional mechanisms available that can be used to avert violence or provide recourse to people affected due to violence as well as the larger political culture that pervades a region, even when social or gender norms may be identical or similar in two or more regions.

While the relatively underdeveloped northern states of the country witness higher rates of violence as well as lower reporting, in the more economically prosperous states of the south, high rate of violence is matched by higher reporting as well. It has been the general perception that the more positive gender indicators in the southern states are reflective of higher and better living standards for women in these parts (Ghosh, 2013). Anthropological and sociological accounts on regional variations in gender issues show that women in northern India have historically had

less autonomy, mobility, and fewer property rights than those in the southern states. These differences were attributed to the differences in the kinship structure such as village exogamy (marrying outside of a social group), cross-cousin marriages, son preference, purdah, land tenure systems, and history of colonization.

While many of the advantages that the southern states had with respect to gender indicators seems to be reducing, with very high rates of violence against women being reported in the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, our study finds that there is a remarkable difference between Bihar and Tamil Nadu in the articulation and understanding of behaviours and norms that can be identified as violent.

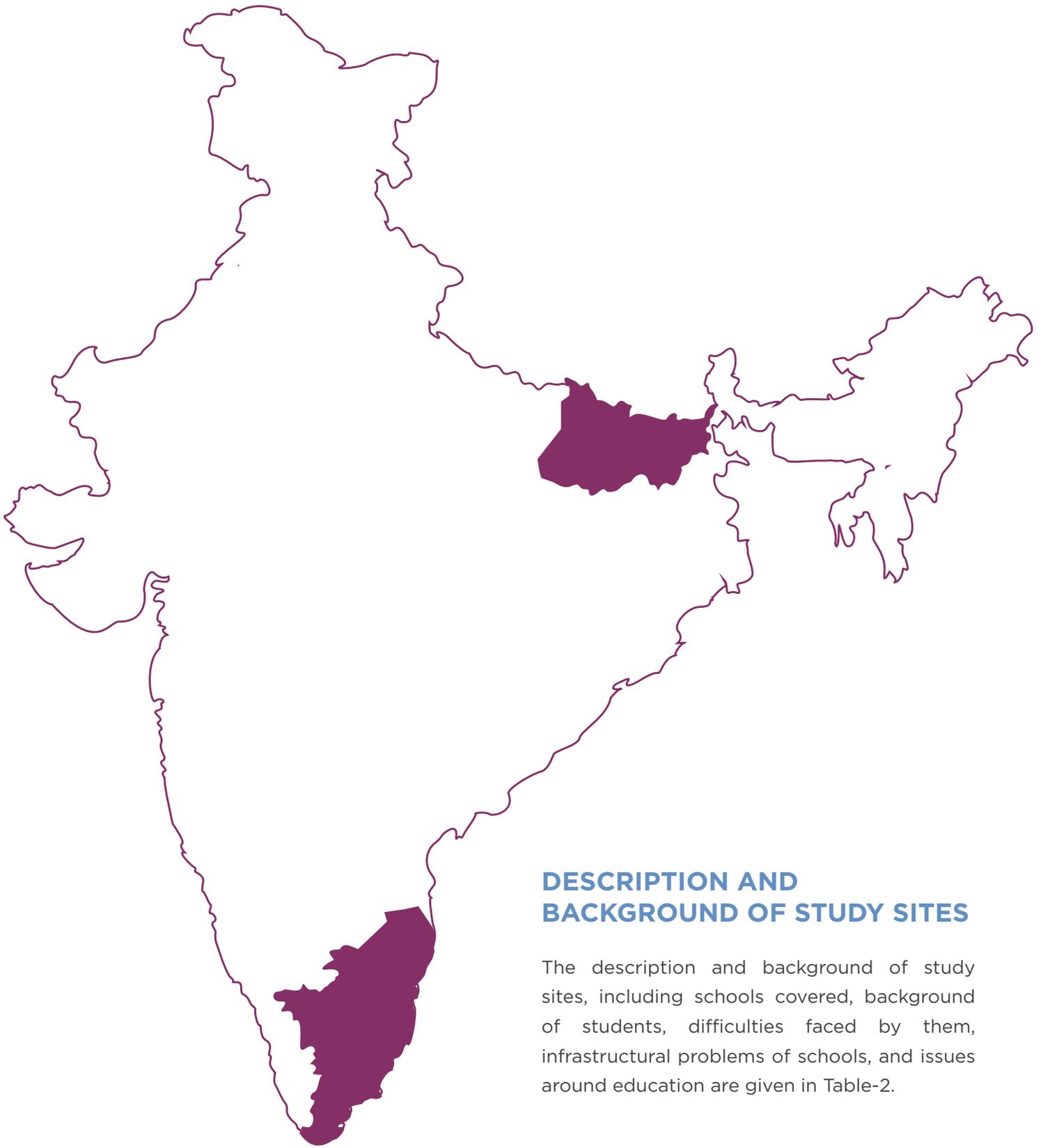
In conversations with all stakeholders in Bihar, there was a marked difficulty in articulating how gender-based inequalities or power differentials lead to violent behaviour. Only on being probed consistently did stakeholders comment on some of these norms but stressed on how these are a part and parcel of everyday life and not necessarily violent activities. This lack of understanding and awareness around what constitutes gender-based violence was unique to Bihar and was not seen as acutely in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, teachers and parents spoke openly about incidences of sexual harassment and eve-teasing of girls, as well as the norms that underlie this behaviour. This dissonance between the two states can be attributed to multiple reasons.

Firstly, the two states covered in the study depict a divergent picture of school based infrastructural deficiencies. Schools covered in Bihar were marked by acute infrastructural challenges, such as dilapidated buildings, lack of sufficient teachers, poor training, missing toilets and other such discrepancies, so much so that discussions with stakeholders could not move beyond these glaring inadequacies to address issues related to violence. Teachers and parents found it difficult to articulate or speak about violence. This was not the case in Tamil Nadu, where school infrastructure was found to be in a much better condition, and teachers or parents did not constantly stress on these deficiencies in their conversations. It seems that amid the many infrastructural deficiencies, gender violence and ways of combating it of course remains much lower on the priority list of main stakeholders in Bihar, whereas in Tamil Nadu as infrastructural needs were taken care of to a large extent, teachers and parents did find the means and language to articulate incidences of violence.

Secondly, Bihar has long been battling crumbling institutional structures and a governance deficit within a violence prone political system (Kumar 2012). Deep decay underlies most of the institutions in Bihar, with the result that violence reporting and redressal mechanisms are largely driven and facilitated by acts of individual agency, and not through institutional instruments. In a context such as this, rule of law has been an aberration rather than practice. Acts such as eve-teasing, sexual harassment or hooliganism are considered 'immoral' activities but are also normalised.

There is reluctance in approaching institutions to arbitrate or mediate these conflicts, as people have become accustomed to resolving conflicts without any institutional redressal over time. There also exist very few active institutional fora other than the government mandated ones to mediate conflicts. In direct contrast, Tamil Nadu is one of the better governed states in India, with some of the best human development indicators and remarkable progress in terms of delivering key services to people, such as quality sanitation, educational infrastructure and improved health facilities (Vijaybaskar et.al 2004; Mehrotra 2006). These facilities/services have been made possible due to the institutional robustness and deep-rooted engagement of successive governments in strengthening governance structures. Since institutions are functional, people find it easier to access them as well. It has also created an enabling environment for other institutional fora in the state to exist and prosper, such as NGOs like Childline that deals specifically with incidences of violence.

Thirdly, the political cultures of the two states are remarkably different. Bihar, for the better part of the last 50 years, has witnessed extreme political and caste-based violence (Kumar, 2009). This overarching climate and culture of violence works in ways to normalise other experiences of violence and renders them almost invisible in comparison. Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, has not witnessed the same form or degree of political violence, marked by institutional apathy and hence as a society is more capable of articulating and responding to incidences and experiences of violence.



DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY SITES

The description and background of study sites, including schools covered, background of students, difficulties faced by them, infrastructural problems of schools, and issues around education are given in Table-2.

SCHOOLS COVERED

- St. Anne School
 - St. Agnes High School
 - Mohammad-pur Middle School
 - Sant Shivanand Government High School
-

PROFILE OF AREA COVERED

- The schools profiled in the study belong to Sasaram and Shivsagar block of Rohtas district in Bihar.
 - The area profiled is economically backward, with limited irrigation facilities and inadequate water supply.
-

BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

- Students of schools covered in study primarily belong to socially and economically backward communities of the area. These include students from Scheduled Castes such as Paswans, Mahtos, Musahars and Other Backward Castes. The concentration of upper castes in the area is very thin.
 - Families of students do not usually own any land, and parents lack a regular source of employment, depending on agricultural season and availability of work. They primarily work as agricultural laborers or are involved in other forms of manual labor.
-

DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS

- Due to their precarious economic situation, students are often forced to take up other activities after school, such as lifting loads, agricultural labour and household work, particularly during periods of harvesting and reaping. This negatively impacts their attendance levels in school and consequently their academic performance.
 - Since parents of these students are mostly uneducated and illiterate, students receive very little help at home in their educational activities. There is also lack of adequate space in homes to study, which impacts their educational performance.
 - Students do not have the financial capacity to pay their fee on time or buy stationery, uniforms and books that they require in schools.
 - The population of the area also consists of those who have migrated from other areas. This is a shifting population, and hence children often drop out of schools as their families move to different areas.
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INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS

- In the schools covered, the student-teacher ratio is not adequate. The number of students per teacher per class is more than 35, a ratio mandated by the RTE¹. (Kundu, P, et, al. 2016)
- Secondly, available teachers do not have proper training. Majority of the teachers are contractual, and underpaid relative to permanent teachers. As a result, their motivation to take regular classes or provide quality education to students is quite low, as borne out by interviews with key stakeholders.
- Thirdly, most schools covered lack functional toilets. Even in schools where toilets are being constructed, maintenance is difficult, as there is a scarcity of piped and running water. Young children are unable to carry water to the toilets, leading to the toilets getting dirty. Many children are also not aware of how to use toilets, owing to any lack of experience in this regard within their homes and communities.
- Due to the absence of clean and functional toilets, girls avoid going to school during their menstrual periods, leading to low attendance of girls.
- Schools in the area lack adequate benches, chalks or fans. Regular classes are also not held in the schools.
- There are discrepancies in the distribution and preparation of mid-day meals in schools. Students are not given what is due to them.

ISSUES AROUND EDUCATION

- There is poor monitoring and supervision of students, leading to poor discipline in these schools, due to the inadequate number of teachers in the schools and their lack of motivation.
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- Teachers have too many additional responsibilities in school, apart from teaching, such as preparation and distribution of mid-day meals etc. which impacts their ability to perform their teaching tasks well.

¹Bihar has a shortage of 1.14 lakh primary school teachers. At the secondary level, the student-teacher ratio is 57, against the norm of 35. The student-classroom ratio in government-secondary schools is 103.

SCHOOLS COVERED

- BN Thoppu, High School
 - Ennadu Higher Secondary School
 - St. Anthony's High School
 - MRIC Higher Secondary School (Aided school)
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PROFILE OF AREA COVERED

- The schools profiled in the study belong to Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu.
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BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

- Students in these schools primarily come from economically backward families. Parents are mostly daily wage laborers, who do not get adequate time to devote to their children. On many occasions students come to school on an empty stomach or without their books and other necessary stationery.
 - These circumstances also impact academic performance of the children, as they are deprived of a stable environment at home, and receive no support, educationally or otherwise from their parents
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DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS

- However, more than poverty, strained inter-personal relationships between parents was one of the main difficulties faced by children, as cited by the teachers.
 - Extra-marital relations are quite common, with children often face psychological stress and severe neglect because of it. On many occasions, children do not get adequate attention from their parents, with their psychological and material needs remaining unmet. In these circumstances, the child often resorts to anti-social behaviour like robbing or indulging in violence.
 - In some families, alcoholism of the father also acts as a major impediment to children developing positive social relations and behaviour.
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INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS

- Lack of adequate infrastructure within schools is a problem area, though it is not as glaring as the situation in Bihar.
- There are also fewer classrooms and dorms in the schools, in comparison to the number of students. Thus, it is difficult to seat all students.



- There is an absence of functional and usable toilets in schools, due to inadequate water supply. In the residential schools, children do not enough water to take a bath every day.
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ISSUES AROUND EDUCATION

- In the schools covered, the student-teacher ratio is not adequate, per the RTE standards which requires one teacher per 35 students.
 - The schools do not have counselling facility, which is mandated and which teachers feel is needed.
 - There are many administrative duties that the teachers must take care of, especially in government schools, which negatively impacts their ability to perform their teaching responsibilities adequately.
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DIFFERENCES IN MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES OF THE SCHOOLS COVERED

While schools under the education departments of the respective state governments have their separate way of functioning according to the policies and the schemes of the governments, the catholic schools have their own system of management and administration. At both the study sites, the government schools fared lower in terms of infrastructure, student- teacher ratio, school amenities and general upkeep of properties. In terms of educational achievement too, except for one school in Villupuram, the church run schools fare better.

The latter are also engaged in providing scholarships to students from their own pool of funds and put a greater emphasis on “value education” in multiple ways, such as focusing on prayers, moral education classes, emphasizing on participation in activities of the church to promote skill building and social contribution among students. While they must oblige to the regulatory permissions and overarching policies of the government, they are independent in their ways of functioning and have developed their own policies to include and serve underprivileged sections of the society. In both the sites, the overarching bodies under which the schools are run, have their own NGO set ups and an array of development programs.

SECTION-2

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

FINDINGS FROM TAMIL NADU AND BIHAR

1. PREVALENT GENDER NORMS

In discussions with all relevant stakeholders, unequal gender norms came out clearly as one of the most fundamental and overarching factors behind violence in schools as well as within communities. The various facets of gender norms that emerged were intrinsically linked to how young girls and boys got socialized into their roles which eventually led to unequal power and privilege between them and was manifested through the exercise of violence. The period of adolescence magnifies the existing gender differentials as boys enjoy privileges related to greater autonomy, mobility and power, while girls experience more restrictions on their freedom and autonomy, as many of them are withdrawn from school due to fear of increased interaction with males and possibility of girls engaging in forms of sexual intimacy.

In the case of the present study, certain norms were found to be widely accepted and normalized across both the selected sites, in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Primarily, norms related to division of labor within the household, dressing, lack of mobility outside the household, differential standards of education, differential standards of disciplining girls within school spaces and marriage as a primary link to a girl's identity etc. were not very different at both the sites. There was a variation in layering of these norms, which could be understood in the varied socio cultural and economic contexts of

Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In the following section, we discuss some of these in detail:

1.1. Norms that operate from within the family

1.1.1. Division of roles within the household

Most of the respondents, across teacher and parent groups, agreed that girls spent more time assisting and/or being responsible for household chores, considerably more than boys and that this impacted their ability to spend time in studies. Within this, their primary tasks consist of cooking, cleaning and taking care of the younger siblings. In a discussion with a parents group in Bihar, a parent remarked:

“Girls do not get much time to study, because after leaving from school, they have to cook in their homes. They will cook till 8-9 in the night.”

