Social

Building Positive Attitudes Towards Gender Equality: A Baseline Survey of Gender Quality Action Learning Programme

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June 2005

BRAC Research Report

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to find out the pre-intervention status on knowledge, perception and attitude of rural people towards gender relations. A survey was conducted on 803 respondents in eight *upazilas* of Netrokona and Kishoregonj districts. Respondents include rich, middle, lower and ultra poor. All the samples for the last two groups, 20% from middle, and 10% from the first group were randomly selected. The study dealt with different themes of general perception, discrimination, empowerment, violence against women, and marriage. The findings indicate that the knowledge of the respondents about nutrition, education, age of voting, and marriage were satisfactory. The gender perception of both male and female were influenced by prevailing patriarchal norms in rural areas. Although the respondents show more favorable attitude towards reducing gender discrimination and marriage related issues, the attitude towards gender roles in society was comparatively less positive. The study further shows that the level of education, and to a lesser extent, economic background were the primary determinants in shaping gender attitude and perception, while age and NGO membership did not appear to have much impact on views of gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, gender has not been considered problematic. "Becoming a woman or becoming a man has been understood as a *natural* process grounded firmly in biology and in the *essential* masculine and feminine attributes that God-given biological differences have been assumed to entail (Eliman and Taggart undated). Many feminist theorists believe gender is not innate; rather gender is something we do (West and Zimmerman 1987) and perform (Butler 1990)".

The analysis of gender – its presence in every aspect of our lives – is indispensable in understanding who we are and what we hope to become. In attempting to talk about gender we tend to universalize, as if gender means the same thing cross-culturally but it is not (McGoldric, Garcia-Petro, Hines and Lee 1989, Webb-Watson 1991). There is a tendency to treat the subject out of its historical context, and yet it is this particular historical moment that has given weight to the concept of gender (Nicholson 1990).

A little different but related with gender discourse that is derived from the "sex-role" model. "As it came to be called, there was always a measure of ambivalence about the distinction between *descriptive* norms (the characteristics men and women are perceived as having) and *socio-cultural* norms (the characteristics a society prescribes for women and men). Empirical researchers tended to insist that their concern was always the former, but since sex roles are operationalized by the latter, empirical research reflects the manifestations of socio-cultural norms (Thompson and Pleck 1987)". Thus, gender norms are actually the culture's list of prescriptions and proscriptions considered appropriate to that sex, and individuals are assessed as properly "feminine" or "masculine" in terms of their attitude toward, and degree of compliance with, these social expectations (Eliman and Taggart undated). Ethnographic studies (see Hartmann and Boyce 1983, White 1992) argue that women are socially constructed as passive and dependent on male provision. Further, Eliman and Taggart (undated) adds that gender itself is socially constructed: historically, politically, and economically.

Equally important of this cultural definition of gender to Bangladeshi society, which is patriarchal[1], patrilineal[2], patrilocal[3]; where the socio-cultural values promote segregation of the sexes, impose a strict division of labor, and foster a systematic bias of male supremacy (Jahan 1995). In other words, the practice of equality of women and men has been thwarted or sabotaged by patriarchal judgements and traditions (Denmark 2004). This gender relation and norms existed in the society produces different types of relationship and interaction between male and female. In this context this study aims to look into knowledge, perception and attitude of people towards gender relations and interaction within the household and in society in rural areas of Bangladesh.

OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER QUALITY ACTION LEARNING PROGRAMME

In 1994, BRAC established Gender Quality Action Learning (GQAL) training for its staff to improve gender relations among the employees and in the administration of BRAC programmes that target poor women and men. This training programme was expanded for the members of the Village Organization (VO) on a pilot basis in 2001 with similar goals, but

[1] Patriarchy is a form of social organization in which a male is the family head and title is traced through the male line. Patriarchal is the characteristics of patriarchy (WorldReference.com English dictionary)

[2] Decent and inheritance counted through the male line

[3] After a woman is married she will reside with the husband's family/or in the husband's village.

focused on fostering gender equality and equity among the villagers. Some of the key issues and concerns raised through the GQAL training were identifying the villagers' knowledge about similarities and dissimilarities between men and women in the socioeconomic and cultural context such as unequal access between men and women in terms of food intake, education, and health care. The programme also focused on decision-making power of women within the household, division of labor, and access to and control over resources.

A project with similar goals has been designed for the ultra poor women. BRAC initiated a program called Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction – Targeting the Ultra poor (CFPR/TUP) in 2002 based on the notion that extreme poverty is multi-dimensional and thus, effective strategies to combat poverty need to be centered on strengthening not only the economic but also the socio-political asset base of the ultra poor. The main purpose of this project is to create a positive attitude in rural areas for women's empowerment and for improving gender relations in the family, society and organization at the village level. It is anticipated that the goal would be achieved by changing gender discriminatory attitudes and behavior through training of VO members including their male relatives.

Ten *upazilas* in two districts have been selected for implementation of the GQAL programme in 2005 and 2006. A total of 1200 males and females were given GQAL training. They were selected from ultra poor, moderate poor, VO members, and union parishad members. The trainees work as educators and will conduct 7200 *Uthan baithak* (Courtyard meetings). Villagers living around educator are expected to participate in the courtyard meetings. Most of the educators are selected from TUP category because the programme is mainly designed for them. The expected outcome might be the additional knowledge and awareness of the villagers about gender norms and relations; better understanding of rationality of joint ownership by men and women of family resources and women's participation in decision-making in the family. To help evaluate the impact and change of behavior of villagers after intervention, a baseline survey was planned to be conducted in the districts mentioned above.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to find out the GQAL pre-intervention views of villagers towards gender relations in the household and in the society.

The specific objective is to look into

1. The knowledge about gender discrimination, empowerment, violence against women, marriage
2. The perception on gender role, discrimination, empowerment, violence, and marriage
3. The existing attitude of male and female towards the themes mentioned above.

METHODOLOGY

The information was collected through individual household survey, attitudinal scale and in-depth interview.

The individual household survey covers socio-demographic profile that helped measure knowledge, perception, and attitude towards gender issues in a different way. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information for survey.

For attitudinal scale 25 statements were selected on which respondents' attitudes were assessed (Appendix 1). The statements reflected situations with which the respondents were asked to agree or disagree. The respondents' attitude on each of the statements were captured in four point Likert scale – completely agreed, partially agreed, partially disagreed, and completely disagreed. Both positive and negative statements had been considered for getting balanced attitudes of the respondents. Each of the statements was given numerical weight four to one for completely agreed and disagreed. On the other hand, this could be 'one for completely agreed' and 'four for completely disagreed'. This variation emerges depending on the nature of the statements. Higher score from a statement related to themes meant more favorable attitude towards gender and the opposite meant less favourable attitude. Total score for each respondent was computed by summing the responses against each statement. Cumulated score from the different themes represented their attitude toward gender relation. In the case of attitude towards gender relation possible scores for a respondent ranged from 5 to 20.

In-depth interview focused on the respondents' attitude towards gender. The same statements, used in attitudinal scale, were also used in in-depth interview. The objective over here was to find out how respondents rationalized themselves in supporting or not supporting the statements with a special focus on interpreting their cognition and influence behind holding attitudes in the statements.

SAMPLING

Eight *upazila* area offices were selected purposively because of chasing the tight training schedule to the educators who would conduct *'Uthan Baithak'* after receiving training (Table 1). The data were to be collected just before commencing the intervention. From each area, one to three spots[4] were selected because in some spots there were no adequate numbers of interviewees. Besides bearing in mind the place of *Uthan Baithak* of the educators selected by Programme Organizer (PO) spots were also selected purposively with a view to covering the households' members who might have participated in *Uthan Baithak.*.