In one of the conversations with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher said:

“Girls have the responsibility of managing household chores as well. They should finish these chores and then come to schools. Their education suffers as a result. They get no time to play or indulge in free time as they need to look after their siblings and manage household chores. This is also a form of violence and discrimination.”

Keeping girls busy with household chores is also a way of keeping them in control. As a teacher from Tamil Nadu said:

“Yes, that’s there in the village, we do give first rights to boys; the girls we keep under greater control; we don’t do that so much with the boys.”

In Bihar, one of the research days happened to be on the day of “Jitiya” (a festival where mothers fast for their children, without water, for 24 hours) and most of the girls were absent from schools to help their mothers prepare for the day long fast, prepare festive delicacies for the family and so on.

In Tamil Nadu, teachers insisted that girls should wear bindi and bangles as it was culturally appropriate. Some respondents acknowledged that things had improved. For instance, a respondent parent from the state observed:

“I think the gents have calmed down; now the wives have the upper hand. Seeing this, the boys also have role models in their fathers. Earlier the men used to drink and come home and say - we have worked so hard. Now, the women are also working and they say, we are also working - so you take care of the house.”

The study responses also reiterate how family also holds and nurtures unequal gender relations, as pointed out by a teacher during conversation with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu:

“Family is the basis of society; a child looks at the mother’s face first; the mother has to be without problems; if she has problems, from the day she conceives, the child will be affected. This is my understanding. If you look at Tamil Nadu, then most of the women remain in the control of their husbands; that is the basis of the family; then the domination is there; even if we were to talk about women’s liberation, even now in the villages this is there.”

Boys and girls are trained differently since childhood and certain forms of behaviour are encouraged for boys, which in the future take the shape of increased violence or aggression. A conversation with an NGO official revealed how boys were not stopped and sometimes even encouraged to use physical force on female family members. A respondent teacher from Bihar also shared:

“Environment at home shapes attitudes of students. Once I saw how a small brother was slapping his sister and the parents were laughing and not stopping him.”

1.1.2. Gender norms around visibility and mobility:

Discussions were held around why it was acceptable to get girls married as soon as they reached puberty (in Bihar) and/or as soon as they completed class 10th (in Tamil Nadu). In Bihar, the number of high schools is lower and the free bicycle scheme for girls has helped in increasing enrolment for girls post class 8th. However, retention is still an issue as harassment and fear of harassment on the roads is a major concern for parents. To quote some important observations from the discussions in Bihar:

“If boys tease or harass girls on the way to school or on the road, it can lead to heated fights between families and communities. So, it is better to make the girl sit at home and not send her to school.” (Teacher, Bihar)

“Some girls don’t even tell at home that this is happening, out of fear that parents might discontinue her schooling. Sometimes, mothers and fathers blame their own daughters for such incidents. They say “tum hi toh ho aise, isliyeaisa ho rahahai.” (Teacher, Bihar)

“There is a difference between a man and a woman. A boy can do whatever, [the thinking being] “ladkhai, kuchbhikare. Ladkaka koi

kuchnahinkaehatai.” But a girl is married off.”
(Parent, Bihar)

In Tamil Nadu, the average age for girls to get married has gone up to around 20, as corroborated by most participants in the study. However, the issues remain similar, with girls dropping out of school after class 10th due to mobility issues around accessing higher education, which are related to fear of safety and long distances, teasing and harassment on the roads as in the schools too and resulting violation of honor and discomfort for the girl and the family. One respondent teacher noted:

“The boys are able to easily tease girls; they try to tease the girls; try to brush against them on purpose and then the girls complain to me. It feels like they have an attitude that they can tease the girls, that there is no one to question them. This is probably because they are brought up at home like this; a girl has to be quite and subdued while no one asks a boy where he is going and what he is doing; there is too much freedom for boys; girls are brought up with a certain fear.”

Eve-teasing and verbal harassment is dismissed as ‘aambaat’ or something that is commonplace. More significantly, the onus of preventing violence is placed on girls, which often puts them in a vulnerable position when faced with the situation of violence. Almost all conversations with parents and teachers revealed how girls are trained to never respond with action to any provocation (verbal or otherwise), whereas boys are almost expected to indulge in behaviour that can be termed ‘violent’.

This fixing of blame of violence with young girls prevents the chances of girls openly speaking about their experiences of violence and leads to their further victimisation.

1.1.3. Marriage

The present study reveals that marriage is seen primarily to safeguard the girls’ virginity and future financial security. Added to this are concerns like families having multiple daughters and hence in a rush to marry them early so that paying dowry is easier on the family income, fear of repercussions finding a groom if the daughter is educated beyond the community standards, and so on. Some observations from the study to this end:

“Girls get married early. There is always a fear that a boy might tease or harass a girl. Out of this fear, parents get their daughters married early. People in the village talk. They say things like, ‘ladkiabsayani ho gayihai. Ladkon se baatkartihai.” There is a fear of the girl acquiring a bad reputation, if people start talking about her. So, it is better to get her married. “Jaldiiskoapnijagahpekardo, taakiizzatbache, laajbacche.” (Parent, Bihar)

“They do not view them equally; they think that if they invest Rs. 50,000 in a boy’s education, he will earn for them and return it whereas the girl will go away to another’s house. They get this feeling that the girls have been given their dowry.” (Teacher, Tamil Nadu)

Investing in girls’ education is also seen as a liability, in most families, because she will move to another family and will not remain a contributor to this one, boys, on the other hand, are the future support system to the family. However, it was interesting to note some differing voices too:

“That only male children will look after their parents; girls will not, is something that I cannot agree. We are 4 girls in our house and I am the third; my father got us educated but even if they had a son he would not be looking after them the way that we have been looking after them and now my mother after his demise.” (Teacher, Tamil Nadu)

“But it is not alright to get girls married so early. Things are changing slowly. There is a benefit of getting girls married late because it allows for full development of their bodies. If they must produce a child at the age of 15 or 16, there is a danger to her life. How will she take care of her child, if her health is poor?” (Parent, Tamil Nadu)

“Marriage is necessary. But no girl wants to get married. They all say that they don’t wish to get married. But society has made marriage necessary.” (Parent, Bihar)

Respondents, in most cases, recognize the legal age of marriage and the problems associated with marrying girls early. They however lack the tools to negotiate delaying marriage in the rigid socio-cultural norms that they have known all their lives.

1.1.4. Differential educational preferences for boys and girls

In the present study, parents and teachers acknowledged, at both the study sites, about a preference for sending daughters to government schools and sons to private schools and about discontinuing education for girls once they reached puberty and/or when girls reached a class after which they had to change to middle/high school and the school was not near residence. The same considerations apply to sending daughters to college too. One of the most prominent issues in accessing education for girls is their safety while travelling to and from the schools, across both the study sites. However, another major barrier after the issue of access is what education are they able to access? As mentioned earlier, girls are mostly sent to government schools while boys to private ones. This is because of the prevailing perception that private schools, although expensive, offer better education and it has an impact on employability. Since marriage, not employability is the primary aspiration of

parents for their daughters, it is acceptable to send girls to government schools and discontinue their education as soon as any problem regarding access, transport, safety, etc. emerges. As described by the study participants:

“Boys are usually sent for higher education and not girls, due to this fear that girls may get harassed. This happens in the case of higher education because high schools are not nearby. Girls need to go to far off areas. Parents feel wary.” (Teacher, Bihar)

“Another reason could be that in these areas, the girl child is looked upon as ‘parayadhan’ or somebody else’s property. She is expected to get married and move to another house. Therefore, parents feel that there is not much rationale in spending a lot of money in educating her. For this reason, the girl child is sent to the government schools where education is free, and incentives are provided, whereas the boys are sent to expensive private schools.” (Teacher, Bihar)

“Once the daughter is married off, it depends on the in-laws whether they let the girl study or not. Before marriage, they all promise that they will let the girl study. But after marriage, different responsibilities come up. Once a girl has children, how will she study? And if her in-laws don’t let her study, then there is nothing much that can be done.” (Parent, Bihar)

1.2 Norms that operate from within the school

1.2.1. Gender norms reiterated by teachers:

Earlier in the section, we have discussed gender norms observed during the stakeholder interactions and how they played out in various spaces such as schools, homes, peers, etc. However, data also revealed that there were a few teachers who recognized the issues of gender socialization and norms and expressed need to address it. For example, in

a conversation with a teachers group in Bihar, a male teacher said that inequality was a form of violence.

During another discussion with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher remarked:

“This is how violence begins, when we see the boy and girl differently; the children themselves may turn around and question this differentiation. The girl may ask, you made only my brother study; even if she goes to another house, she will ask this.”

In this light, many respondents openly expressed the discomfort around the unchallenged, dominating behaviour of boys and the culture of fear that develops in girls, in their early adolescence. For instance, a teacher from Tamil Nadu remarked:

It feels like they have an attitude that they can tease the girls, that there is no one to question them. This is probably because they are brought up at home like this; a girl has to be quite and subdued while no one asks a boy where he is going and what he is doing; there is too much freedom for boys; girls are brought up with a certain fear.”

This differential treatment between the sexes leads to the development of certain fixed notions about gender roles and any deviation from these roles leads to violence being committed.

1.2.2. Dealing with romantic relationships

In all conversations with parents and teachers, one overarching concern expressed by them was regarding the possibility of romantic feelings and attractions developing between boys and girls. This is viewed problematic and almost symptomatic of an illness, which must be strictly controlled and avoided. In an interaction with a teachers group in Bihar, one teacher remarked:

“Romantic relationships are an illness. Unfortunately, at this age, this is an illness that affects all.”

Teachers also remarked that romantic relationships at this age were completely wrong, as the prime objective of the child should be to focus on his or her education. Teachers articulated the deep reservation that parents often expressed about the possibility of children falling in love in schools and engaging in intimate behaviour, due to which they often requested teachers to not allow boys and girls to sit or play with each other. In a discussion with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher shared:

“Parents do not like it if there is a lot of interaction between boys and girls. So, they do not allow girls to participate in sports and other activities. This is especially the case with older girls. They feel scared that boys and girls might develop romantic feelings or relationships.”

In fact, both teachers and parents remarked that it was better and advisable for schools to not be co-educational. It is easier to avoid such problems in same-sex schools. In a discussion with a parents group in Bihar, a mother remarked:

“It is not possible for parents to constantly keep track of their daughters. In co-educational schools, this is always a worry. These days boys are not always trustworthy or of good character. Also, some girls indulge in such activities and can spoil all other girls as well. Thus, it is better for schools to not be co-educational.”

In a teachers' group discussion, a teacher said:

“To avoid romantic relationships between children, co-education should be stopped at this level. It can be continued at a higher level, for instance in college. But at this age (below 18), children do not have the mental maturity to understand what is good for them. But since

we have a co-educational school, teachers have to keep a constant check on the activities of students. But even then, such incidents happen.”

Within the community, the possibility of any form of intimacy, sexual or otherwise, between a boy and a girl before marriage is seen as problematic and is not permissible per the social norms of the area. This is particularly the case for girls, as families exercise tremendous control over the sexuality of young girls, lest they develop romantic relationships before marriage and bring ‘dishonor’ to the family and community. If such cases come to light, families often stop girls from coming to school. In a discussion with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher said:

“If parents suspect that there is a possibility of such things developing, they stop sending their daughters to school. But this does not happen with boys. They are still sent to schools. But girls are stopped.”

In a discussion with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher shared:

“The matter goes to the Panchayat; if they are both willing then they are married. And that too, only for drop out children; not school going children. Otherwise it goes to our village Panchayat and it is sorted out here; if it can’t be then it goes to the police station.”

With the aim to prevent any romantic relationships developing between students, schools strictly monitor and control their interactions and other activities. There is a focus on ‘character building’ and ‘moral education’ in schools, particularly in schools runs by Christian missionaries which discourage interactions with the opposite sex and make an effort to retain them within the given social structure. For instance, students are taught and counselled to look at each other as brothers

and sisters. Students are instructed to focus on their studies, and not get distracted by such unnecessary diversions. However, as most teachers mentioned, it is not possible to prevent interactions between boys and girls, and often romantic relationships do develop between them. If these come to the notice of school authorities, usually the students are counselled to stay away from each other. In a discussion with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher remarked:

“Teachers usually counsel such boys to improve their behaviour. both girls and boys are counseled. Teachers tell them to build ‘character’ and that their education will suffer. There was an instance of a boy and girl developing a romantic relationship in class 10th. When the teachers found out, they were counseled. Principal was also told. They changed after that. And the matter was resolved.”

In case, students continue to engage in romantic relationships even after counseling, parents are called in and informed by the teachers. Teachers said that this has an immediate impact, as students, particularly girls are often worried that parents might stop sending them to school altogether.

It is however interesting to note that there were a few dissenting voices as well. For instance, a teacher of a government school said that schools and parents should learn to accept these relationships and friendships as part of growing up. She also mentioned that constant surveillance of children and forcing girls and boys to stay apart from each other was problematic, as it led to them viewing each other as different and as sexual objects, and never as friends. She said:

“Earlier, girls and boys would not even sit together in class or play together. Boys are taught that they should not speak to girls. This is the mentality of people. But we sometimes

counsel them that this is not appropriate, and that boys and girls should talk to each other.”

She also mentioned the importance of educating children on sexual and reproductive health during adolescence, so that they were more aware and in a better position to make informed decisions. She said that in most schools, such education was not provided, but the government should try to do so.

1.3. Denial and countercurrents

Many respondents, especially teachers, even officials while speaking of the school context, denied any difference in how girls and boys were treated. Often, they expressed the reason for inequality between girls and boys to be influenced only by the family background and situation, even caste. Some teachers also mentioned that no incidence of teasing, harassment or violence happened between adolescents for as long as they were in schools. However, some of them agreed that this was because the school environment was a controlled one while once the children set foot out of the school premises, especially boys; they behaved in their naturally socialized manner. This behaviour may be very different from how they are during the school hours.

Some respondents also cited examples of change, with respect to gender norms. For example, while speaking of differences between how girls and boys are treated, a female teacher from Tamil Nadu said:

“We cannot think of this entirely as patriarchy; there are other things; society does think of women as lower than men. If as a teacher, I

speak to a man, the people seeing me do not have the right to judge me but whenever they see me speaking to a man, they wonder – what is our relationship. As far as I am concerned, I think I can do anything.”

One of the respondent parents from Bihar shared:

“Earlier, they used to be seen differently, now it is not there... earlier they used to think of girls as less; now it is not there.”

From interviews with officials of the SSA, department of education, it came out that most officials acknowledged the problems of gender-based violence that adolescents faced in their daily lives. Most respondents however felt that instances of violence were outside school premises. For example, a representative of the SSA in Bihar remarked:

“In schools there are usual physical fights between boys that are resolved by teachers themselves. There are other issues like forms of caste-based violence that still disturb school environment. For instance, in some cases, upper caste students don't eat mid-day meals prepared by lower caste cooks. Discrimination based on caste was very rampant earlier.”

2. VIOLENCE: FORMS AND CAUSES

2.1. Forms of Violence

2.1.1. Violence within schools

In multiple interactions with teachers, parents, SMCs, key informants from the government and relevant non-government organizations, the experience of SGBV in the school space as well as otherwise was explored. Questions ranged from division of work, to differential customs and responsibilities for girls and boys, to ways of disciplining and reprimanding them within and outside school, what are the common problems for children, how do all of these change by age and so on. Teachers were particularly asked about support mechanisms and redressal methods used within the school.

2.1.1.1. Corporal punishment

On initial probing, most respondents mentioned that corporal punishment had been banned by the government and hence was no longer practiced in schools. They insisted that harsh forms of punishment were not used and at most, teachers scolded or counseled students. In one of the schools in Bihar, while a discussion on corporal punishment was going on, one of the teachers was holding a cane in his hand, while constantly stressing on the absence of physical violence in schools.

On deeper probing, it was revealed that in almost all schools, caning and physical beating of students was a commonly accepted practice. Using of physical violence against students was identified as an effective form of administering discipline. In fact, almost all teachers said that banning the use of a cane was a step in the wrong direction, as children got 'spoilt'. Teachers constantly pointed out that it was one of the most effective means of controlling children in classrooms. In one of the conversations with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher said:

"I believe in the proverb that - you must milk a cow with dancing or singing- whichever is suited; likewise, we have to do whatever the child responds to; some children respond only to being caned; they simply do not listen otherwise."

In another conversation with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher remarked:

"It is a way of instilling fear, which does work for some students. We have to be clear that the use of the cane is only to instill fear in the students, and not to physically harm them or create any other problem."

In one incident narrated by a mother in a parents group in Bihar, a girl was beaten up very badly by her school teacher because she was found talking in class. She developed black marks all over her body. The matter was taken up seriously by the school principal and as the teacher was threatened with a suspension, the matter was resolved within the school.

Corporal punishment reveals itself in gendered ways. The use of a cane is more routinely used against boys, and girls are not commonly hit by teachers. This was brought to light in one of the conversations with teachers in Tamil Nadu, who said:

"If they must, then let lady teachers beat girls. Even if they must beat, it should not be on the cheeks but on the hands/feet. Teachers warn the students and ask them to kneel down and sometimes beat the boys; if it is a girl then they do not beat her so much but call the parents and talk to them about it."

Teachers in both Tamil Nadu and Bihar are more likely to resort to violent forms of disciplining and adopt less supportive attitudes towards peer-to-peer violence in conditions of shortfall and inadequate infrastructure. Teachers pointed

out that it was difficult to control students, especially when the number of teachers was so low. In one conversation with a teacher in Tamil Nadu, she said:

“When the number of children increases, teachers cannot control them. When a certain line is crossed, then some teachers carry out beating.”

Teachers also mentioned that unlike in the past, corporal punishment could now be met with resistance from parents and also lead to action against teachers. Some teachers pointed out that parents tended to spoil their children now and hence complained if teachers used the stick or any other form of violence against their children. The inability to use the stick is seen by teachers as a major reason why they are unable to control students. One teacher said:

“Teachers are scared of hitting students now to maintain discipline. Parents are very aggressive. If something happens to the child, then an FIR can be filed against the teachers. So, we feel scared.”

However, there were a few teachers who drew attention to the negative aspects of corporal punishment and pointed out that it could lead to negative outcomes for students, in the form of developing fear of teachers and school, and stubbornness. They mentioned how it was important to interact with adolescent students and communicate to them the reasons as to why they were being scolded or chastised, instead of direct beatings. But, due to the lack of proper training of teachers and too many students in comparison to teachers, teachers end up losing patience and hitting the children.

Thus, corporal punishment emerged as one of the most common forms of violence seen in the school settings in the study. The findings were consistent at both the sites.

2.1.1.2. Peer-to-peer physical violence in schools

Peer-to-peer violence, especially among boys, is normalised and not particularly seen as a violent activity that warrants attention, according to the study respondents. During initial conversations with teachers and parents, they passed off these incidents as trivial, and something that was normal during this age of adolescence. In one of the discussions with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher remarked:

“This is the age when such things (physical fights among boys) are very common. They get resolved on their own.”

Since at this age boys do not have the understanding to differentiate between right and wrong, fights often break out, which get resolved between the students themselves and very rarely involve teachers. It was also very clearly argued that there were usually no cases of physical violence against girls or among them.

2.1.1.3. Verbal violence and bullying

Verbal abuse or any form of bullying is seen as routine and part of everyday life and not something that constitutes violence, as articulated by the respondents at both the study sites. In some interactions with teachers in Tamil Nadu, instances of girls being mocked and verbally abused due to their skin color or height emerged more prominently. Teachers also pointed out that boys often used indecent language or pass comments against girls in schools. While some matters are taken up seriously by teachers, many said that in most cases, these matters should be ignored since it was done in a spirit of fun. They insisted that it should not be seen as an act of violence, but a factor of their age. However, one respondent did point out that often boys on being taunted

or mocked by girls did retaliate more strongly in comparison to girls.

In discussions with teachers in Tamil Nadu, it was clearly articulated that eve-teasing and harassment of girls did take place in schools, though on a much lower scale than what happened outside. Boys often pass comments against girls and try to touch them forcibly. In a conversation with a teacher in Tamil Nadu, she remarked:

“The boys are able to easily tease girls; they try to tease the girls; try to brush against them on purpose and then the girls complain to me.”

The situation is a little different in Bihar, as teachers and parents very clearly mentioned that eve-teasing or harassment had very rarely been reported by girls. In a conversation with a teachers group in Bihar, a teacher said:

“Harassment of girls outside the school does happen. But within school premises it is uncommon. Also, these things are more common in urban areas, and not in rural parts.”

Another form of verbal abuse that came up in discussions, from both study sites, was the use of caste-based slurs. While the teachers did mention that the use of caste-based slurs and abuses were not commonly heard in schools anymore, interactions with officials working with local NGOs, as well as with the government, particularly in Bihar, brought out a different reality. They articulated the deep prevalence of caste-based abuses in school spaces, especially during fights and arguments. This was particularly the case with more interior villages, with high caste teachers or students often refusing to call out socially disadvantaged children by their names, and instead using their caste names. For instance, teachers would often use slurs like ‘musaharva’ for students of the Musahar or the Scheduled

Caste community in Bihar. This practice is seen not just among the savarna or dominant caste teachers (Brahmin or Rajputs) but even among the OBC teachers. In some places, unknowingly slurs like ‘chor-chamar’ are used, where the term chor (thief) is equated with the Scheduled Caste group of chamars. Even conversations with parents revealed that while teachers may hesitate to openly use caste-based abuses, there are subtle ways in which caste-based discrimination works in schools, mostly in the form of verbal abuse.

A parent in Bihar narrated an incident of how teachers expressed surprise when students from socially disadvantaged caste groups performed well academically. He said:

“Even if upper caste students are foolish, teachers make them sit in the front, whereas if a lower caste child is doing well, he or she is made fun of. This makes the lower caste children more aggressive.”

In Tamil Nadu, respondents agreed that caste distinction was maintained in the social order despite so many years of reservation and awareness programs as well as better standards of education in the last few decades. They also stressed that even within schools, caste was a factor in teachers’ biases towards certain students as well as in serving of mid-day meals and seating arrangements within the classroom and this had only started to change in recent years. For instance, one headmaster in Tamil Nadu observed that being an outsider (from another community) he had to work extra hard to change teachers’ mindsets about children from socially disadvantaged castes. He narrated that for a long time, children from socially disadvantaged castes were asked to bring their own utensils to school for having the mid-day meals and would sit separately and eat.

2.1.1.4. Sexual abuse of students by teachers/adults in school space

Discussions with both teachers and parents revealed that there were only stray incidents reported of sexual abuse committed by teachers against students. In one of the discussions with teachers in Bihar, one teacher narrated an incident of a male teacher regularly abusing a young girl in the school. The male teacher would poke the girl on her breasts with a pen. The girl complained to her parents and an enquiry was ordered. After the enquiry, it was revealed that he had misbehaved with several girls. He was subsequently removed from his position. However, most teachers and parents mentioned that such episodes were rare.

In one of the KIIs in Tamil Nadu, the respondent narrated an incident about a girl student complaining about a teacher of touching her inappropriately. The teacher was reprimanded. However, the respondent went on to explain that the girl was manipulative and made an unnecessary case out of an “unintended” touch by the teacher. Eventually the girl’s parents were asked to pull her out of the school. In another narration during an FGD in Tamil Nadu, a teacher noted how one parent who used to drop his daughter to the school would come a little earlier in the morning, stay back, and would touch adolescent girls inappropriately while they were coming to school.

2.1.2. Forms of violence outside school

In the context of understanding SGBV, within the frame of rigid gender norms and the school as a site, it is important to lay out the related

structural enablers and barriers. These are typically beyond interpersonal factors that lead to violence, directly or indirectly. Hence, this section of the report briefly discusses an overview of macro, ecological² issues that influence the exposure to and experience of violence by young girls and boys. These factors range from culturally entrenched power relations between men and women, how boys and girls socialize into respective gender roles; and the larger, socio-political, economic and policy factors.

2.1.2.1. Harassment of school going girls

One of the most common problems, as discussed by both parents and teachers, is the harassment and eve-teasing faced by girls on their way to school. The area covered in both the states is predominantly poor and students come from economically backward families. Hence, most of them have to either walk or use public transport to reach school. On their way to school, or while coming back, they are often harassed by boys and men, who whistle, or call them names and pass comments in sexually offensive language. This is a problem which is faced more acutely by girls who live in far-off villages that do not have any higher secondary school facilities. Boys also tend to gather in front of schools to tease or taunt girls. In a conversation with a parents’ group in Bihar, a mother remarked:

“Harassment of girls on the roads is very common. On the way to school, boys might play some song on the mobile to tease them. These keep happening, making life difficult for girls.”

² Feminist theorists have focused on male-dominated social structures and socialization practices that teach men and women gender-specific roles that can influence violence and abuse against women. In the past decade or so, scholars have argued that a complete understanding of violence against women requires acknowledging factors operating on multiple levels. Ecological frameworks,, have been applied to studies on violence against women to demonstrate that there are factors exogenous to individual women that interact to increase their vulnerability to violence.

Girls hesitate to retaliate or speak out against it, out of the fear that they might be physically harmed. Parents and teachers also train girls to not speak out against harassment who feel that the best recourse to this menace is for girls to ignore the boys. In many conversations, on being asked how girls can protect themselves from this difficulty, both parents and teachers said that girls should learn to ignore, since it was difficult to change attitudes and habits of boys which had been cultivated since time immemorial. In one of the conversations with a parents group in Bihar, a parent said:

"If girls are verbally harassed or abused, they should ignore. Only when they are touched forcibly should they bring it up."

Another parent from Bihar maintained:

"If girls revolt, then they will have to face grave consequences. So, they avoid it."

This fear of being harassed or molested often acts as an impediment to girls getting higher education. As the distance of the school increases from their homes, the drop-out rate of girls in schools also increases, as borne out by conversations with government officials as well as parents. In a conversation with a teacher in Bihar, she said:

"Some girls don't even tell their parents that they are being harassed, out of a fear that parents might discontinue their schooling."

A headmaster from Tamil Nadu remarked:

"When they come from home, they may be followed or be teased; specifically, what can girls students do – they have to experience it. Some children enjoy this; some others make plans to curtail this and some others actually fail to curtail this and become resigned to it; that they will be teased on the way to school; they are not able to do anything about it."

Elaborating further about harassment of girls from boys who belong to other schools, he said:

"Those schools (schools around this one) have students who get more than 400 marks – all brilliant students – they stand here – look at girls, pass comments; this has become habitual for them; this they learn from cinema, social media."

Teachers mentioned how girls needed to behave in a certain manner so as to be able to 'avoid' violent behaviour. In a conversation with a teachers' group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher remarked:

"If the girl responds properly the first time, then they will not continue, it is only when she does not respond properly the first time, that they progress to the next time."

In another conversation with a teachers group in Bihar, a male teacher remarked that violence may be difficult to prevent in co-educational institutions, since during adolescence, boys are bound to look at girls with a 'sexual gaze' and hence the only option to prevent violence is to have separate schooling for boys and girls.

Teachers also remarked that often it was the girls' clothing that attracted unwanted attention from boys and led to violence. Hence, girls must dress up more responsibly to avoid violent situations:

"Girl students wear skirt and shirt from VI- VIII; I feel that they should avoid it. Earlier they used to wear a uniform with a vest. Most of these girls are mature; many parents are not mindful of buying them the right underwear. When they come on cycles, we ourselves feel strange; then imagine the reaction of the male staff; there are many male staff in this school. They should at least wear a coat on top."

2.1.2.3. Lack of usable toilets in schools

Another insidious form of violence that often acts as an impediment to adolescent girls going or continuing to go to schools is the absence of usable and functional toilets within school premises. This was a problem that came out more overtly in conversations with teachers and parents in Bihar, all of whom pointed out that most government schools did not have functional toilets. Some toilets remain locked, while others are used only by teachers. In schools that have toilets, the maintenance is very poor, since there is an absence of running or piped water in the toilets. In a situation when over 200 students use the same toilet, toilets get dirty. While boys can opt to go outside to relieve themselves, girls find it more difficult and hence end up not relieving themselves at all throughout the school hours. Even when they do, they have to opt for places that are safe and covered, as girls are particularly vulnerable to violence from men when they go out to fields to relieve themselves, a fact that has been borne out by multiple data sources. During their menstrual periods, mothers reported that girls avoided coming to school altogether, since they were unable to use the toilets. In a conversation with an NGO representative, he remarked:

“There is a lack of water in the toilets. This is clearly violence against girls. They are not in a position to use the toilets. They have to control and not drink water. They have to go outside, and to areas that are not properly covered. Boys can go anywhere.”

While toilet construction has become a priority area for the government under the flagship scheme called the Swachha Bharat Abhiyan, the implementation has been rather patchy, leading to many girls unwilling to attend regular school, which has to be understood as a form of violence against them. In Bihar, for instance, a teacher observed:

“Although there is so much money being given to us for the Swachha Bharat Scheme, there are no toilets in schools. Where will the senior [older] girls go? Most of them have to be granted leave during their periods. My hands are tied, I cannot ask them to come to school if we have no facilities”.