Spots were used in this study as a unit of the survey. From each spots sample from four categories: rich, middle, lower and ultra poor (CFPR/TUP) categorized by BRAC staff through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method for selecting the ultra poor were included in the study. We considered all the samples for the last two groups, 20% from middle and 10% from rich class that make 75 in total in one spot. It is necessary to mention here that the male and

[4] Among other steps for targeting ultra poor selecting village is bit final stage of this process. Once the villages are selected, several participatory wealth-ranking exercises are conducted to cover all possible locations of a village where extreme poor live. These sub-village level locations are known as spots, which typically constitute 100–150 households.

female ratio of the sample is 50%. The numbers that are mentioned especially for middle and rich were randomly selected from the list in the PRA file.

Table 1. Sampling at a glance

Districts	Area offices	Spots	Respondents (Part A)	In-depth (Part B)
Kishoreganj	Kishoreganj Sadar	1	75	10
	Katiadi	3	154	20
	Pakundia	1	75	10
	Kuliarchar (control)	3	100	10
Netrokona	Mohongonj	2	150	20
	Atpara	1	74	10
	Madan	1	75	10
	Kendua (control)	2	100	10
Total		14	803	100

For in-depth interview the information was collected from same persons who were interviewed in survey. Ten interviewees were selected from each spot. Primarily male and female were selected differently from each category. The respondents were chosen considering their age. Too older person was excluded from in-depth interview. The number was selected from different age group so to see whether age has a bearing different attitude towards gender. If male was selected from one household, female was selected from other household. But this number sometimes varied from other spots, as the sufficient numbers of TUP members were not found.

ANALYTICAL FRAME

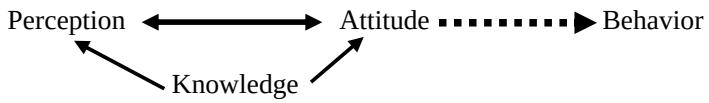
The study has focused on the following five main themes keeping consistency with the issues of GQAL programme:

Themes	Issues
General perception about gender	Gender role within household, equality, and division of labor
Discrimination	Inequality in nutrition, health, education, and workload
Empowerment	Decision making within household, mobility outside home and social participation in *shalish*
Violence against women	Dowry, divorce, and perception of violence
Marriage	Early marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, and decision on marriage

These themes and issues have been analyzed in terms of knowledge, perception and attitude[5]. Knowledge means the information, understanding, skills people gain through education or experience; or the state of knowing about a particular fact or situation. Perception is the way people notice things, especially with the senses, for example our perception of reality/color is visual perception. In other words an idea, belief, people have as a result of how they see or understand something. And the way people think and feel about somebody or something; the way people behave towards something or somebody that shows how people feel and think is attitude.

[5] The definition of knowledge, perception and attitude has been taken from Oxford Dictionary.

The following conceptual model shows that knowledge, perception and attitude are inter-related but one concept does not necessarily lead to another. Knowledge level of anyone can influence both perception and attitude but there is no clear-cut direction that knowledge may come up first, then perception, finally attitude, and behavior. Perception, attitude interacts with each other. It is likely that typically knowledge, and perception of human being towards anything else might have helped to influence the attitude, and eventually could have altered human behavior.



One might have enough knowledge and very good perception on gender issues but his or her attitude and behavior could be different. Given this pondering by the different concepts this model has been considered to explicate current status of knowledge, perception and attitude of the villagers in this study.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

At the outset findings presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Table 2 shows that out of total respondents 52% are female and they mostly came from lower socio-economic class while others were from middle and higher class. The highest number of respondents belonged to 30-44 years age group whereas few of them were above 60 years.

Majority of the respondents were married (86%) and Muslim (96%) and 32% of the total are involved with the NGO activities. Sixty percent of the respondents were illiterate (60%) and only 3% had HSC degree. Almost half of the respondents were engaged with business (47%). Ten percent are involved with household work.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents (n=803)

Age group	% of respondents
15-29	27 (214)
30-44	45 (358)
45-59	24 (191)
60>	6 (36)
Education	
Illiterate	60 (485)
One to five	23 (181)
Six to ten	14 (116)
HSC +	3 (21)
Economic status	
TUP	3 (21)
Lower	57 (458)
Middle	29 (234)
Upper	11(90)
Occupation	
Agriculture	14 (115)
Day labor	13 (106)
Business	47 (376)
Household work	10 (82)
Others	15 (124)
Marital status	
Unmarried	5 (41)
Married	86 (694)
Widow/Divorced.	9 (68)
Religion	
Muslim	96 (769)
Hindu	4 (34)

KNOWLEDGE

Respondents' Knowledge on gender relations were assessed in terms of the different issues like mandatory education, nutrition to children, division of property, age of voting right, dowry and divorce, and age of male and female's marriage were inquired in themes - discrimination, empowerment, violence against women and marriage. However, knowledge on the topics of the respondents has been discussed beneath.

KNOWLEDGE ON DISCRIMINATION

There are many issues, which are related to discrimination but here only few of them focused on knowledge are included. The knowledge on the mandatory education and giving food to children are discussed in this section. In general, 30% respondents correctly stated the extent of compulsory education for children. As expected, the knowledge level is significantly higher for people with better education. Like educated people the well-off class of the society also had better knowledge compared to other classes regarding the compulsory education. In occupational group businessmen had relatively better knowledge than others, which is statistically significant. It was found that the more the level of education the better the knowledge level of the respondent (Table 3).

Regarding food requirement for boy and girl in the family during their growing stage (10-11 years), irrespective of economic status, education and occupation 82% all of the respondents gave correct answer. Twelve percent said that boys should be given more food whereas 6% of the respondents favored girls. Majority of the respondents were aware of the necessity of providing equal amount of food for both boy and girl (Table 4). Over one third of ultra poor respondents put emphasis on boys. A trend is found in economic group and in education variable meaning that from lower to higher class and illiterate to higher education level the knowledge have gradually increased but different results are found in respondents with diverse occupations. However, the knowledge level and the variables mentioned in the Table have strong statistical association.

Table 3. Knowledge on compulsory education

Variable and group		Correct answer (%)	N
Economic status*	TUP	33.3	21
	Lower class	21.6	458
	Middle	31.6	234
	Upper	57.8	90
Education*	Illiterate	19.4	485
	Class 1-5	30.4	181
	Class 6-SSC	56.9	116
	HSC and higher	81.0	21
Occupation**	Agriculture	34.8	115
	Day labor	16.0	106
	Business	35.4	82
	Housework	29.0	376
	Others	29.8	124

*p<.001, **p<.01

Table 4. Knowledge on food requirements for boy and girl (%)

Variables and groups		Equal	Boy	Girl	N
Economic status*	TUP	57.1	38.1	4.8	21
	Lower class	79.9	12.4	7.6	458
	Middle	85.0	9.0	6.0	234
	Upper	93.3	6.7	0	90
Education**	Illiterate	78.1	14.2	7.6	485
	Class 1-5	86.7	8.3	5.0	181
	Class 6-SSC	92.2	5.2	2.6	116
	HSC and Higher	85.7	9.5	4.8	21
Occupation**	Agriculture	86.1	10.4	3.5	115
	Day labor	70.8	19.8	9.4	106
	Business	90.2	4.9	4.9	82
	Housework	82.2	11.4	5.3	376
	Others	80.6	9.7	9.7	124

*p<.001, **p<.01

EMPOWERMENT

The knowledge on empowerment includes issues like division of property among the family members and minimum age of casting vote. Table 5 shows that over half of the males and females were knowledgeable about the division of property between them but males were more knowledgeable than females. Muslims were better aware of this issue than the Hindus. Besides, both religion and sex are statistically associated with knowledge on division of property.