The issue of toilets was also raised during interactions in Tamil Nadu, especially in schools which were not located in urban areas and for children who came from very deprived backgrounds and might not have toilet facilities where they resided. For instance, a teacher from one of the remote schools remarked:

“Children are also sent to fetch water from adjoining fields sometimes. They also have to be taken for their daily baths or they venture out on their own if there are known neighbors near school or distant relatives. During the time that they are out of school, they are vulnerable to be accosted by unknown individuals”.

2.2. The cycle of violence: Causes

The key issues that emerged from our discussions with multiple stakeholders in this study, namely, parent groups and SMCs, teacher groups, school principals, (government) education officers and representatives from key NGOs in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, were centered around children’s exposure to violence in the domestic space, lack of role models, abuse and discrimination based on caste, vulnerability to violence outside of and around school spaces, lack of safety for girls commuting long distances, lack of toilets in schools leading to absenteeism during menstruation and so on. Most of these were beyond the scope of examination in the present study. Yet, these are notably important since they form the environment in which the study has taken place. To understand what risks and opportunities exist for young boys and girls and how they assume different positions in the context of violence, it is crucial to understand

the environment they inhabit. In Tamil Nadu, a parent said:

“About 90% of people in these surroundings see boys and girls differently. About 10 % where the parents are educated, they see them as equal; if it’s a girl then they’ll send her to work [in the fields or in the household]; a boy they’ll let him roam free.”

In exploring the causes for the multiple forms of violence seen in schools as well as outside, the study found that expressions and experiences of violence were largely determined by a diverse set of factors, ranging from witnessing violence while growing up, familial experiences in relation to violence as well as the pressures and fears that grounded the many forms of manhood. In conversations with respondents, all these factors revealed themselves as underlying themes that either caused violence directly or created conditions for the perpetration of violence. These have been discussed below:

2.2.1. Familial and contextual causes of violence

In many conversations, it was borne out consistently that the family environment played a very important role in shaping children’s attitudes towards violence. In Tamil Nadu, teachers mentioned how many children in these schools belonged to broken families, where either one or both parents were missing. In such circumstances, children grow up in an environment marked by neglect and abandonment, which can result in increased aggression among them. In Tamil Nadu and Bihar, stakeholders mentioned how children were also often witness to violent encounters between their parents, both in the form of verbal and physical abuse. This often shapes their attitudes towards violence, feeding in them the idea that violence in inter-personal relationships is permissible. In a conversation

with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher remarked:

“For some children, the family atmosphere is not healthy; they learn inappropriate words from the family that they start to use – if we were to ask the boy what that word means, they may not be able to explain. So, they learn these things at an age when they are not able to understand what it means. Some children also see fighting between parents. They get caught in these problems.”

Indicating outside circumstances that contribute towards SGBV, he added:

“I knew another boy, just about 11, his parents had gone their separate ways when he was younger. As a result, the boy grew up in a strange way. By the time he was 11, he was already looking at girls with a sexual gaze. So, these are situations, outside, that influence the child, either in the family or in the society around them.”

Teachers also pointed towards the contextual influences that often impact a child’s predilection towards violence. In conversations with teachers and parents, it came out that their immediate social contexts and environments were marked by violence, either in the form of abusive language or use of force in everyday situations. Children pick up on these influences and internalise these behaviour patterns as ‘normal’. A teacher in Tamil Nadu, during a conversation remarked:

“In our school, very few children come from close by, the majority travel by bus. When they come in the bus from villages, people when they see students, use vulgar words and behave badly; when they experience this, it leaves an impact on the children.”

Teachers and parents spoke about the role of peer groups in encouraging certain types of behaviour, which might be violent or increase

the likelihood of boys committing violence. Parent groups in Tamil Nadu spoke about the increasing trend of alcohol consumption among adolescent boys, and how such behaviour quickly spread among boys belonging to a particular peer group. This has a potential role in increasing the chances of these boys committing violence.

"We can teach children but eventually it all depends on the friendships they cultivate. One boy may be good, another one may be rowdy, another one may smoke, and another may drink alcohol; only when they all come together does the set become violent."

Overall, in Tamil Nadu, many parents locate discussions about violence in the larger context of parenting and parent - child relations and communication. This indicates a need for GBV prevention interventions to address the larger context of parenting as well. Similarly, teachers believing that children learn violent language, behaviour, attitudes from disturbed families/parents/neighborhoods points to the need for intervention at multiple levels - violence in society/violence in the family/violence in school. How much all of this can be handled within the school is an important consideration.

A principal in Tamil Nadu explained:

"Most of our children's parents go out to work and they may leave word with the neighbours that if their child comes home, they should take care of them; they use these children to do their household chores and then there may be a boy in their house who misuses them - he may send them out to buy a beedi or a cigarette and then the child thinks - why should I not try this. If it is a girl, they may ask her to clean and wash and then this makes the situation for sexual violence as well. They are unable to oppose it due to their family situation, their young age, their own ignorance."

Another teacher, also from Tamil Nadu, observed how unfortunate family situation led to students going astray:

"We have this instance of a girl, whose father left the family to be with another woman, her mother started socializing with another man and this girl, seeing her mother 'go on the wrong path', goes to her grandparents where she does not feel welcome and then she does not know where else to go; she feels abandoned on the middle of the road. So the 'social situation' (he means family situation) is the reason why children are distracted."

In Bihar, the key barrier to children's education and reason for exposure to unsafe, vulnerable situation was due to engagement in work to support family earnings. As narrated by a teacher, *"in this area, a lot of students belong to the Scheduled Caste (Dalit) community such as Paswan, Mahto etc. and most of these students belong to economically poor families, in which parents are involved in agricultural labor or other forms of manual labor. This is in any case a poor area, as there are no irrigation facilities and water supply are completely dependent on natural sources. Only 5-10 per cent of students come from relatively better off families. The rest all belong to economically marginalized groups. There are some children who in addition to schooling are also expected to work outside to run their families. Some of the work includes, lifting loads, household work, etc. Once they go back home after school, they again have to work. Many students also assist their parents and families in carrying out agricultural labor. This is more prominent during the agricultural season such as harvesting. At that time, attendance of children goes down."* Additionally, *"Girls commuting to the fields or construction sites, or remaining alone in the house for housework or to take care of younger siblings are constantly under the threat of abuse."*

In Tamil Nadu, alcoholism and extra marital affairs were cited as dominant factors for children's exposure to violent behaviour and emotional distress within the family. In Bihar, larger deprivation and a general culture of violence act as a precursor to violent behaviour within the family and in the communities.

2.2.2. Role of mass media and technology

Teachers and parents pointed towards the easy access that children had, to different forms of media and technology. Through this, they get easy access to different materials of explicit content, which may lead to the practice of violent behaviour among them. Children use internet without much adult supervision, which gives them access to pictures, videos or any content that may not be for their consumption. Violent pornographic content is also easily accessible to them, which often acts as a factor for children wanting to play out these violent roles in their real lives. In Bihar, a key informant narrated that while familiarity with mobile phones and explicit content begins very early for boys because of greater access to a peer group of older boys, even for girls the same is true, albeit at an older age. This was true for Tamil Nadu as well. The reason cited was that since boys spent more time out of house and their socialisation was broader, they got to know of online content early in their teenage, which could be as young as 11 which influenced their views about the opposite sex.

A teacher in Tamil Nadu remarked during a conversation:

"We were talking about the right age of maturity; watching TV or other forms of media is also a reason- when children watch intimate scenes, then they also imagine several relationships and then their gaze towards other students becomes a reaction. Some children who are under control remain alright. Those without supervision, get affected by this."

Some teachers also mentioned how cinema, particularly the representation of heroes in films impacted how children perceived gender roles, and consequently the practice of violence. Children get easily influenced by how male heroes are represented as overtly masculine, aggressive and powerful, while women are more subdued and mellow. In a discussion with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher remarked:

"Some boys do these things because they visualise themselves a movie 'hero'; the girls remain quiet."

This perception of boys being 'aggressive' and girls being 'mellow' often plays out in more violent forms in real life, as girls are routinely subject to harassment and stalking by boys, behaviour which has been 'normalized' through popular culture. This also results in girls being socialized into a culture of silence, where they grow up to be meek, disempowered individuals who are unable to exercise agency against harassment.

2.2.3. Infrastructural deficiencies

As discussed earlier, infrastructural deficiencies also play a role in increasing the likelihood of violence, both in the context of teachers perpetrating violence against students and teachers being able to keep a check on students committing acts of violence against each other. In almost all discussions with teachers, students as well as government officials, it came out that paucity of resources in the form of inadequate teachers for the total number of children in schools as well as logistical gaps such as dysfunctional toilets or classrooms, deeply impact the prevalence of violence in school settings. Teachers routinely spoke about their inability to control such large groups of students. Boys end up fighting with each other or indulging in violent behaviour against girls, without teachers coming to know

of such cases. Additionally, in circumstances of resource crunch, teachers find the use of physical violence against students an easier method of disciplining them, instead of trying to communicate or counsel them. In an interaction with a teachers group in Tamil Nadu, a teacher remarked:

“Some schools have strength of 450 students. Some classes have strength of 150 students. In such circumstances, it is not possible for teachers to pay attention to individual students and control them.”

Further, they said, “our facilities are already very meager; there is only one teacher for each subject and then when classes are combined – more than 100 students in one class- we cannot even seat them comfortably, what we want to teach them does not go and reach them. Not only does he [students] not understand, he is distracted also because it is co-ed; the disturbance from outside is also there.”

DISCUSSION

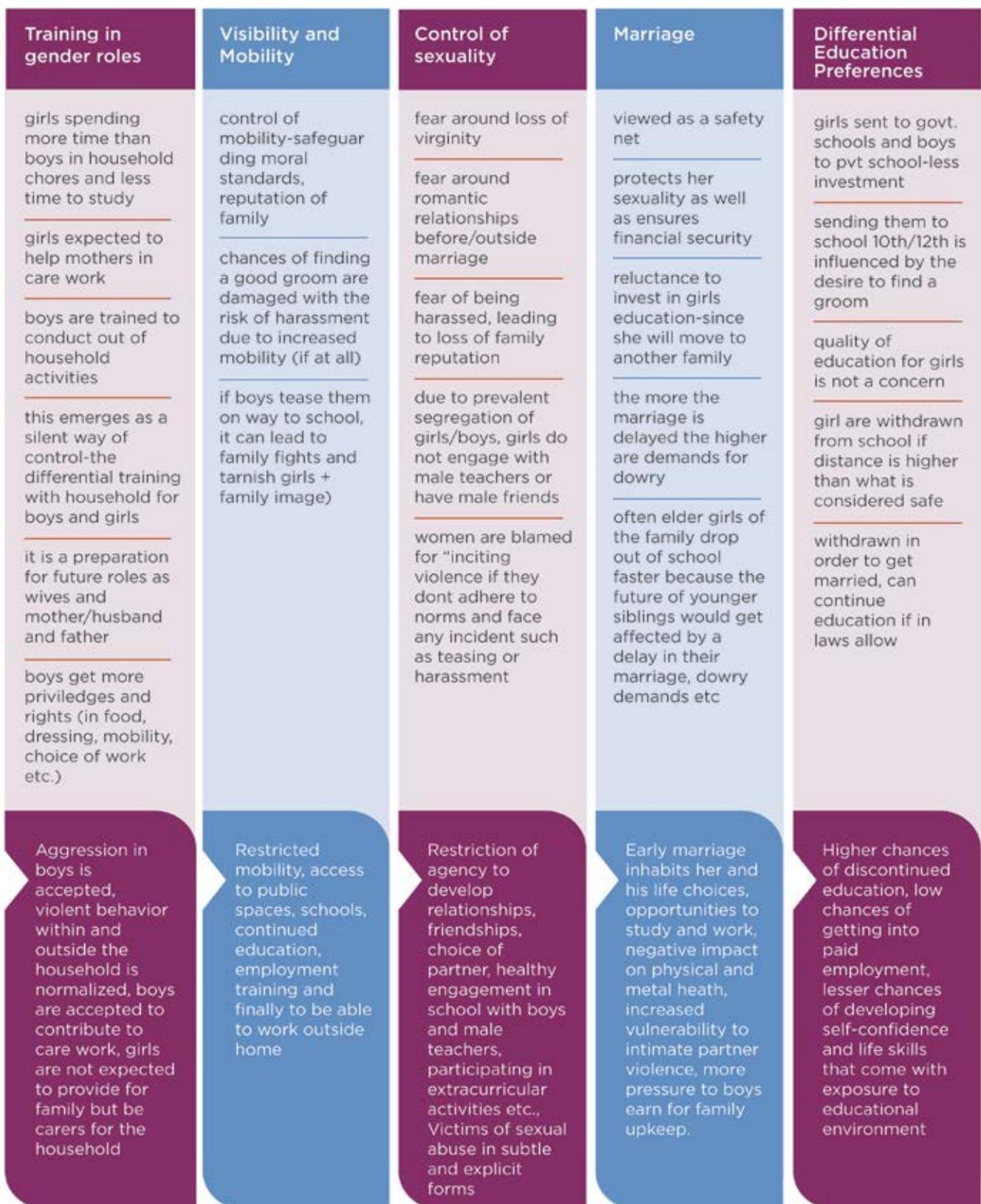
The study explored perceptions of teachers, parents, headmasters, SMCs and other key individuals in and around the school space in the given geographies, i.e., Shiv Sagar and Rohtas blocks in Rohtas district, Bihar and Kallakurichi and Villupuram blocks in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu.

The key themes explored were around gender norms for girls and boys, their issues in general and specifically within the school space, probable causes leading to these issues, experiences of violence, forms and reasons of violence amongst adolescent girls and boys, disciplining methods used in school

and reporting/redressal structures existing to address instances of abuse/violence for school children.

As narrated in the preceding section on findings, a considerable amount of data speaks about gender norms (held within the school and outside of it), practices emerging from these norms and how these are adapted in the lives of children. Based on this, several linkages are evident (as discussed in subsequent sections) between the normative structuring of adolescent lives and the different forms of violence they experience.

FIGURE-1: INTER-LINKAGES BETWEEN NORMS, PRACTICES AND VIOLENCE



The two key bases for the study are the group under focus and the platform under consideration, i.e., the focus of the study is on adolescents in the school space as discussed earlier. It is important to bear in mind the peculiarities, challenges and opportunities inherent in choosing to focus on adolescents and using the school as the focus of consideration for the study to set the context for the discussion ahead.

Rigid, embedded and inequitable gender norms have been spoken about abundantly and clearly position themselves as reasons for multiple practices as borne out in the study; such as differential preferences for education of boys and girls, high dropout of girls from higher secondary school, early marriage for girls, mobility restrictions on girls, aggressive behaviour of boys and so on. Unequal gender norms and patriarchal value systems privilege male rights and entitlements, which lays the base for future violence in society. These actions include various acts of violence which have also been highlighted in the study findings earlier.

The linkages between norms, resulting practices and expression of control and violence are illustrated through Figure-1. As it shows, there are several norms discussed in the previous section which operate from within the household and from the school, translate into unequal power relations between girls and boys, women and men. Accepted practices in the study areas, such as, restricting girls' mobility, making them drop out of school after they hit puberty, curbing their interaction with individuals outside the household, sending them to study in government schools instead of private schools because of difference in the perceived quality of education et al are often linked to safeguarding the accepted

moral standards for girls. This has two primary purposes, one is that their reputation and chances of finding a groom are not tarnished while the second being to preserve the closely linked social credibility and honor of the family. Marriage, in this context, hence warrants a discussion because of its linkages with the educational attainment of girls, their reduced chances of working outside home and gaining financial independence, their roles after marriage, their identity formation in adolescence, their vulnerability to violence and so on which are beyond the scope of this research to elaborate at length. Further, the severe social sanction of girls agreeing to partners selected for them for marriage based on caste, religion, class makes it extremely difficult for girls to marry out of choice. This makes them vulnerable to emotional and physical abuse, since their decision to stay or leave in the marriage is also implicitly not with them, but rests on family honor.

Marriage, as an institution and as a social structure, is closely linked to the conversation around gender norms. As reported by a study on early and child marriages³, families are mostly aware of the legal age of marriage for girls, however, their decisions on when to marry them off are dependent on the *"the fact that a family's social status is directly linked with their daughters' purity and chastity. The families' concern about controlling their daughters' sexuality and preserving their family honor ultimately outweighed their desire to delay her marriage to a more ideal, adult age."*

This also leads us to the anxiety around romantic relationships between adolescent girls and boys and their engaging in intimate behaviour stems from the prevailing gender norms that view physical or sexual intimacy between adolescents as deeply subversive of carefully

³ <https://ajws.org/blog/factors-affect-girls-age-marriage-india-top-five-take-aways-study-telangana/>

established rules. These rules, as borne out in multiple discussions, dictate that chastity and sexuality of young girls must be preserved, lest they bring dishonor to the family. Any flouting of these rules is met with strict resistance, which may lead to girls being disallowed from going to school, and in some cases extreme physical violence as well. Sometimes, these relationships also disturb the carefully established norms governing caste alliances and hierarchies in the region and can lead to violence between different caste groups. In one incident narrated by an NGO representative, this nature of violence came to light. A relationship had developed between a boy belonging to a socially disadvantaged community and a girl from a socially disadvantaged caste. The girl's family perceived this as an affront to their honor and threatened to kill the boy. After much counseling and mediation by the NGO, the matter was resolved. In most cases, a resolution of such cases ends in marriage—either a marriage between the two-people involved or the girl dropping out of school and being married off.

Viewing the interplay of norms and practices in the expression of violence is important. Norms become important to understand when they uphold violence as an acceptable way to exercise control and power. Hence, the sharp differences between gender norms and resulting gender roles often get magnified due to the tendency within male socialisation patterns to include an element of ownership for men and control over women. Inequitable role allocation and deep-rooted gender socialisation mean not only that girls while growing up are deprived of many rights and privileges but that boys gain these (such as autonomy, mobility, opportunity and power) as they enter adolescence, simultaneously (Know Violence in Childhood, 2017). This also means that young

boys are often prone to more physical violence, both within and outside the school, are exposed to bullying and explicit material on media sooner than girls, and normalize aggressive and controlling behaviour very early in their adolescence. Very crucially linked to these norms of masculinity is the exercise of violence. The behaviour of men, particularly their sexual behaviour, is very often influenced by a desire to assert their masculinity and takes the form of overt or covert violence.

The expression of sexual and gender violence was explored majorly with respect to two forms, in this study. Firstly, respondents were asked about disciplining methods used within the school and what interpersonal forms of violence did they observe in school and secondly, the forms experienced by girls and boys outside the school space. As narrated in the section on findings, despite the government banning the use of any form of physical violence by teachers, corporal punishment (and replacement methods) is clearly still being used quite commonly (Gershoff, 2017), both as an instrument to instill fear among students as well to control them in classrooms. Both in the primary interactions as well as in the literature, school corporal punishment is highly gendered, with boys being more likely than girls to experience⁴ it. Corporal punishment stands as one of the primary reasons for boys to drop out of school. Research also suggests that corporal punishment interferes with children's learning by impairing their interest to learn and instilling a dislike for school. It is also linked with mental health and behavioural problems as it is often emotionally humiliating for children and is the strongest predictor of depression among school children (Elbla, 2012). A study to estimate the costs of school corporal punishment places it equivalent to 0.64% of GDP of India (Pereznieto, Harper, Clench, & Coarasa, 2010).

⁴ In India the estimates are 83% boys vs 73% girls

Peer to peer violence among adolescent boys, in the form of ganging up for physical fights, verbal and physical bullying also emerged strongly in the school context. In a recent estimate, in the South Asian context, out of every 1000 children, 790 children in the age of 13-15 years engage in acts of bullying and physical fights (Know Violence in Childhood, 2017). Similarly, for girls in the age group of 15-19 years, physical and sexual violence stands at 294 per 1000 children. As boys and girls grow up, their exposure to physical violence and sexual violence for boys and girls respectively, increases. This is corroborated by the findings of this study as well as global literature.

Outside the school space, one of the major forms of violence experienced was linked to harassment faced by girls on the roads. The fear of harassment on roads is inbuilt to the extent of making girls choose to stay at home rather than continue schooling, especially if the school is far. Numerous sources⁵⁶⁷ cite long distances and perceived threat of violence on the way as one of the major problems in retaining girls in higher secondary school, despite schemes providing bicycles, bus travel vouchers, et al. The respondents also point to the fact that a girl who has faced any form of sexual harassment or molestation is seen by society as 'dishonorable', thereby making her marriage prospects dimmer and less hopeful. Also, families train girls to not retaliate or speak out against violence, since it increases the chances of girls facing more acute forms of violence, such as rape. This fear leads to many girls being forced to stay at home, after the end of middle school, or forced to get married after the end of middle or high school, as families are continually under pressure to preserve and protect the 'chastity' of their daughters. In most

scenarios, the girls do not have prospects of choosing their partners and of getting married beyond their caste, class and social sub-group. The same reasons also apply to girls missing school during periods due to lack of toilets or unusable toilets in the school. Having to go to the fields, desolate areas or any public space for any reason makes young girls vulnerable to violence and abuse.

An important factor emerging out of the study in all forms of control and violence is caste dynamics and its layered implications for young girls and boys. In all discussions and interviews, respondents point to the enhanced vulnerability of adolescent boys from socially disadvantaged castes to violence and physical fights with boys from a dominant caste. Similarly, girls from a socially disadvantaged caste are more prone to verbal violence, teasing, harassment and sexual abuse from both- boys from their own caste and those from a dominant caste. At the study sites, most of the student groups were homogeneous in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds. Despite this, teachers and parents mentioned about caste-based discrimination within school to some extent. However, while considering children's vulnerability to violence outside the school space, it is important to consider overarching power structures and social norms, such as those mediated by caste.

Last, but not the least, the persistent denial of violence⁸ in schools, among children also could be indicative of the 'normalisation' of violence that often makes it difficult for people to recognize the more covert forms of violence. Most teachers and parents recognised physical violence and sexual violence, but other forms of violence such as teasing, verbal abuse, emotional abuse or bullying were not seen

⁵ <https://scroll.in/article/839162/school-is-still-too-far-for-many-girls-in-haryana-and-they-are-now-rising-in-protest>
⁶ <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/iXWvKng7uU4L8vo5XbDn9I/The-high-dropout-rate-of-girls-in-India.html>
⁷ <http://schooldropoutprevention.com/country-data-activities/india/>
⁸ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243214526468>

as violent behaviour. The concurrent rhetoric around “boys will be boys” with respect to their aggressive behaviour, sexual gaze towards women and general violent attitude in public spaces is also a form of normalization. This normalization promotes adverse notions of

masculinity and femininity for boys and girls and acceptability to gendered cultural norms, which encourage a culture of violence for men and boys and a culture of silence for women and girls

BEHAVIOURS, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES THAT CAN BE TARGETED

The previous sections have elaborated on the crucial role played by gender unequal norms in the perpetuation of SGBV. Therefore, behaviours, knowledge and attitudes that uphold gender discriminatory norms must be targeted through a potential intervention. It is important to help students recognise the differential value attached to boys and girls by society and how this can lead to violence at early ages. A gender transformative approach can be utilised that involves recognising and understanding the social construction of gender and patriarchy and how it is reflected in everyday actions that we undertake (Achyut, P. et. al. 2016):

- Students can be trained and educated about their understanding of what are desirable and acceptable roles for girls and boys. It could be in relation to division of responsibilities between men and women in the domains of household work and child care as well as paid work outside home.
- Attitudes surrounding gender unequal norms such as differential educational opportunities presented to boys and girls, differences in autonomy and mobility of the sexes, as well as distribution of food and other resources within the household (Achyut, P, et, al. 2011).
- Attitudes related to desirable gender attributes can be targeted. For instance, the tremendous focus on the need for boys to be masculine and ‘strong’ or for girls to be

‘compliant’ and ‘obedient’ – there could be possible targeting of why these attributes are considered necessary and further scrutinising of the same (Achyut, P, et, al. 2011).

- Building an understanding of patriarchy and how schools as institutions perpetrate it. Sessions can be used to build a broader understanding of patriarchy, power, gender discrimination and violence, and examine the role of schools within that. For instance, opinions on friendships and interactions between boys and girls in classrooms, girls playing outdoor sports, encouragement given to girls for school work, violence faced by students in classrooms, etc. (Achyut, P. et. al. 2016).
- Attitudes towards sexuality and body – this could include sessions on body mapping, body changes, physical attraction towards girls or boys, respect for one’s own body as well as other’s body (Achyut, P, et, al. 2011).
- Building of knowledge around different forms of abuse and violence, both within and outside school spaces as well as attitudes and behaviours that justify violence against women and children (Achyut, P, et, al. 2011).
- Within the school space, along with students, behaviours and attitudes of teachers also needs to be targeted. Self-examination of one’s own life experiences and emotions connected with discrimination and inequality through self-reflective sessions where teachers are encouraged to look at their lives, journeys and discriminations is one of the ways in which attitudes can be targeted (Achyut, P. et. al. 2016).

EXISTING RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE

While investigating the various forms of violence, the study explored the different mechanisms and tools that were being used at the ground level by the different stakeholders to respond to issues and instances of violence

within school spaces as well as in the community. It was found that parents, teachers as well as local NGOs and CBOs were also using different techniques to respond to violence. Some of these have been discussed below.

RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE BY TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

We probed for how parents, teachers as well as schools usually respond to instances of violence within the school space. The study investigated whether formal means for redress were existent and how well did formal bodies like the School Management Committees or Parent Teacher Associations functioned (if they existed) to address issues at systems level within the school. Our research revealed that responses to violence existed at several levels, and several people ranging from school principals, teachers and parents intervened for different purposes. Some of the measures used were:

Providing counsel to children

Talking to children on a one-on-one basis to explain to them how their behaviour was unacceptable and/or advising children on improving their behaviour was the most common strategy that emerged out of the data. These chats with students were used to tackle a variety of issues ranging from poor performance in studies, peer to peer violence, bullying to dealing with attraction between students. While in most cases the teachers addressed these issues on an individual basis, in some schools only the head of the school addressed these matters. In these one-to-one talks with students, teachers reported that they highlighted to the students' importance

of concentrating on their studies, respecting the fact that their parents were working hard to send them to school and in some cases calling parents to meet the teacher and talking to parents. The goal of these "counseling" interactions was largely to ensure school attendance and improve the academic performance.

Although the previous sections of the reports have presented data where teachers were aware of problems in the families of the students, none of the teachers or school principals reported addressing difficulties that students might be facing at home, as the predominant concern was around academic performance and maintaining discipline within the school. Informal "counseling" within the teacher-student interaction was a phenomenon that was commonly reported across both the study sites. At neither of the study sites, was such counseling mandated or made systematically available, but took place on a need-basis and was dependent on the motivation of an individual teacher or school principal. However, teachers in Tamil Nadu did explicitly mention the need to hire "professional counselors" as they felt that children would feel more comfortable opening up and responding to outsiders and that the teachers did not have the time to take on the additional responsibility of counseling. However, respondents in Bihar did not acknowledge the need for hiring a trained school counsellor.

Involving parents in dealing with issues of violence

Several school teachers mentioned that they did involve parents of the students through parent-teacher interactions. Further probing revealed that these interactions mainly focused on discussing the academic progress of the students and in some cases bringing to parents' attention the issues of attraction amongst students. These meetings with parents usually were held once a year and with students from class 10th. As compared to the government schools, the aided minority schools had a regular mechanism of inviting parents to schools for meetings to discuss the academic progress of their children, but the teachers noted that they faced challenges in ensuring that parents attended these meeting and mentioned that, "the parents don't come to the meeting; now the last meeting, the parents needed to come to sign on the application for the 10th standard students; in the first round only 12 out of 40 parents had come; the others did not come (even for such an important reason). There needs to be awareness programs for parents."

A difference in the way these meetings were prioritised was observed in the different schools (government and minority aided schools), both in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, the aided minority schools had a mechanism that was institutionalised for these meetings to take place, whereas in the government run schools, the efforts were inconsistent. In Bihar as well, the government high school closer to the block headquarters had institutionalised the yearly parent teacher meeting, as the Principal of the school prioritised the results of the school and took pride in various achievements by their students, which were proudly displayed to the research team during their visit. However, in the more remote and rural schools (both in Tamil Nadu and Bihar), the school administration did not have any such planned institutionalised

meetings and the interactions with parents were need-based to discuss disciplinary issues as they arose.

On probing the parents' experiences of meeting with teachers, there was a gender dynamic that unfolded. In the FGDs, mothers mostly reported being unaware of such meetings since their husbands attended these and did not share the information with their wives. When asked if the parents ever raised issues other than their children's studies, like lack of toilets in school or teasing outside school compound, the response was usually in the negative. Also, while in the minority aided schools in Tamil Nadu, parent-teacher associations were formalised, most government schools did not have these. Setting up of such associations could provide a potential entry point to address issues beyond academic performance of students and could raise important issues around violence in schools, providing a viable platform to work collaboratively with school and community of parents on important issues.

School assembly

Schools reported using other mechanisms of raising awareness around issues of discrimination within students. For example, a school principal while acknowledging that caste plays a role in violence shared his following strategy for preventing caste-based discrimination:

"During our morning assembly, we explain to students clearly that there should be no insults or abuse on the basis of caste. In our school, there is a lot of focus of moral education. This is a school based on moral values. We have assembly every day in the morning. This is a mission school, based on moral values and students are given lectures on moral values every day in the morning assembly by the principal as well as teachers. This has a positive impact on students."