Regarding the minimum age of voting rights people with higher economic status and HSC and higher education knew very well compared to other categories (Table 6). Over half of the respondents who were involved with agriculture, business and other occupations were cognizant of the minimum age of voting rights. Males were more knowledgeable than female with regard to the age of voting rights. All these responses are statistically significant with the variables - sex, economic status, education, and occupation.

Table 5. Knowledge on the division of property between male and female

Variable and group		Correct (%)	N
Sex*	Male	66.1	386
	Female	55.2	417
Religion*	Muslim	62.3	769
	Hindu	17.6	34

*p<.001

Table 6. Knowledge on the minimum age for voting

Variable and group		Correct (%)	N
Sex*	Male	60.9	386
	Female	44.8	417
Economic status*	TUP	33.3	21
	Lower class	45.0	458
	Middle	58.5	234
	Upper	80.0	90
Education*	Illiterate	41.6	485
	Class 1-5	60.2	181
	Class 6-SSC	79.3	116
	HSC and Higher	90.5	21
Occupation*	Agriculture	60.0	115
	Day labor	50.9	106
	Business	61.0	82
	Housework	44.9	376
	Others	64.5	124

*p<.001

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The knowledge of the respondents on the punishment of transaction for transaction dowry and the legal procedure of divorce was measured. The findings show that 8% replied correctly about the punishment for dowry transactions but majority (62%) of the respondents answered correctly regarding divorce. There is a significant variation among the economic category and in the different level of education on the knowledge of punishment for dowry. The upper class and the relatively better educated people had more knowledge than the other categories (Table 7), but the overall knowledge level was not satisfactory in all those groups. So far the responses are significantly associated with the level of education and economic status.

On the other hand, the implementation of divorce by law is well known irrespective of all education categories including Muslim. Even more than half of the illiterate people were knowledgeable about divorce. Although divorce is not allowed in Hindu religion few Hindus were aware of the legal time period of accomplishing divorce (Table 8).

Table 7. Knowledge on the legal punishment of dowry

Variable and group		Correct (%)	N
Economic status*	TUP	14.3	21
	Lower class	5.2	458
	Middle	8.5	234
	Upper	21.1	90
Education*	Illiterate	4.5	485
	Class 1-5	8.3	181
	Class 6-SSC	17.2	116
	HSC and higher	42.9	21

*p<.001

Table 8. Knowledge on the actual period of execution of divorce

Variable and group		Correct (%)	N
Education*	Illiterate	57.3	485
	Class 1-5	66.3	181
	Class 6-SSC	71.6	116
	HSC and higher	85.7	21
Religion*	Muslim	64.0	769
	Hindu	20.6	34

*p<.001

MARRIAGE

Resembling dowry and divorce there are some legal issues related to marriage. It was expected that the respondents would have considerable knowledge about marriage and practices especially with the actual age of marriage for men and women.

This section explored the respondents' knowledge regarding the minimum age of marriage for both boy and girl. Among the married 67% respondents knows the minimum age of marriage for women while 24% did not know the actual age of marriage for men. Majority of the respondents who were 15-29 years old and unmarried knew the minimum age of marriage for males (Table 9). Similar trend was found in the cases of more educated and upper class respondents.

On the other hand, most of the respondents from different economic categories including married, unmarried and widow are ignorant about the minimum age of marriage for female. Age, economic status, education and marital status are strongly associated with the knowledge on minimum age of marriage for women. A similar statistical significance was also observed for minimum age of men's marriage except age.

Table 9. Knowledge on minimum age of marriage for boy and girl (%)

Variables and group		Male	Female	N**
		Correct	Correct	
Economic status*	TUP	66.7	33.3	21
	Lower class	62.0	19.2	458
	Middle	71.8	26.1	234
	Upper	82.2	45.6	90
Education*	Illiterate	56.7	15.9	485
	Class 1-5	77.9	28.7	181
	Class 6-SSC	88.8	46.6	116
	HSC and Higher	100	66.7	21
Martial status*	Unmarried	85.4	43.9	41
	Married	67.6	24.2	694
	Widow/Divorced/Separate	52.9	16.2	68
Age*	15-29	75.2	-	218
	30-44	68.2	-	358
	45-59	59.2	-	191
	60<	52.8	-	36

*p<.001, ** there were same number of males and females respondents

PERCEPTION

Perception is also explained on the basis of different themes used in this study. It includes the way of perceiving gender characterizing different indicators such as compartmentalization of gender role in the family, favoring male regarding health, education, access to food, treatment, recreation, decision-making whereas paying no heed to women in the different sphere of life, meaning of violence, decision on girls' marriage. Based on these variables the idea, belief or the nature of understanding of the respondents towards gender were investigated.

GENERAL PERCEPTION ABOUT GENDER (MALE AND FEMALE FUNCTIONS IN FAMILY)

Bearing five themes in mind the perception of the respondents on different issues were reviewed. Overall, a very predictable (gender stereotype perception as people guess and practice) perception was shown regarding the activities and role of male and female in the family. Perception towards the activities normally done by male and female in the family were found almost same across different variables – economic category, sex, age groups, occupation, educational background, marital status, NGO membership, and religion. A little exception was found in the ultra poor but the frequency of this category in the sample is very lower than others. Therefore, this may not influence much on the perception level of the study.

Table 10 shows that all respondents perceive earning, and shopping/marketing should exclusively be male's responsibility (99 to 100%). On the other hand cooking, household work, and childcare were believed to be assigned only to females in the family (95 to 100%). Respondents from different occupations, particularly farming and business considered 'teaching at home' (51-72%), and educated people (HSC and above) and extreme poor believed that childcare should be males' tasks (Appendix 2, 3). There was no different perception among the respondents related to teaching child at home as male's and female's duty.

Table 10. Perceived role of male and female in family

Type of activities		Economic status %			
		TUP	Lower	Middle	Upper
Earning	Male	100(21)	100(458)	100(234)	100(90)
	Female	33(7)	28(128)	27(64)	20(4)
Cooking	Male	0(0)	.2(1)	.4(1)	0(0)
	Female	100(21)	100(456)	99(232)	100(90)
Teaching child at home	Male	57(12)	53(214)	65(153)	77(69)
	Female	43(9)	60(273)	66(154)	78(70)
Household work	Male	10(2)	7(32)	6(14)	2(2)
	Female	95(20)	96(440)	99(231)	98(88)
Shopping	Male	100(21)	99(452)	99(231)	99(89)
	Female	0(0)	3(15)	3(7)	1(1)
Childcare	Male	71(15)	45(207)	46(108)	57(51)
	Female	100(21)	93(425)	93(218)	94(85)

Multiple responses considered

PERCEPTION ON DISCRIMINATION WITHIN FAMILY

The issues on perceived discrimination normally found in village life were considered. The following tables show that there is no significant difference among the respondents in expecting child, necessity of education, priority of treatment, excess food intake, decision-making in the household, and participation in social activities. As a whole head of the household was in essence the husband and boy were given much priority than female and girl.

In expecting son as first child in the family all economic categories and illiterate respondents preferred boy than girl, but educated people (HSC and above) preferred girls than boys (Table 11). Nearly half of the Hindus (44%) liked to have either boy or girl as first child. This result is strongly statistically associated with religion and education.