Similarly, minority aided schools used morning assembly to talk about moral behaviour and values. Various topics addressed in these school morning assemblies included topics from importance of personal care, values, importance of cleanliness, etc. The mechanism of morning assembly was again used variedly between the two states. While all minority aided schools across both states held morning assemblies, only one government high school in Bihar reported using morning assembly as a platform to raise issues beyond academics with the students.

Moral Science classes

Minority aided schools were the only set of schools that regularly conducted classes on “moral education”. All the teacher participants in the study cited these lectures as being preventive in nature and felt that this was a platform that ‘educated’ students about leading a moral life and teach children values. When further probed it was observed that moral education although touch moral values, did not cover topics of gender, violence and discrimination. The government schools did not report holding any such classes.

RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE BY SMCs

Under the RTE Act⁹, SMCs are a representative body of community members and parents to work with the school on development and implementation of school development plans. The SMC is also a mechanism to help parents communicate with schools and hold schools accountable for ensuring implementation of provisions under various schemes, such as, mid-day meal, adequate infrastructure in the schools, etc. Therefore, SMC is an important formal mechanism to hold schools accountable and collaborate with schools for development of schools.

Our research showed that there was a difference in the status of SMCs in both the study states. In Tamil Nadu, there was a stay order on formation of SMC in minority aided schools. These schools have formed their own Parent Teacher Associations as described above. The stay order did not apply to government schools. During the course of data collection, however, the research team could not find an active SMC to interview. On the other hand, in Bihar SMCs were existent but largely defunct. In fact, while conducting FGDs with parents, the study team realised that most parents did not even know that a provision for SMC existed. However, the study team could successfully conduct FGD with members of a functional SMC in Bihar. The FGD with this SMC was eye opening to the realities within which SMCs function. Discussions revealed that the SMC members primarily saw their role as being that of a watch-dog who were responsible to ensure that the school had adequate provisions for the students as outlines in the RTE Act, like adequate supply and utilisation of ration for mid-day meals or provisions for benches in the school, accurate reporting of school attendance, etc. The FGD revealed that SMC members faced a lot of problems in carrying out their work. For example, one of the members shared:

“As per the RTE we are supposed to get grains and pulses for children, but when I go and check, there is surplus grain that is not returned, instead the teachers, ayahs and headmaster take it with them.”

Similarly, another SMC member said:

“This school has no school compound wall and the toilets that were made are destroyed. We have raised this issue with the school head master, but he hasn’t been doing anything. He does not want to build the school gate and wall, as if that is built, then along with children, he too will be locked inside the gate for the full-day and won’t be able to go home early every day.”

SMC members reported frustration over lack of transparency in schools over fund utilisation, poor quality of education and corrupt practices within school. The course of the discussion revealed that SMC members though acknowledged that issues of violence needed to be raised in the school, they believed that the role of the SMC was primarily focused on the infrastructure needs within the school and devoted their efforts largely towards this aspect.

The situation of the status of SMCs was also noted by representatives of SSA in Bihar. To quote them, “On paper, SMCs are very powerful. But they are not operational in most parts. It is essentially a committee consisting of mothers. Category-wise reservation is provided for mothers in the committee.

⁹ <http://righttoeducation.in/know-your-rte/features>

The ward member of the school is the Chairman of the committee. The Samiti Secretary is one of the mothers. SMCs have to play a very important role. Right from enrolment to everyday management of schools is the responsibility of the SMC. They have to work in tandem with the school authorities. The Mid day meal amount is also passed by the SMC. But SMCs are not operational. Corruption is also a problem. There is both shortage of funds as well as mismanagement.”

The issues of corruption were also raised by the SMC members in the FGD, where one of the office bearers narrated an incident where he went to the block education office to complain against the non-allocation of rations for mid-day meals but he realized that the school principal had already bribed officials at the block level and he eventually lost interest in lodging complaints.

RESPONSE OF THE PANCHAYAT

Although Panchayat members were not purposively sampled in the village where SMC members were interviewed, the research team also interviewed the village Sarpanch, who was earlier also a member of previous SMC. When asked about the role of the village Panchayat in response to violence in school settings, the Sarpanch revealed that as a part of his mandate it was his duty to look after the infrastructure of the village, like roads, water, etc. but did not see that issues of violence within school as being under the purview of the Panchayat. He mentioned that *“Panchayat does address issues of inter-caste affairs, where we try to explain to the girl and boy that they cannot marry. Mostly the girls’ parents marry them quickly and the problem is resolved. ”*When asked about the state of lack of toilets and compound walls in school, the Sarpanch felt that at village level it was difficult to resolve such issues and expressed fear about facing violence himself: *“I know there are a few men who do such things, they come at night and break the toilets, but who will speak against them? They come with knives to fight, so it is best to keep away.”*

INITIATIVES BY LOCAL NGOs/CBOs TO DEAL WITH ISSUES OF GBV WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Fieldwork and review of literature demonstrate that while there exist NGOs and CBOs in the communities that are active, very few are involved in directly dealing with issues of violence faced by adolescent boys and girls. Also, most NGOs work with children outside of the schools, i.e., in communities or with children in difficult situations and do not access children within school settings routinely. While local NGOs work with students on a variety of issues, they have responded to issues of violence indirectly.

External interventions

NGOs like Scope-India, Railway Children-India and Childline work with children in difficult situations, say for instance, runaway children, children on the street, and children facing abuse. These NGOs are mostly experienced in dealing with situations where the child is a victim of violence. They have reported several instances of violence stemming both from home and school. However, they do not particularly operate within the school settings.

Interventions embedded in the schools

The study did explore the work of a few NGOs working within the school and education system that often indirectly deal with issues of violence faced by adolescents. The Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE) and Corstone were two major programs that were explored in Tamil Nadu and Bihar, respectively. Both these programs use different methods of addressing issues with adolescents like gender, mental health, human rights and to some extent violence.

- Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): It has developed and mainstreamed a curriculum called Rights of the Girl Child, which focuses on several issues ranging from child rights and gender to sexual and reproductive health issues with children. The curriculum uses a participatory approach to engage students. The IHRE has successfully institutionalised the curriculum by integrating it within the structure of SSA that ensures capacity building of teachers on issues of gender (see next section).
- Corstone: It works with adolescent students through two programs that are currently running in different districts of Bihar. One such initiative is called “Girls First”. It focuses on working with adolescent girls from classes 8 to 10 in residential schools of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Within these schools, Corstone conducts curriculum-based programs using a participatory approach to focus on issues of skill-building, problem solving, and emotional resilience with the girls. The curriculum also addresses topics related to reproductive health and hygiene, body awareness and mapping, as well as attraction. Facilitators are trained to implement the curriculum. In another initiative called Youth First, Corstone implements a similar curriculum-based program with adolescent boys in schools on various themes related to mental health, interpersonal communication, and issues of sex, sexuality and gender. While there is no direct focus on gender violence, facilitators mentioned how adolescents often spoke about their experiences of violence.

TABLE-3: CORSTONE PROGRAMS

NAME OF PROGRAM	TARGET POPULATION	FOCUS AREAS	TOOLS	STRATEGIES
Girls First	Girls studying in KGBV class 6 to 8th	Skill building, problem solving, decision making, reproductive health and hygiene, communication skills, identifying emotions and dealing with them, difference between sex and gender, body and attraction, emotional resilience.	Storytelling, puzzles, quizzes, role playing, group activities and games.	1-2 teachers per school are trained on the Girls First Module by a trained facilitator
Youth First	Grades 6-8 girls and boys in govt schools	Skill building, problem solving, decision making, reproductive health and hygiene, communication skills, identifying emotions and dealing with them, difference between sex and gender, body and attraction, emotional resilience	Story-telling, quizzes, puzzles, group discussions	Groups of 20 students of single sex groups with trained facilitators and trained teachers per school.

There is no direct module on violence prevention, but facilitators argue that their approach towards building emotional resilience and skill-enhancement in dealing with psychological stressors and mental health is useful in helping adolescents fight forms of violence, such as verbal abuse and bullying at home and in schools, as well as being able to express their desire to marry late or pursue higher education to their parents. Similarly, the Youth First Initiative working with adolescent boys has helped young boys navigate and redefine their relationships with fellow female classmates, looking at them as equals and developing friendships with them, instead of always identifying them as sexual beings. The facilitators argued that their approach of building emotional resilience and conflict resolution in adolescents, as well as awareness generation around issues of gender and body are instrumental in changing attitudes of young boys towards violence against girls, as well as building the confidence of girls to actively confront emotional violence (Table-3).

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SECTION-3

STRATEGIES ON WAY FORWARD

POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS ON SGBV

Several entry points emerge from this formative work based on the existing responses to violence. While some entry points are evident and easy to reach, the following section also outlines a few entry points at a systemic level to make programs sustainable over a long period of time. Some of these entry points are:

SCHOOLS AS AN ENTRY POINT:

This formative study has highlighted consistently that schools are a feasible entry point to engage with students and boys in particular on issues of SGBV.

Within schools there are several entry points that emerged from the data, such as:

- **School principals:** Data reveals that across both states, schools that had a strong leadership in form of a sensitive school principal, s/he ensured that the school environment, infrastructure in school would be sensitive to the needs of girls to extent possible within school resources. Fieldwork also revealed that in some instances in Bihar, the headmistress had issued warnings to a teacher who had used corporal punishment to a student. In other instances, the School Principal made decisions regarding shutting the school gate and creating physical safety by fortifying school compound to deal with menace from outsiders. These instances point to the potential of School Principals' potential as agents of change. Hence working with the heads of the school and sensitizing them to understand the centrality of gender in lives of adolescents

and the role of schools in preventing and mitigating this violence would be an essential entry point for all programs.

- **School teachers:** Fieldwork in both the states showed that teachers themselves were reinforcing inequitable gender norms among students, possibly as they had never been exposed to any gender training. Our data also revealed that teachers were anxious about dealing with adolescents and lacked knowledge of issues that are typical during this life stage and therefore did not have any tools to deal with issues like attraction among school children. Therefore, within the school settings, teachers are perhaps the most significant gatekeepers who need to be sensitized on issues of gender and need capacity building to better understand and equip themselves on what the characteristics and developmental milestones in adolescence are, what are various strategies that could be used to discipline children (apart from use of corporal punishment), what are the ways in which issues such as attraction among students can be handled in a healthy manner and how gender cuts across in all their dealing with children. An intensive, reflective training of teachers, along with use of structured curriculum (there are several existing curricula-such as IHRE, GEMS curricula that could be adapted) could be initiated in buying into addressing gender and issues of violence within the school.

- **School management:** Observations and interactions with several stakeholders revealed that buy-in from school management was very crucial to ensure execution of programs to address violence in school settings. Interviews with school management members particularly those from the minority aided schools revealed varied amount of awareness and acknowledgement of the need to address gender and gender-based violence within schools. Interviews with school management also showed that while there was no outright denial of violence occurring in schools, there was a need to sensitize school management authorities to ensure a buy-in for a school-based program.
- **Students as an entry point:** Stakeholders across the board agreed that students needed to be actively engaged with as active recipients of a program to prevent gender-based violence. According to several stakeholders interviewed, school was identified as being one of the most captive places to engage with boys. Stakeholders listed several advantages of working with boys in school settings, such as, ability to engage on a routine basis and setting pace with modules. Stakeholders suggested a staggering of topics while designing programs with boys beginning with communication skills, to self-awareness, and building it up to awareness of identity, gender and violence. Furthermore, various stakeholders also suggested that while some programs could take place in groups of boys and girls; topics such as sexual health, body awareness needed to happen in single sex groups with facilitators of the same sex. Some also felt that while programs aimed at engaging boys were essential, girls too needed to be engaged to learn to assert themselves and learn healthy ways of communications. However, several stakeholders, including a few teachers, expressed that any program working to address violence needed to “teach our boys how to talk to a girl respectfully”.
- **Engaging with parents in school:** As previously mentioned in the section on responses to violence, the existing parent-teacher associations could be considered as possible entry points to reach out to and connect to parents within the school setting. Fieldwork shows that there was support from school principals and teachers on widening the scope of these parent-teacher meeting to address issues beyond academics and use these interactions as channels of communication to sensitize and educate parents on issues of parent-child communication, talk about treating their daughters and sons equally, and be a good role model to their children, apart from discussing academics all the time.
- **SMCs as entry points:** Data shows that SMCs are in a dismal state. Although mandated under the RTE Act, SMCs are largely existent on paper and in small instances where they are functional they are focused on development of school infrastructure and fighting corruption and malpractices to make the school authorities responsive. Activating these is a big challenge requiring dedicated efforts to advocate with members as well as with school authorities and though well-functioning SMCs would ideally take up issues of violence in schools, the feasibility seems very low.
- **Minority aided schools:** Minority aided schools present another unique opportunity and a feasible entry point to address SGBV not only in schools, but also in communities. Fieldwork suggested that these schools were linked to various other institutions like social service wing,

education board, and youth board. These structures are feasible entry points to address issues of SGBV from multiple entry points, namely, through schools, through community work and through youth groups with young men. In this respect the minority aided schools would allow a more holistic, feasible approach, which would otherwise be difficult to access and implement in the government set-up. Having said this, however, sensitisation of authorities in this system too needs to happen on issues of gender, gender-based violence and gender norms.

STRUCTURAL ENTRY POINTS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

- **Education department:** The state and block resource centres of the SSA: Although physically outside the school-space, education department, its policies and regulations and various provisions have a direct bearing on the infrastructure of schools, capacity building of teachers and quality of education. Within the department of education, the SSA is in-charge of teacher training and reaches out to all government-run schools across entire districts. Discussions with representatives of SSA reveals that SSA is an entry point to mainstream curriculum on gender and violence and build capacity of teachers across entire district. Mainstreaming gender in SSA implemented curriculum in teachers training, advocating for fresher trainings for teachers where curriculum (like IHRE curriculum) already exists could go a long way in sustaining programs that address SGBV in the school system. However, to successfully utilize the SSA as an entry point, the feasibility of advocating with the education department and the SSA itself needs to be considered. Interview with representatives from IHRE revealed several challenges in influencing

the SSA. In the current study in case of Tamil Nadu, since the SSA already has the curriculum mainstreamed, working with SSA to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the curriculum is a likely entry point. In Bihar however more efforts need to be dedicated towards advocating inclusion of gender in teachers training curriculum. Only after advocating could this be a feasible entry point in Bihar.