Table 11. Perception on having first child in the Family (%)

Variables and group		Boy	Girl	Any one	N
Economic status**	TUP	61.9	14.3	23.8	21
	Lower class	73.8	8.7	17.5	458
	Middle class	69.2	13.2	17.5	233
	Upper class	56.7	17.8	25.6	90
Religion*	Muslim	71.3	11.3	17.4	769
	Hindu	47.1	8.8	44.1	34
Education*	Illiterate	75.1	7.6	17.3	485
	One to five	69.1	17.1	13.8	181
	Six to SSC	58.6	12.1	29.3	116
	HSC and above	33.3	38.1	28.6	21

*p<.001, **p<.03

Although the boys were preferred to get education, the Hindus (82%) and least educated group (44%) preferred both boys and girls to get educated. Religion, education and occupation are significantly associated with preference for boys and girls education.

Table 12. Perception on the choice of education for boy and girl (%)

Variables and group		Boy	Girl	Both	N
Religion*	Muslim	54.0	9.8	36.3	769
	Hindu	14.7	2.9	82.4	34
Education*	Illiterate	59.6	10.3	30.1	485
	One to five	45.3	10.5	44.2	181
	Six to SSC	36.2	6.0	57.8	116
	HSC and above	33.3	0	66.7	21
Occupation**	Agriculture	61.7	4.3	33.9	115
	Day labor	60.4	10.4	29.2	106
	Business	48.7	9.3	42.0	376
	Household work	53.7	4.9	41.5	82
	Others	46.8	16.9	36.3	124

*p<.001, **p<.01

Regarding the decision for family planning most of the respondents said that it depends mostly on wives (43%), but 33% of the respondents thought that both husband and wife were equally important for taking decision on this matter. Among the respondents apparently female, Muslim, NGO members, illiterate, 15-29 years age group, businessman and respondents engaged in household work put emphasis on wife for family planning (Table 13). The Hindus

and educated people felt that both should take decision what could be done. The variables sex, religion, NGO membership, education, age and occupation have significant relationship with the choice of family planning.

In the case of treatment most of the respondents believed that husband was important to get cured first, but 20% of the respondent thought that both should get treatment at the same time. Looking into detail on the basis of different occupational groups, sex, religion and educational category, all of them favored husband rather than wife. But educated people and Hindus took it differently. They considered that both husband and wife cured at the same time (Table 14).

Necessity of relaxation for family members was observed. The findings show that husband should get more importance than wife. Out of the total respondents majority (78%) unanimously accentuate to husband rather than wife (Table 15). Similar results were found regarding the question of providing excess food to husbands and boys than wives and girls (Table 16). Hence, the respondents do not have different view on the requirement of food for the family members. As a whole 81% and 78% of the respondents more enthusiastically emphasizes on husband and boy than wife and girl for the necessity of food.

Table 13. Perception on the precedence for decision-making in birth control (%)

Variables and groups		Husband	Wife	Both	Aunt	N
Sex*	Male	36.0	26.9	37.0		386
	Female	13.2	57.1	29.5	.2	417
Religion**	Muslim	24.4	43.3	32.1	.1	769
	Hindu	17.6	26.5	55.9	-	34
NGO membership**	Yes	20.8	51.4	27.8	-	255
	No	25.7	38.5	35.6	.2	353
Education**	Illiterate	26.6	45.2	28.0	.2	485
	Class 1-5	16.6	43.6	39.8	-	181
	Class 6-SSC	25.9	32.8	41.4	-	116
	HSC and higher	23.8	28.6	47.6	-	21
Age**	15-29	22.0	45.0	33.0	-	218
	30-44	19.8	46.4	33.5	.3	357
	45-59	31.4	37.7	30.9	-	191
	60+	41.7	16.7	41.7	-	36
Occupation*	Agriculture	40.0	27.0	33.0	-	115
	Day labor	33.0	32.1	34.0	.9	106
	Business	13.8	56.4	29.8	-	376
	Household work	25.6	41.5	32.9	-	82
	Others	32.3	25.0	42.7	-	124

*p<.001, **p<.01

Table 14. Perception on the priority of treatment in the family (%)

Variables and group		Husband first	Wife first	Same time	N
Occupation*	Agriculture	53.0	21.7	25.2	115
	Day labor	65.1	19.8	15.1	106
	Business	70.5	12.5	17.0	376
	Household work	54.9	17.1	28.0	82
	Others	60.5	18.5	21.0	124
Sex**	Male	54.1	21.5	24.4	386
	Female	73.4	11.3	15.3	417
Religion*	Muslim	64.9	16.9	18.2	769
	Hindu	47.1	-	52.9	34
Education*	Illiterate	71.3	15.1	13.6	485
	One to five	59.7	19.3	21.0	181
	Six to SSC	46.6	14.7	38.8	116
	HSC and above	33.3	23.8	42.9	21

*p<.001, **p<.01

Table 15. Perception on the necessity of relaxation of husband and wife (%)

Variables and group		Husband	Wife	N
Sex**	Male	69.2	30.8	386
	Female	86.3	13.7	417
NGO membership***	Yes	82.4	17.6	255
	No	76.1	23.9	548
Education**	Illiterate	81.6	18.4	485
	One to five	75.1	24.9	181
	Six to SSC	70.7	29.3	116
	HSC and above	61.9	38.1	21
Marital status***	Unmarried	63.4	36.6	41
	Married	78.0	22.0	694
	Widow/separate/divorced	88.2	11.8	68
Occupation*	Agriculture	71.3	28.7	115
	Day labor	74.5	25.5	106
	Business	86.4	13.6	376
	Household work	70.7	29.3	82
	Others	66.9	33.1	124

*p<.001, **p<.01, ***p<.05

The respondents across age, sex, marital status, NGO membership, and education except those with higher education (HSC and above) expressed that husbands and boys should get excess food. Twelve out of 23 educated (HSC and above) respondents felt that wife needed more food than husband at the time of pregnancy. Here although the pregnant woman were not considered but respondents might have been influenced with this problem.

Table 16. Perception on the necessity of excess food intake in the family %

Variables and group		Husband	Wife	Boy	Girl
Economic status	TUP	85.7 (18)	23.8 (5)	90.5 (19)	57.1 (12)
	Lower	83.0 (380)	23.8 (109)	77.5 (355)	55.5 (254)
	Middle	76.5 (179)	33.8 (79)	77.4 (181)	64.5 (151)
	Upper	81.1 (73)	34.4 (31)	80.0 (72)	70.0 (63)
Sex	Male	73.8 (285)	37.0 (143)	77.5 (299)	62.7 (242)
	Female	87.5 (365)	19.4 (81)	78.7 (328)	57.1 (238)
Education	Illiterate	82.7 (401)	23.3 (113)	76.9 (373)	54.4 (264)
	One to five	76.8 (139)	30.9 (56)	75.1 (136)	65.2 (118)
	Six to SSC	85.3 (99)	37.1 (43)	87.9 (102)	72.4 (84)
	HSC & above	52.4 (11)	57.1 (12)	76.2 (16)	66.7 (14)
Age	15-29	78.4 (171)	29.9 (63)	78.9 (172)	64.2 (140)
	30-44	82.7 (296)	27.9 (100)	76.0 (272)	60.9 (218)
	45-59	79.6 (152)	26.7 (51)	82.7 (158)	53.9 (103)
	60 +	86.1 (31)	27.8 (10)	69.4 (25)	52.8 (19)
Marital status	Married	63.4 (26)	53.7 (22)	80.5 (33)	58.5 (24)
	Unmarried	81.3 (564)	26.9 (187)	77.7 (539)	60.1 (417)
	Widow/separated/ Divorced	88.2 (60)	22.1 (15)	80.9 (55)	57.4 (39)

Numbers in the parentheses indicate the number of responses; multiple responses are considered

PERCEPTION ON EMPOWERMENT

The term empowerment is here defined by decision-making, mobility of women, and their participation in social activities. Decision-making in buying, selling household assets and using sale proceeds were considered. The results show that out of total respondents 53% believed that both husband and wife should decide to buy and sell any kind of household assets and use of that sale proceeds. Little different perception was found between male and female in terms of buying domestic goods in which wife should have more power to decide than husband (Table 17). On the other hand, perception did not differ much between male and female for decision on selling land and rickshaw. For domestic goods and livestock both husband and wife were given priority to decide on buying, selling and using sale proceeds compared to husband alone. In-laws of the family were found less important with regard to decision-making on buying, selling, and using sale proceeds.

Table 17. Perception on controlling over household assets

Sex	Assets	Husband & wife (%)	Wife (%)	Husband (%)	Father in law/Father (%)	Mother in law/Mother (%)
		Buying assets				
Male	Land	41.2 (159)	2.3 (9)	46.4 (179)	9.6 (37)	.5 (2)
	Rickshaw	48.2 (186)	2.1 (8)	45.9 (177)	3.9 (15)	-
	Livestock	46.6 (540)	32.7 (379)	17.2 (199)	3.1 (36)	.3 (4)
	Domestic goods	37.6 (435)	53.3 (617)	7.0 (81)	1.4 (16)	.8 (9)
Female	Land	42.0 (175)	1.9 (8)	51.3 (214)	4.6 (19)	.2 (1)
	Rickshaw	39.6 (165)	3.1 (13)	55.6 (232)	1.4 (6)	.2 (1)
	Livestock	40.9 (512)	40.0 (501)	17.7 (221)	1.0 (13)	.3 (4)
	Domestic goods	32.1 (402)	58.6 (733)	8.4 (105)	.6 (8)	.2 (3)
		Selling assets				
Male	Land	53.9 (208)	.8 (3)	34.7 (134)	10.4 (40)	.3 (1)
	Rickshaw	57.0 (220)	.5 (2)	38.9 (150)	3.6 (14)	
	Livestock	57.3 (664)	20.2 (234)	18.9 (219)	3.3 (38)	.3 (3)
	Domestic goods	54.5 (631)	36.0 (417)	7.3 (85)	1.7 (20)	.4 (5)
Female	Land	47.7 (199)	.7 (3)	46.3 (193)	4.8 (20)	.5 (2)
	Rickshaw	49.6 (207)	2.2 (9)	46.0 (192)	1.9 (8)	.2 (1)
	Livestock	53.2 (665)	21.9 (274)	23.3 (291)	1.4 (17)	.3 (4)
	Domestic goods	50.1 (627)	33.4 (418)	15.7 (196)	.6 (7)	.2 (3)
		Using sale proceeds				
Male	Land	64.5 (249)	.8 (3)	26.7 (103)	8.0 (31)	
	Rickshaw	63.0 (243)	1.3 (5)	32.1 (124)	3.6 (14)	
	Livestock	64.3 (745)	12.5 (145)	19.9 (231)	2.8 (33)	.3 94)
	Domestic goods	63.4 (734)	21.8 (252)	13.2 (153)	1.2 (14)	.4 (5)
Female	Land	59.7 (249)	2.2 (9)	34.1 (142)	3.8 (16)	.2 (1)
	Rickshaw	60.2 (251)	2.2 (9)	35.3 (147)	2.2 (9)	.2 (1)
	Livestock	64.3 (805)	12.9 (161)	21.3 (267)	1.1 (14)	.3 (4)
	Domestic goods	62.4 (780)	21.7 (271)	15.3 (192)	.4 (5)	.2 (3)

Multiple responses considered

In participating social activities, especially in *shalish* (traditional justice system in rural Bangladesh) women were not allowed to attend. Table 18 shows that 4% of the respondents felt that women should participate in *shalish*. There is no dissimilarity in other variables regarding this issue (Appendix 4). Although this issue is especially related with women and this is an indication of women empowerment but findings show that not only men discouraged women to participate in village *shalish* but women also themselves were found uninterested to be active in *shalish.* Even all the education categories had identical view regarding participation in *shalish.* Sex and education is insignificantly associated with participation of women in village *shalish.*

Table 18. Women participation in village s*halish* (%)

Variables and Group		Yes	No	N
Male	TUP	-	100.0	8
	Lower class	1.9	98.1	216
	Middle class	3.4	96.6	117
	Upper class	6.7	93.3	45
Female	TUP	15.4	84.6	13
	Lower class	3.7	96.3	242
	Middle class	4.3	95.7	117
	Upper class	4.4	95.6	45
Education	Illiterate	3.3	96.7	475
	One to five	3.3	96.7	181
	Six to SSC	3.4	96.6	116
	HSC & above	14.3	85.7	21
Marital status*	Unmarried	9.8	90.2	41
	Married	3.0	97.0	88
	Widow/separate/divorced	5.9	94.1	68

*p<.05

Like participation in *shalish*, women mobility outside home was considered in the study. The results show that almost all the respondents (91 to 100%) had similar opinion in this regard (Table 19). They said that females should not go outside home alone and they must take permission. Almost all (90 to 99%) the respondents felt that women must be permitted from their husbands rather than other members of the family, and he must accompany her if necessary (Table 20). Only few of them believed that her son or relative could go with her to visit that places. Few of them had mentioned that women should seek permission from father/mother-in-law. The interesting result was found for both male and female. They had similar view in this regard.

Table 19. Perception on the mobility of women outside household

		Should go alone	Need permission	Whose permission	
Sex	Name of place	No %	Yes %	Husband %	Father/Mother in law %
Male (n=385)	Father's house (Other village)	98.4	100	91.4	8.6
	Near by Upazilla	99.2	100	97.1	2.9
	Govt. office	96.6	100	97.1	2.9
	Local market	98.2	99.7	97.7	2.3
	Entertainment	98.7	99.7	98.2	1.8
	Hospital	95.1	99.5	96.4	3.6
Female (n=417)	Father house (Other village)	98.3	99.3	89.9	10.1
	Near by Upazilla	97.8	99.0	95.9	4.1
	Govt. office	97.4	99.3	96.6	3.4
	Local market	97.1	98.3	95.2	4.8
	Entertainment	98.8	98.8	96.9	3.1
	Hospital	93.5	98.3	96.4	3.6

Table 20. Women's accompany for outside visit

Sex	Name of place	Son %	Husband %	Relatives/ Neighbour %
Male (n=385)	Father house (other village)	17.9	78.2	3.9
	Near by thana	8.6	88.3	3.1
	Govt. office	9.4	89.6	1.0
	Local market	16.6	81.6	1.8
	Entertainment	5.7	93.2	1.0
	Hospital	14.8	81.3	3.9
Female (n=417)	Father house (other village)	13.2	83.2	3.6
	Near by thana	9.8	87.8	2.4
	Govt. office	9.4	88.7	1.9
	Local market	16.5	81.3	2.2
	Entertainment	7.7	87.1	5.3
	Hospital	12.5	81.5	6.0

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

It is difficult to put forward actual definition of violence against women as it differs from culture to culture. However, in this study few issues were included on which violence can seemingly be determined. Table 21 shows that at different stratified classes male respondents considered beating, slang, disgracing as violence against woman. The respondents from ultra poor did not categorize mental torture as violence. The upper class considered all these behavior mentioned in Table 21 as violence but all the types are not equally valued to them as violence. Female also deem all those actions as violence. Like males females also did not emphasize much on behavior such as mental torture and not sending father's home as violence.