COMMUNITIES AS AN ENTRY POINT TO ADDRESS GBV AND ALSO ENGAGE WITH MEN AND BOYS

- **Building alliances and partnerships with existing programs of other NGOs:** Another possible entry point is to build networks with existing programs that deal with issues of adolescents. As pointed out earlier in the report, gender norms, which are at the core of gender base violence, are perpetuated and reinforced not only within schools, but also outside the school setting within families and communities, where adolescents live. NGOs with their reach of the community could address normative issues around gender and masculinity in communities while complementing programs that are run within schools. Partnerships with NGOs and schools could synergistically draw upon mutual experiences and maximise respective strengths. Fieldwork reveals that there are existing programs in communities in both the study states. NGOs could be looked at as platforms to bridge between schools and families and be approached for a more comprehensive programming.
- **Building alliances and partnerships with existing programs of other NGOs:** Another possible entry point is to build networks with existing programs that deal

with issues of adolescents. As pointed out earlier in the report, gender norms, which are at the core of gender base violence, are perpetuated and reinforced not only within schools, but also outside the school setting within families and communities, where adolescents live. NGOs with their reach of the community could address normative issues around gender and masculinity in communities while complementing programs that are run within schools. Partnerships with NGOs and schools could synergistically draw upon mutual experiences and maximise respective strengths. Fieldwork reveals that there are existing programs in communities in both the study states. NGOs could be looked at as platforms to bridge between schools and families and be approached for a more comprehensive programming.

- **Engaging with men and boys in community:** One of the findings of this formative research has been the lack of safety in spaces like roads, communities and villages. Data reveals that Panchayats, existing CBOs, small savings groups, etc. that are already operational in the villages, could be used as vehicles for engaging with men and boys in the community through mechanisms like sports, community meetings, Panchayat meetings, or campaigns by CBOs. Although this study was more focused on understanding how schools as systems could be looked at to engage with boys, it would be essential to also think of partnerships and entry points to reach out to the community at large too.

POTENTIAL TOPICS AND MODES OF DELIVERY TO ADDRESS SGBV AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SCHOOLS

The previous section delineates the various entry points at multiple levels to consider reaching out to adolescent boys and girls with an aim of prevention and addressing SGBV. The participants during the fieldwork suggested several specific activities, specific content and mode of delivery for design and delivery of a program on SGBV among adolescent children. Following suggestions came up during interactions with various stakeholders regarding potential modes of delivery of a possible program:

- A school counsellor to talk to students and teach students about sensitive topics, such as, sexual abuse, reproductive health information, body changes, etc.
- A curriculum that teaches them value education and moral science. Teachers in Tamil Nadu have already been exposed to the curriculum by IHRE but expressed need for more training to feel confident about the delivery of the curriculum.
- Complaint boxes in schools where students can anonymously register their grievance without revealing their identity and bring to the school's notice any problem they might be facing.
- Important topics to be presented to students in the form of edutainment, through street plays, dramas or songs by young people.

Respondents, both parents and teachers, and other stakeholders, while recognising the need to address SGBV with adolescents, expressed several topics that they felt were important to cover by any program, such as:

- Sexual abuse and awareness regarding what constitutes ‘good’ and ‘bad’ touch.
- Reproductive and sexual health.
- Educating children about their rights and creating awareness of existing helplines for them.
- Imparting moral and value education and highlighting the importance of role models.
- Gender sensitisation and equality

Table-4 summarises a broader range of tools and modes of delivery appropriate to school-going children that could be considered.

TABLE-4: TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED IN SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO FIGHT SGBV

TOOLS	DESCRIPTION
Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)	<p>This is one of the key tools used in equipping young children with the knowledge and skills for making responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships (UNFPA, Engaging Young Men and Boys; 2013).</p> <p>CSE Curricula deals with how gender norms influence sexual behaviour and prevalence of violence, such as early marriage, unwanted or forced sex, intimate gender-based violence, unequal power in relationships to negotiate condom and contraceptive use.</p> <p>Key subtopics usually include masculine/feminine gender norms, socialisation of young boys and girls into stereotypical gender roles, and its impact on the lives of young people, nature of gender inequality and how gender norms can change. teaching of skills of communication, assertiveness, intent/goals, decision-making and relationship skills can be done using a gender perspective.</p>
Role play, drama, street plays and popular theater	<p>These tools use the instrument of the local media such as dance, song and drama to raise awareness around issues of gender inequality and violence. Popular theatre is different from traditional theatre, in the sense that it highlights the contradictions prevalent in society and prompts the audience to reflect on the unanswered questions. This can be effectively used in a school setting, by mobilising students and teachers (Belbase, L, et al. 2010).</p>
Open ended stories	<p>The objective behind using this tool is to make the respondents reflect and think on unanswered questions, raised during the narration of a story. In open-ended stories, either the beginning, middle or ending of the story is left out purposely, and the respondents or audience is asked to ponder and discuss over the part of the story that has been purposely left out.</p> <p>This is a tool that is seen to elicit good group participation and can be used in settings or with groups that have a rich oral or folk story background. This can be an effective tool to engage a group of children as well. It is also an effective tool to get information on a variety of social and cultural issues (Belbase, L, et al. 2010).</p>

Games ¹⁰	<p>Games are effective training tools which have the potential to improve the learning process by creating an environment in which people’s creativity and intelligence are engaged in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Games used during a training program help reinforce initial learning, question existing beliefs in an interesting format and can also help practice the use of new skills and knowledge. It is particularly relevant for a school setting in which young people are to be engaged (Belbase, L, et al. 2010).</p>
Flash Cards	<p>These are a set of cards bearing information, as words or numbers and can be used in the classroom or in a private study (Belbase, L, et al. 2010).</p>
Education and Action Kits	<p>Existing education and action tools can be used to introduce a range of themes surrounding issues of gender inequitable norms and violence.</p>

¹⁰ Under MASVAW, different games have been used for gender sensitisation. In one such game, a group of men are brought together. These men belong to different occupational categories and could be traders, students, cultivators and are brought together from different villages. Two men are picked from the group. Each is given a task to complete, such as making a drawing or creating a puzzle. One of them can go about completing the task independently while the other one must wait for instructions given by others and must remain a silent spectator. As the game progresses, it becomes clear that the person independently finishing his task is being able to do so quickly, while the second one remains confused and frustrated by the instructions on which he must depend. This game is symbolic: the aim is to make them realize how powerlessness of women affects their decision making and self-esteem.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Beginning with the examination of feasibility and scalability of the various entry points discussed in the previous section, this section of the report discusses the overarching recommendations for working in schools to address gender-based violence. These recommendations are drawn both from findings of the formative research, as well as from best practices that were reviewed as a part of the desk review.

A NOTE ON FEASIBILITY AND SCALABILITY OF VARIOUS ENTRY POINTS

At a larger level, experiences from earlier programs that are school-based or school focused, such as, GEMS, IHRE or community focused, such as, ICRW's Parivartan program point out that while either of these two approaches are useful to bring about certain changes among children, the long term sustainability of effects from these programs on lives of children, i.e., whether boys exposed to school-based programs alone grow up to be more gender equitable men or do boys exposed to a community-based program grow up to be more equitable adults, is not yet answered by research. What we do know is that evaluation results from both GEMS and Parivartan show a marked decrease in gender inequitable attitudes among boys. These results also show that boys who went through GEMS/Parivartan were more willing to widen their view of a woman's gender role, questioned the gender roles they were exposed to at home (parents; many boys questioned the unequal household chore sharing at home), etc. At an operational level, how well do school-based programs work has been largely dependent on the extent of buy-in from education departments, school authorities and teachers. Therefore, working to ensure buy-in from all levels within the school system is the cornerstone for successful roll-out of such programs.

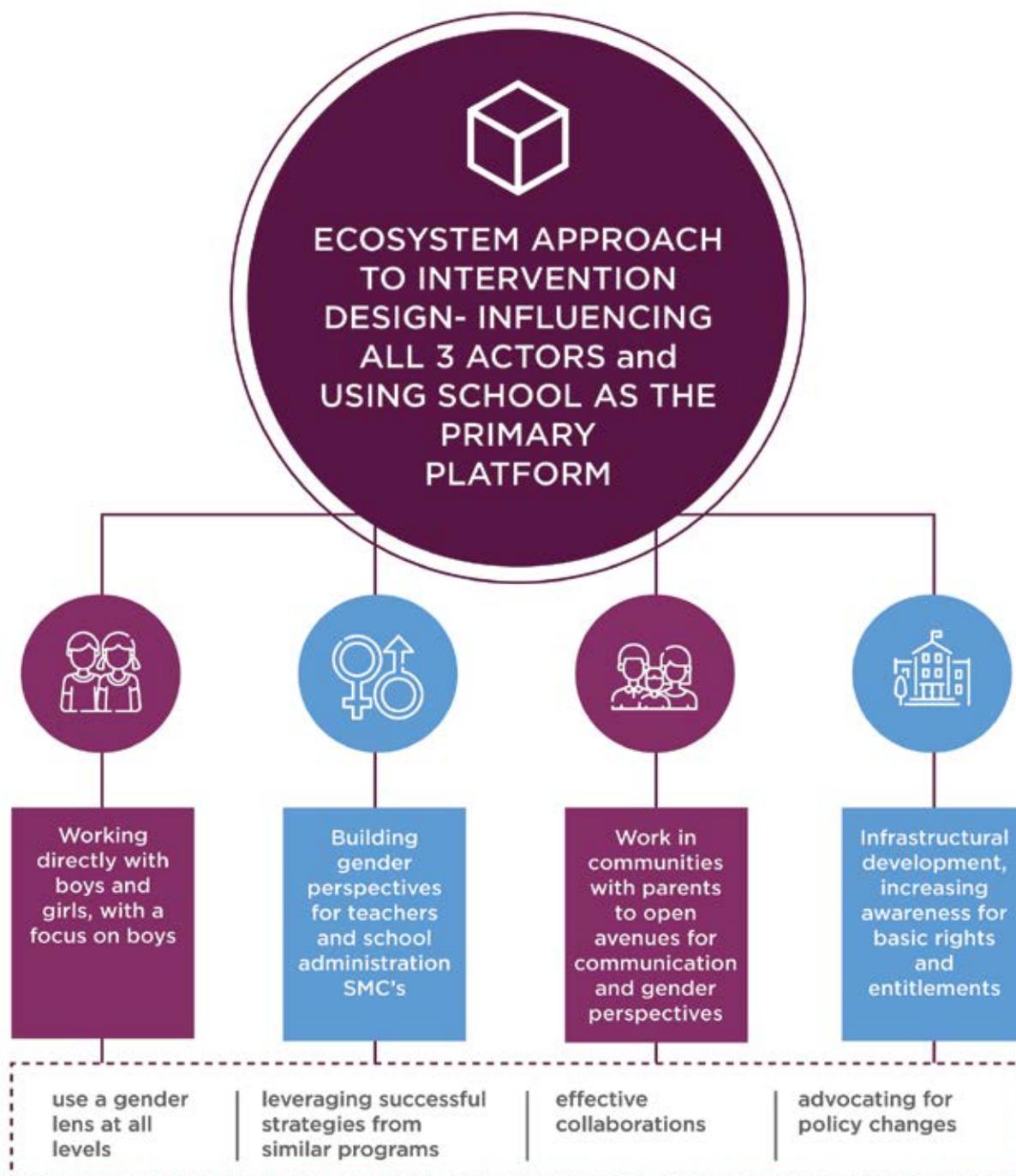
On the other hand, programs that are run in community are more likely to reach out to families and the immediate ecosystem of an adolescent. However, scaling of such interventions is a challenge. Furthermore, any program whether school or community based, needs to be backed by institutional practices that ensure sustainability of these initiatives

A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL TO ADDRESS SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Based on the findings of the research a more comprehensive approach is suggested as in Figure-2.

The comprehensive response suggests various strategies at multiple levels within schools and outside the school space. Figure-2 represents the four levels of engagement to influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around SGBV at its core. The levels are as follows, moving from micro to macro:

FIGURE-2: A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL TO ADDRESS SGBV



- **Level 1:** Working directly with boys and girls, with a focus on boys: The model suggests that the first level of engagement be with children, through various methods, such as, in school curriculum-based programs or community platforms. It emphasises that boys should be made the focus of the engagement.
- **Level 2:** Building gender perspectives for teachers, school administration, and SMCs: The second level of engagement could be with the immediate actors in the school setting- teachers, headmasters, other school staff members who engage directly with children, and school management committee members. These groups have continuous interaction with children through their formative years, which makes them significant in changing the experiences of children while they are growing up.
- **Level 3:** Working in communities with parents to open avenues for communication and building gender perspectives: Communities include both people and places. Community involvement could mean including parents in the conversations around norms, practices, violence and so on as well as imply usage of community platforms and spaces (such as panchayat bhawans, for instance) for activities related to messaging about these issues, so that a wider audience is reached.
- **Level 4:** Infrastructural development, increasing awareness for basic rights and entitlements: Since it has been amply established that basic infrastructural facilities and their access is the key to a fulfilling learning experience for children, the model proposes advocacy efforts to activate provisions for teacher recruitment, toilets, benches, chalks, uniforms, books, etc. in schools. Moving beyond the basics, this should also involve efforts for counsellors, janitors, libraries, play space, equipment, and so on.

Cutting across these levels are four key guiding principles, which are:

- To use a gender lens to engage with all stakeholders and for all program and activity designs as the foremost non-negotiable attribute
- To leverage evaluated strategies from similar programs in order not to duplicate programming and use knowledge generated through research in effective and ethical ways
- To establish collaborations with local partners, government, international agencies and community owned processes for the best interest of the people for whom the intervention is primarily designed
- To use mandated guidelines and systemic policy formulations to advocate for change. Similarly, to use program evidence for the larger goal of policy advocacy

TABLE-5: SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN INDIA TO FIGHT SGBV

BEST PRACTICES IN FIGHTING SGBV IN INDIA

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	KEY PROGRAM STRATEGIES USED	KEY FINDINGS
<p>GEMS (Gender Equity Movement in Schools)</p>	<p>This school-based program was developed by ICRW, in partnership with the Committee of Resource Organizations for Literacy (CORO) and the Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS). The program divided the schools into three arms: two intervention arms and one control arm.</p>	<p>1) Students in class 6th and 8th participated in group educational activities (GEA)- GEA: The GEA primarily consisted of participatory methodologies such as role plays, games, debates and discussions on issues of gender sensitisation and violence¹¹.</p> <p>2) A school-based campaign was a series of events that were designed in consultation with students and involved games, competitions, debates and short plays.</p>	<p>1) Violence is a very common aspect of the lives of young adolescents at school, particularly among boys.</p> <p>2)After the first round of intervention, there was an improvement in the attitudes of students towards gender equality.</p> <p>3) There was also an increase in the proportion of boys and girls with high gender equality scores in the two intervention arms compared to the control arm.</p> <p>The overall data suggests that GEMS has been successfully able to create the base for improving awareness, building skills and changing attitudes towards violence, both inside and outside schools (Achyut, P, et.al; 2011; UNHCR, 2011; UNFPA, Engaging Young Boys and Men, 2016).</p>
<p>Parivartan</p>	<p>This program uses sports based methods to educate young boys about gender violence and equality and was</p>	<p>1)School based component: The program identified schools associated with MSSA in the west and southern</p>	<p>The study adopted a quasi-experimental design with two arms in each setting: an intervention arm</p>

¹¹ These sessions were conducted by trained facilitators belonging to CORO and TISS.