Table 21. Perceived meaning of violence against women %

Sex	Econ status	Beating	Slang	Disgracing	Mental torture	Providing no food	Not sending father's home
Male	TUP	100(8)	100.0 (8)	63.5 (5)	0 (0)	75.0 (6)	62.5 (5)
	Lower	96.7(206)	91.5 (195)	54.5 (116)	43.7 (93)	80.8 (172)	46.9 (100)
	Middle	98.3(115)	84.6(99)	59.0 (69)	41.0 (48)	80.3 (94)	47.9 (56)
	Upper	97.8(44)	86.7(39)	73.3 (33)	62.2 (28)	75.6 (34)	53.3 (24)
Female	TUP	100(13)	100(13)	61.5 (8)	38.5 (5)	76.9 (10)	30.8 (4)
	Lower	94.6(227)	85.8(206)	52.1 (125)	40.4 (97)	84.2 (202)	53.8 (129)
	Middle	97.4(112)	87(100)	58.3 (67)	49.6 (57)	87.0(100)	42.6 (49)
	Upper	97.8(44)	88.9 (40)	68.9 (31)	64.4 (29)	77.8 (35)	53.3 (24)

Multiple responses considered; Numbers in the parentheses indicate the number of responses

MARRIAGE

In this section basically marriage related problems was included for perception. This was who should in the family decide regarding girls' marriage. Findings show that 49% of the respondents supported that parents should decide their daughter's marriage while 25% thought that fathers ought to decide it. An insignificant number of respondents favored to daughter who should decide herself whom to marry. Around one fifth thought that mother should have influence in deciding this matter. There is significant relationship between this subject and the variables mentioned in Table 22.

Table 22. Perception on decision-making for girls' marriage %

Variables and group		Daughter herself	Father	Mother	Father & Mother	N
Sex**	Male	4.9	28.0	16.6	50.5	386
	Female	6.5	22.3	23.0	48.2	417
NGO membership*	Yes	9.0	22.4	23.5	45.1	255
	No	4.2	26.3	18.2	51.3	548
Marital status***	Unmarried	9.8	31.7	-	58.5	41
	Married	5.5	24.1	20.7	49.7	694
	Wid./S/D	5.9	30.9	23.5	39.7	68

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.03

ATTITUDE

This section analyses the attitudes towards gender issues covered in the five themes of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to measure the attitude level of the respondents. The attitude level was categorized into three group - 5-9 being less favorable, 10-14 being neutral, and 15-20 more favorable.

For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews with 100 respondents were conducted. These respondents were selected from the sample participating in the survey. In selecting the interviewees, due consideration were given to characteristics like sex, age, economic status, etc. to ensure representation of various groups. Using the same Likert statements for quantitative measurement of attitudes, the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement and then to justify and rationalize their responses. It was expected that the interviews would provide important insights into the attitude of the respondents in addition to supporting the findings of the survey.

The association between study variables and attitude scores of different themes were examined through analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study also explored the correlation among themes through attitude scores. Finally, regression analysis was done to assess the determinants of attitudes.

GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS GENDER

Attitude towards the role of male and female in the family and society was measured in this section. Findings show that 6% of the respondents had more favourable attitude towards general perception of gender while 40% had less favourable (Table 23). More than half of the respondent had showed neutral attitudes towards gender. The mean attitude score for this theme is 10.38. The attitudinal scores were strongly associated with the respondents' sex, economic status, education, occupation, martial status, and religion (Table 24). Level of education seems to be an important aspect in the determination of attitude. Respondents with more education (HSC or above) have a significantly higher mean score (14.19) than the illiterate group (10.00). No significant variation in attitude scores was observed in case of NGO membership or age of the respondents.

The in-depth interview brings together opinions of the respondents on the basis of the statements. The general attitude regarding the difference in the gender roles in family and society is shaped by the stereotyped views about division of labor and the role of women as mothers. The identity mainly associated with women is that of a mother and women's primary role is perceived in terms of reproduction, childcare, doing household chores, etc. For dominance of men over women or women's relative inferior position in society, many respondents said that it was the norm, tradition, or god created us this way. In some cases, the entrenched patriarchal ideology is quite evident. A respondent belonging to upper class said, "Women are half of men" while another said, "Men are the *matha* (head) of society."

Physical attributes of men and women are also important in the formation of gender attitude. One said, "Since women cannot physically dominate or beat men, their status will always be below men." There is also a perception that men's work is supposed to have more value. In addition, men expect women to be always obedient and humble towards men. According to many respondents, while women working outside home is acceptable, men doing

household chores like cleaning clothes is highly objectionable. One respondent commented, "What will people say in village if I do housework?"

Table 23. Attitudinal scores of general attitudes towards gender (n=803)

Statistics	Result
Actual score range	5-20
Mean	10.38
Median	11.00
Mode	11
Standard Deviation	2.94
Respondents with more favorable attitude	6% (48)
Respondents with less favorable attitude	40% (321)

Table 24. Attitudinal scores of general attitude towards gender (n=803)

Variable and group		Attitude scores			
		Mean	SD	F	Significance
Gender*	Male	10.73	2.95	10.163	.001
	Female	10.07	2.90		
Age	15-29	10.35	2.90	.192	.902
	30-44	10.35	2.90		
	45-59	10.42	3.06		
	60-above	10.72	3.04		
Economic status***	TUP	10.33	2.06	6.687	.000
	Lower class	10.12	2.75		
	Middle class	10.42	3.01		
	Upper class	11.62	3.53		
Education***	Illiterate	10.00	2.61	22.528	.000
	Class 1-5	10.20	2.70		
	Class 6-SSC	11.56	3.59		
	HSC and higher	14.19	3.87		
NGO membership	Member	10.46	2.89	.245	.621
	Non-member	10.35	2.96		
Occupation**	Agriculture	10.54	3.03	3.618	.006
	Day labor	10.32	2.51		
	Business	10.74	2.97		
	Housework	10.04	2.85		
	Others	11.10	3.31		
Martial status	Unmarried	11.51	2.82	3.507	.030
	Married	10.35	2.96		
	W/D/S	10.06	2.67		
Religion**	Muslim	10.31	2.87	11.269	.001
	Hindu	12.03	3.97		

*p<.01,**p<.001, ***p<.000

For the theme general perception towards gender, the qualitative section reinforces the findings of the quantitative part of the study. An overwhelming majority of respondents had a negative or less favorable view on the issues of role of women in society and family, division of labor, etc. The interviews provide further evidence that attitudes are influenced by patriarchal norms and traditions of rural societies, which underscores the basic differences in the role of men and women both at the individual and community levels.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The objective of the section is to evaluate the attitude towards discrimination between male and female; and boy and girl with regard to nutrition, education, value of work, etc.

Table 25. Attitudinal Scores of Gender Discrimination (n=803)

Statistics	Result
Actual score range	5-20
Mean	14.83
Median	14.00
Mode	11
Standard Deviation	3.38
Respondents with more favorable attitude	44% (353)
Respondents with less favorable attitude	4.2% (34)

Around 44% had more favorable attitude and 4.2% had less favorable attitude (Table 25). The mean attitude score for this theme is 14.83.

Attitude seems to vary quite significantly on the basis of education, economic background and religion (Table 26). Again, respondents with higher years of schooling had more favorable attitude than those with less schooling. Economic condition also influences attitude towards gender discrimination. This may be because those who are better-off are in a position to distribute household resources more equitably. Hindus have a much higher score (17.50) than Muslims (14.71).

In-depth interviews revealed some key findings. It generally shows that boys are more valued than the girls in the family. The preference for boys is mainly explained by their value as future bread-earner for the family. The respondents who said that boys' education was more important was rationalized by the belief that boys were likely to get a job and take care of the family in future while the girl went some other's home after marriage. On the other hand, other respondent said that boys' education was particularly important for poor families. The justification given for equal importance for girl's education varied. They argued that free education for girls was an incentive. While other contended that if the girl was educated she might comprehend the exigency of it and sent her children to school. In addition there are some other dimensions for the importance of girl's education. A female respondent believed that an educated girl was good for marriage as it assumed to reduce the pressure of dowry. With regard to food intake, most men and women said that men should eat more as they worked harder. The only reason pointed out for importance of food for women is that they bear children.

Table 26. Attitudinal scores of gender discrimination by selected variables (n=803)

Variable and Group		Attitude scores			
		Mean	SD	F	Sig
Gender*	Male	15.17	3.37	7.764	.005
	Female	14.51	3.37		
Age	15-29	15.08	3.33	.625	.599
	30-44	14.71	3.38		
	45-59	14.80	3.49		
	60-above	14.58	3.12		
Economic status***	TUP	14.19	3.74	9.377	.000
	Lower class	14.32	3.33		
	Middle class	15.61	3.35		
	Upper class	15.51	3.15		
Education***	Illiterate	14.26	3.30	13.137	.000
	Class 1-5	15.44	3.27		
	Class 6-SSC	15.93	3.38		
	HSC and higher	16.57	3.44		
NGO membership	Member	14.72	3.33	.390	.533
	Non-member	14.88	3.41		
Occupation***	Agriculture	14.99	3.47	5.275	.000
	Day labour	14.03	3.06		
	Business	15.95	3.39		
	Housework	14.57	3.39		
	Others	15.38	3.29		
Martial status	Unmarried	15.05	3.24	1.752	.174
	Married	14.88	3.40		
	W/D/S	14.10	3.23		
Religion***	Muslim	14.71	3.36	22.798	.000
	Hindu	17.50	2.65		

***p<.001, *p<.05

The survey shows a more favourable attitude towards gender discrimination meaning that most of the respondents had positive views on equal treatment of men/women and boy/girl. However, these observations are in contradiction with the views expressed in the findings of in-depth interviews. Although there is a consensus that girl's education, nutrition, etc., is important but boys are given more emphasis in these aspects. This biased opinion is apparent in education implicitly due to their perceived potential as future earner of the family. There is also a perception that men work harder than women and therefore should eat more.

EMPOWERMENT

This theme consisted of statements related to decision-making with regard to household properties, participation in social activities like *shalish*, and mobility of women. Almost one fifth of the respondents had a more favourable attitude towards the issues and about same percentage of them (20.3%) had less favourable attitude (Table 28). The mean attitude score for empowerment related issues are 12.44. Different categories in education, economic and marital status are associated with attitude towards empowerment and these associations are statistically significant (Table 29). Similar to the previous two themes outlined above, respondents with more education have a higher score. Some variations are also observed in the different economic groups. TUPs had a mean attitude score of 10.90 while the mean for upper class was 13.34.

Table 27. Attitudinal scores of empowerment (n=803)

Statistics	Result
Actual score range	5-20
Mean	12.44
Median	12.00
Mode	11
Standard Deviation	3.27
Respondents with more favorable attitude	20 % (161)
Respondents with less favorable attitude	20.3 % (163)

Table 28. Attitudinal scores of empowerment by selected variables (n=803)

Variable and Group		Attitude Scores			
		Mean	SD	F	Sig
Gender	Male	12.72	3.29	5.296	.022
	Female	12.19	3.24		
Age	15-29	12.53	3.08	.099	.961
	30-44	12.38	3.24		
	45-59	12.46	3.40		
	60-above	12.44	4.09		
Economic** status	TUP	10.90	3.51	4.096	.007
	Lower class	12.32	3.31		
	Middle class	12.47	3.01		
	Upper class	13.34	3.49		
Education***	Illiterate	12.00	3.17	14.492	.000
	Class 1-5	12.54	3.23		
	Class 6-SSC	13.55	3.25		
	HSC and higher	15.57	2.99		
NGO membership	Member	12.47	3.01	.021	.885
	Non-member	12.43	3.39		
Occupation	Agriculture	12.38	3.13	1.675	.154
	Day labour	12.34	3.25		
	Business	12.87	3.11		
	Housework	12.22	3.24		
	Others	12.98	3.57		
Martial status*	Unmarried	12.85	3.33	3.505	.031
	Married	12.51	3.26		
	Divorced/separate	11.47	3.23		
Religion	Muslim	12.40	3.27	2.580	.109
	Hindu	13.32	3.32		

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.03

Results from the in-depth interviews confirm the existing belief found in the quantitative analysis that overall control of the decision-making on household properties should remain to men. This is rationalized in several ways: men are the bread-earner and understand property issues better; and they are main guardians who are ultimately responsible for all members in the family. As for female ownership of property, most men said that it was not necessary because the women could not use or maintain the properties properly. In addition, there is a fear of men regarding loss of control over resources. One respondent stated, “Women should not be owners of property because they will become powerful.”

The general attitude towards participation of women in *shalish* is quite negative. Mainly, social and religious norms are the reasons of women not being part of *shalish* but men. Several

respondents said that women lose honor or *purdah* if they participate in *shalish*. Some comments, "What do women know about justice?" and "Think of your own case, you will not take your wife to *dorbar*." Interestingly, women themselves disclose the unfavorable attitude towards social mobility of women as well. Some female respondents opined that the most suitable place for women is home and all her activities should be confined within this boundary.

Except in some specific issues, both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate similar findings related to empowerment. In terms of ownership of resources, participation of women in *shalish* and their free mobility perception and attitudes of the respondents are illustrated to be identical as they put into practice in reality.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Under this theme we measured respondents' attitude regarding violence against women through statements that reflected various dimensions of violence like beating, deprivation, etc. Of the total respondents 14.4% had more favorable attitude while 17.3% had less favorable attitude (Table 29). Sex, economic status, education, and occupation of the respondents are significantly associated with scores (Table 30). No significant variation was observed with regard to NGO membership status, age, religion, and marital status. The mean attitude score is 12.46. Interestingly, males had higher score than females although women were the victims of violence. The impact of education is also clearly evident in this theme; respondents with no education had a significantly lower mean (12.05) than those with HSC and above (14.90). The poor, TUPs (12.48) and lower class (12.09) had a lower mean than the upper class (13.30).

On the other hand, the qualitative part presents positive views, i.e. respondents had favorable attitude against violence. In responding to the statement about the cause of violence is poverty. But many responded that beating wife was not going to solve the problem of poverty. A respondent said, "Allah has given women as "*amanot*" to men, so women should not be beaten." Many pointed out the legal and religious implications of beating in the family. Similarly, the attitude towards beating for dowry is also favourable. But there were some respondents who considered beating acceptable in certain situations. According to a respondent, "Beating is not bad, it reduces anger." The girls could have kept under strict control through beating, one answered. Moreover, "In our society, women can lose honour, men don't" expressed other. Many men did not consider mental torture, scolding, and even not giving permission to go to the parent's house as violence.

Table 29. Attitudinal scores of violence against women (n=803)

Statistics	Result
Actual score range	5-20
Mean	12.46
Median	13.00
Mode	11
Standard Deviation	2.88
Respondents with more favorable attitude	14.4% (116)
Respondents with less favorable attitude	17.3% (139)

Table 30. Attitudinal scores of violence against women by selected variables (n=803)

Variable and group		Attitude scores			
		Mean	SD	F	Sig
Gender***	Male	12.98	2.89	25.267	.000
	Female	11.97	2.78		
Age	15-29	12.37	2.81	.512	.674
	30-44	12.39	2.88		
	45-59	12.66	2.90		
	60-above	12.61	3.15		
Economic	TUP	12.48	2.40	6.609	.000
status***	Lower class	12.09	2.72		
	Middle class	12.85	3.10		
	Upper class	13.30	2.85		
Education***	Illiterate	12.05	2.84	12.817	.000
	Class 1-5	12.71	2.82		
	Class 6-SSC	13.32	2.72		
	HSC and higher	14.90	2.68		
NGO	Member	12.47	2.70	.008	.927
membership	Non-member	12.45	2.95		
Occupation***	Agriculture	12.82	2.79	7.782	.000
	Day labour	12.00	2.85		
	Business	13.70	2.70		
	Housework	12.06	2.78		
	Others	12.91	3.05		
Martial status	Unmarried	12.85	3.40	2.192	.112
	Married	12.50	2.83		
	Divorced/separate	11.81	2.91		
Religion	Muslim	12.47	2.89	.271	.603
	Hindu	12.21	2.60		

***p<.001

There is a broad consensus on the negative consequences of physical violence in the quantitative and qualitative data. For the most part, the attitude against violence is shaped by social and religious norms. However, there is greater acceptability for the other dimensions of violence such as deprivation and mental or psychological torture.