	<p>implemented by ICRW and Futures Without Violence in partnership with the Mumbai Schools Sports Association (MSSA) and NGO Apnalaya in the schools and the slum community of Shivaji Nagar, Mumbai respectively. Under the program, informal coaches and mentors from Mumbai slums and surrounding communities were recruited and trained in how moments on the cricket field could be used to impart messages on violence and respect.</p>	<p>parts of the city that offered cricket to their students and approached them to participate in the program.</p> <p>2)Community based component: The NGO partner, Apnalaya, identified experienced senior players called mentors in Shivaji Nagar and asked them to build their own teams of 15-20 boys each. A total of 16 mentors participated in the program.</p> <p>3)The coaches and mentors were trained to lead interactive sessions with athletes using training cards and other resources.</p> <p>4)Training and support given to coaches and mentors was a program strategy to improve athlete’s gender related attitudes and practices while playing cricket.</p>	<p>and a comparison arm. While coaches and mentors in the intervention arm received specialised training and resource material for implementation of the program with the athletes, no such material or training was provided in the comparison schools.</p> <p>Participants became more aware of the rigid and harmful notions of masculinity and the prevalence of sexual violence in the society.</p>
<p>Do Kadam Barabariki Or</p>	<p>This intervention has been implemented among boys and young men in the age group of 13-21 who were members of youth clubs that are supported by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, in the state of Bihar.</p> <p>The project was undertaken by the Population Council in partnership with the Center for Catalyzing</p>	<p>The overall focus of the program is to create a greater understanding of violence against women and girls.</p> <p>This particular intervention engaging adolescent boys comprised of a mix of life skills education and cricket coaching.</p> <p>The life skills curriculum was disseminated over 42 weekly sessions, and covered topics related to gender discrimination,</p>	<p>15 NYKS clubs were divided each into intervention and control arms, by using a cluster randomised trial design.</p> <p>The attitudes of the boys in the intervention clubs reflected change in their understanding of masculinity, and many of them even rejected the notion of the right of men and boys to exercise control over women and girls and perpetrate violence on them. More boys in the</p>

	<p>Change and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, with support from UKAID.</p>	<p>masculinities, and violence against women. Peer mentors, who had undergone pre-program and refresher training programs delivered these sessions with core trainers from the implementing agency C3 India.</p>	<p>intervention arm rather than control arm believed that their peers would respect boys who expressed nontraditional behaviours, such as helping in housework or child work.</p>
<p>Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW)</p>	<p>Objective: to assess various entry points that are available to work with men.</p> <p>1)Men as perpetrators targeting their behaviour with women;</p> <p>2)Men in peer groups targeting their behaviour with friends and lastly men in positions of authority.</p>	<p>1)Orientation of teachers and principals on issues of gender equality and violence.</p> <p>2) Quiz games and flash cards on issues around gender roles of men and women and violence against women.</p> <p>3) A group of boys was identified. This core group of boys was then encouraged to organise road shows, speak to people etc. to create awareness.</p> <p>4) Students initiate activities in schools and communities.</p>	<p>School related violence has also been targeted. In a school in Gorakhpur, younger students have announced their school to be DandaRahitVidyalaya or A School without a Stick (USAID, 2015; Gupta, M, Oxfam; Center for Health and Social Justice, UN Trust Fund; 2009-11) .</p> <p>Issue of verbal abuse is also being dealt with, with young students in five schools in Gorakhpur having initiated the Gaali Band Karo Abhiyan or A Campaign to Stop Abusive Language against women. The students run a competition based on self and peer monitoring and aim to raise awareness through that.</p> <p>MASVAW also aims to educate and socialize parents on these issues.</p>

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building of stakeholders

As outlined throughout the report, there is a necessity to ensure a buy-in from stakeholders at all levels from school management and administrators to teachers. Given that interviews with stakeholders revealed that often gender norms were reinforced by the institutions, gender sensitization workshops are recommended as a fundamental step prior to entering schools to intervene to prevent and address gender-based violence in schools. Interviews also revealed that majority of stakeholders (Principals, School administrators, etc.) were themselves endorsing gender inequitable attitudes. Therefore, capacity building on gender using reflection as a technique to examine how gender norms and roles affect them would be important.

Building capacity of teachers

Teacher capacity building is another recommendation stemming out of the formative work and is also supported by experiences of other programs. There are several existing curricula available for teachers' training, such as, IHRE curriculum and GEMS curriculum. However, teachers' capacity building with a buy-in from the school authorities is essential for successful roll-out and sustenance of the program.

Utilising existing provisions under the RTE Act

The formative research highlights the role of infrastructure in increasing vulnerability of girls to violence. The RTE Act has several provisions that provide for not only funds, but also has mandated bodies, such as, SMCs, which are supposed to function as a body to ensure quality education and development of the schools. A consistent finding is that though all stakeholders (excluding parents) were aware about the RTE and SMC, the utilisation of the provisions was very poor. Therefore, there is a need to activate the provisions under this act.

Working with boys and girls before launching the program

Although, this formative research did not involve children, working with children is highly recommended to reexamine the suggested entry points, validate formative research, and inform validation and development of curriculum to address GBV in schools. Experience from GEMS suggests that this engagement with children is best conducted in a workshop environment that has participatory methods, such as, role modeling, games, quizzes, etc.

Working with adolescents within schools and outside schools

It is feasible to work with adolescent girls and boys particularly inside school. This research did not explore avenues outside the schools, but has identified several best practices that have put forth their experiences of addressing GBV in communities and families (Table-5).

As the report mentions, responses to violence are not institutionalised. However, since this formative

research did not interview children, we do not know where children go to report about their experiences. Although the research did not even come across a formalized redressal mechanism for the states that talks about dealing with violence faced by children, an example of how a redress mechanism broadly for violence against children (violence in schools would be included under this) works in Jharkhand under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) could be a model to consider for setting up similar mechanism in the study states (Annexure-1).

Developing a ‘theory of change’

Given that this report presents findings of the formative research, the next steps recommended entail conducting a ‘design’ workshop to think about the theory of change (ToC), broad aims and goals of the proposed program based on the findings. Articulating ToC would help in prioritising feasible entry points from among multiple entry points suggested in the report. This will help sharpen the results-framework and identify concrete, measurable indicators against which progress and impact of the program on addressing SGBV and prevention of SGBV could be measured.

Risks to the participants/community

Experience of several programs such as GEMS, Corstone, Parivartan, etc. in India and other programs globally have often talked about the risks associated with implementation and the aftermath or backlash of implementing a program that talks explicitly about gender, gender norms, questions status quo and questions firmly held notions about masculinity. Although this aspect wasn’t explicitly assessed in the formative research, based on past experience and desk review, care needs to be taken while designing and implementing programs on gender and gender-based violence to ensure that all relevant stakeholders and gatekeepers support the program and that participation of girls and boys in the program doesn’t invite violence.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Developing a broad set of indicators to identify appropriate activities and goals of the program as well as its output to address SGBV among adolescents, a theory of change, and the program framework, is also imperative.

Measuring social norms that are entrenched in gender inequity is one of the foremost requirements to address sexual and gender-based violence. However, little guidance is available to help practitioners integrate simple norm measures and change strategies within field-based programming (Ben Cislighi & Lori Heise, 2016). The two important steps, according to Cislighi and Heise, to establish measures in norm changes are as follows:

1. Finding the right questions and strategies to collect meaningful and reliable data; and
2. Identifying resource-efficient data collection strategies that can be integrated within already overstretched M&E systems or that can help practitioners rethink some elements of their existing M&E system

Further, there are important considerations while analysing norm change measurement data. For it is a challenge to identify the right social level at which data should be analyzed (Ben Cislighi & Lori Heise, 2016). If norms apply within reference groups, then data aggregated at a national level will not be representative of how people are behaving under normative influence within a group. They also suggest that social network analysis is a useful tool to understand data from norm change studies.

Specifically, around indicators to address SGBV, many organizations¹² have developed compendiums and knowledge products to guide the science of establishing norm change measures and using them. However, these are increasingly taking into account the need and significance of using norm change frameworks as the basis for measurement in actual success of interventions. Several existing indicators could be utilized, such as, at an individual level: measuring change in gender beliefs, beliefs about household chores sharing, attitudes about gender roles and expectations, measuring self-reported acts of violence¹³, etc.

A recently published report (Know Violence in Childhood, 2017)) has extensively documented the status of childhood violence and proposed a composite index to measure childhood violence, called the Violence in Childhood (VIC) index, which covers two dimensions, violence against children and violence against women, acknowledging their inherent overlap.

To understand what could be potential ways of measuring violence in the school setting, the ICRW study on school-related gender based violence in five countries (ICRW, 2014) in Asia is a good resource. For instance, the “School Equality Score Card” is helpful to gauge perceptions around various dimensions on gender equality within schools and supplement it with group discussions (Table-6).

¹² Here are some of the broad base resources on norm change measurement:

PATH: <http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=1524>

USAID: https://www.measureevaluation.org/prh/rh_indicators/womens-health/sgbv/other-resources

LSHTM: <http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/Social%20norms%20talking%20points.pdf>

WHO and PATH: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/42966/1/9241546476_eng.pdf

CARE: https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/working_paper_aas_gt_change_measurement_fa_lowres.pdf

¹³ Compendium of gender scales <https://www.c-changeprogram.org/content/gender-scales-compendium/relations.html>

TABLE-6: SCHOOL EQUALITY SCORE CARD: UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS AROUND DIMENSIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY

DIMENSIONS	RELATED QUESTIONS
Sports participation	Do girls participate in sports activities as much as boys?
Class participation:	Do girls participate in class as often as boys?
Chore burden:	Do girls spend the same amount of time doing chores (tidying, sweeping, and cleaning) at school as boys?
Latrines:	Are there toilets at school that girls feel comfortable to use?
Seeking help:	Do girls talk to teachers about their concerns as much as boys?
Leadership:	Do girls participate as leaders of student groups as much as boys?
Safety going to school:	Are girls as safe as boys on their way to and from school?

The Global Guidance on Addressing School Related Gender Based Violence has also documented developing indicators to measure impact (i.e., real and sustained change) as well as progress in meeting project objectives (e.g., cases referred, numbers trained). The review noted that, for one SRGBV program, the indicators were much too broad to allow for meaningful measurement of outcomes¹⁴.

Some of the qualitative indicators include:

Increased use of positive discipline methods in school (by teachers, monitors and school management)

- Positive class rules developed and displayed in the classroom
- Teachers’ use of praise and positive reinforcement techniques during lessons
- Corporal punishment eliminated
- Clear discipline policy developed (and understood) at school level

Means of verification: Classroom observations, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs)

Increased knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding gender and SGBV in the school community (teachers, students, staff members, support workers)

- Increased knowledge/understanding of the mechanisms for reporting and confidence to use them

¹⁴ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002466/246651E.pdf>

- Increased reporting of incidents over baseline
- Timeliness of actions on reported cases
- Monitoring who is doing the reporting – monitor the cases brought forward by the community

Means of verification: KAP baseline and endline, impact assessment at endline, interviews, FGDs, school records, documentation of cases.

Determining measures of success, or change, is in the end contextual and depends on the program intent. It is intricately linked to the theory of change of the program and must be designed in alignment with the intended outcomes of the program.

LIMITATIONS

The present formative research has several limitations owing to the scale and the scope of the research mandate. Described below are some of the limitations:

- Non-inclusion of children as research participants in formative research: As mentioned above, the current formative research did not include children due to the limited scope of work as well as ethical considerations.
- Non-representative sample: The schools sampled for the study were based in rural locations which were part representative of the blocks from which they were drawn. However observations based from these cannot be generalised to the rest of the state both in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. For example, a school sample in Tamil Nadu was situated on a hill-top amidst a forest. Challenges faced by students, teachers in this school were unique (like threat of snakes, floods, lonely forest) and cannot be generalised to other areas even within the same district.
- Limited focus: The study was more focused on understanding schools as an entry point. It could not include representatives from Panchayats and did not have much engagement with SMCs, thus limiting its scope to comment on recommendations to strengthen SMCs.

CONCLUSION

Working with schools and in particular with boys on issues of SGBV is a complex issue compounded both by structural and normative challenges. SGBV and role of boys in perpetuating violence is evident, but what lies beneath the overt forms of violence are various structures in communities, families, in school themselves (teachers' attitudes, etc.) that shape and reinforce boys' attitudes and thinking about masculinity, and their gender roles as 'men or boys'. Additionally, infrastructural issues (such as availability of toilets, unsafe passage to schools etc.) play a role in creating situations that heighten girls' vulnerabilities to violence. Therefore any program that aims to prevent and address gender based violence needs to adopt a comprehensive approach that not only engages with men and boys to prevent violence, but also empowers girls, while providing conducive institutional support in form of a gender sensitive school, functional structures, such as, SMCs, structural interventions that institutionalise the centrality of addressing gender at the core of teachers' and school administrators' capacity building and communities and families that are supportive to reinforce gender equality.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE-1

Redressal mechanism for violence against children under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)

1. State Level: State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
2. District Level: District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) headed by District Social Welfare Officer (in Jharkhand) who is the nodal officer- District Child Protection Officer (DCPO)
3. Block Level: Block Level Child Protection Committee (BLCPC)- headed by Block Chairman and BDO
4. GP Level: Village Level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC); Members:SMC 1 male and 1 female, adolescent 1 girl and 1 boy (from village based adolescent clubs/ BalSansad), 1 SHG member, AWW (Secretary), VHSNC, Sahiya, ward member, Gram Pradhan (President); Social Workers, District Child Protection Officer, ANM (Guest members)
5. Wherever the VLCPCs have been activated by NGOs working in those areas, they mainly focus on issues of child trafficking, child labour, school drop outs etc.
6. Cases from the BLCPC and VLCPC are mandated to reach Childline. Additionally, the CWC at the district works towards responding to children in need of care and protection who are sent to child welfare homes. There seems to be no proper linkage between the district level DCPU and the CWC as of now.

ANNEXURE-2

Total Data Points

BIHAR

FGD Teachers	5
FGD parents	4
KII principals	4
KII Govt officials	3
KII NGOs	6
KII community leader	1
Total activities	23



TAMIL NADU

TOTAL KIIs with Principals	4
TOTAL KIIs with NGO representatives	4
TOTAL KIIs with diocese and govt functionaries	8
Total FGDs with parents	4
Total FGDs with teachers	4
All Activities	24



ANNEXURE-3

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