MARRIAGE

This section measures attitude towards polygamy, dowry, early marriage, etc. Almost half of the respondents (48%) had more favourable attitude while 8.3% had less favourable attitude (Table 31). The mean attitude score for this theme is 14.74. Economic status, education, marital status, and religion are associated with attitude towards marriage (Table 32). Unmarried group had higher mean than the married. Again, educated respondents had significantly higher average score (18.00) than the illiterate (13.96). Those who were economically better-off had more favorable attitude towards marriage-related issues. The average attitudinal score for TUP and lower class 13.90 and 14.23 respectively; on the other hand, the mean attitude score for upper class is 15.99.

Table 31. Attitudinal scores of marriage related issues (n=803)

Statistics	Result
Actual score range	5-20
Mean	14.74
Median	15.00
Mode	17
Standard Deviation	3.46
Respondents with more favorable attitude	47.8% (384)
Respondents with less favorable attitude	8.3% (67)

Resembling attitudes towards marital issues the in-depth interviews produces issue-based findings. Of them the consequences of early marriage is explored at the outset. Some respondents pointed out that early marriage create health problems especially during childbirth. Others emphasized on the legal implications of early marriage. On the other hand, early marriage is rationalized by factors such as more dowries will be demanded if the girl is older; people will defame the girl in case of delay in marriage. In addition, safety of young girls is also another consideration for early marriage.

Table 32. Attitudinal scores of marriage-related issues by selected variables (n=803)

Variable and Group		Attitude Scores			
		Mean	SD	F	Sig
Gender	Male	14.95	3.56	2.904	.089
	Female	14.54	3.36		
Age	15-29	14.83	3.25	.208	.891
	30-44	14.65	3.59		
	45-59	14.83	3.44		
	60-above	14.58	3.61		
Economic status***	TUP	13.90	3.51	10.200	.000
	Lower class	14.23	3.54		
	Middle	15.32	3.15		
	Upper	15.99	3.30		
Education***	Illiterate	13.96	3.47	27.619	.000
	Class 1-5	15.39	3.27		
	Class 6-SSC	16.37	2.67		
	HSC and higher	18.00	2.57		
NGO membership	Member	15.05	3.29	3.077	.080
	Non-member	14.59	3.53		
Occupation*	Agriculture	14.49	3.54	2.564	.037
	Day labour	14.35	3.68		
	Business	15.65	3.39		
	Housework	14.59	3.30		
	Others	15.16	3.63		
Martial status*	Unmarried	15.17	3.42	3.526	.030
	Married	14.81	3.46		
	Divorced/separate	13.71	3.41		
Religion**	Muslim	16.67	3.47	7.799	.005
	Hindu	16.35	2.88		

***p<.001, **p<.005, *p<.01

In commenting on the statement about whether the girl becomes a burden if she is not married quickly, there is wide variation in responses. According to the respondents children

never become a burden to parents. One reacted "Its my *thing*...so I can't throw it out." Others were concerned about girl's marriage, which was a constant headache particularly when parents were poor.

Generally, the respondents were against illegal polygamy mainly because of legal (court and *shalish*) or social justifications. Respondents varied whether dowry increased wife's honor or not. Some considered that it increased honor as she had given money/assets to bride. It might augment her bargaining power in her in-laws family. She can't be easily dominated and can show "power of money" while others argue in a different way that dowry creates more pressure on wife. In other words it can increase greed of groom and/or his family. One male respondent said, "Dowry may increase the honor of wife but only until the money lasts...when the dowry money is finished, the honor is gone."

By and large the attitude towards the issues related to marriage is favorable. An overwhelming number of the respondents expressed negative views on early marriage and polygamy. Although there is a perception that marriage is a difficult issue for the poor families, the attitude was generally against early marriage practices.

CORRELATION AMONG DIFFERENT THEMES

It was observed that the attitudes towards different themes are positively correlated with each other. The strongest association is seen between attitude towards marriage and violence (.458) (Table 33). This association is understandable because violence-related issues are most often linked with different problems in marriage. Attitude towards gender discrimination is related with both empowerment (.430) and marriage (.421). The association between general perception and the rest of the themes is not stronger (.200-.369). This suggests that issues of empowerment and marriage are not influenced by the views on the role of the sex in family and society.

Table 33. Pearson correlation among different themes of gender attitude

Themes		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4
General perception of gender	X_1				
Gender discrimination	X_2	.282**			
Empowerment	X_3	.315**	.430**		
Violence against women	X_4	.250**	.368**	.369**	
Marriage	X_5	.174**	.421**	.257**	.458**

** p<.01

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The OLS regression has been used to identify the socioeconomic and demographic factors (independent variables) that influence the attitude scores (dependent variable) for individual themes (Table 34). It was observed that the increase in number of years of schooling was likely to lead to more favourable attitude in all themes. Economic status also influenced some aspects of gender attitude such as discrimination, violence against women, and marriage. The lower class (including TUP) is likely to have less favourable attitude than comparatively higher classes for these themes. Sex does not seem to have any effect on attitude except for violence against women. In this case males, on average, had intriguingly more favourable attitude than females. Hindus had more favourable attitude than Muslims with regard to discrimination and violence. NGO members were more likely to have favourable attitude towards marriage-related issues.

Table 34. Regression analysis of attitude towards gender relation

Independent variables	General perception	Discrimination	Empowerment	Violence against women	Marriage
Adjusted R square	.080	.073	.051	.076	.105
Constant	10.564**	16.889**	11.04**	10.27**	13.772**
	(13.754)	(19.046)	(13.251)	(13.65)	(15.433)
Age (yrs)	.009	-.011	-.001	.009	.010
	(.986)	(-1.107)	(-.172)	(1.025)	(.983)
Sex (Male=1, Female=0)	.404	.717	.408	1.110**	.296
	(1.043)	(1.606)	(.933)	(2.928)	(.658)
Marital status	-.402	.179	.390	-.036	(.344)
(Married=1, others=0)	(-1.323)	(.512)	(1.135)	(-.122)	.976
Religion	-.871	-2.085**	-.160	1.603*	-.428
(Muslim=1, Hindu=0)	(-1.713)	(-3.551)	(-.278)	(2.134)	(-.724)
NGO membership	.302	.016	.163	.313	.665**
(Yes=1, no=0)	(1.383)	(.067)	(.663)	(1.464)	(2.624)
Education (yrs)	.206**	.128**	.213**	.158**	.270**
	(6.624)	(3.548)	(6.038)	(5.186)	(7.470)
Economic status	-.063	-.803**	.122	-.484*	-.582*
(Lower=1, Mid/Upr=0)	(-.286)	(-3.152)	(.488)	(-2.240)	(-2.271)
Occupation (Housework=1, others=0)	-.261	.069	-.083	.200	-.036
	(-.691)	(.160)	(-1.95)	(.539)	(-.083)

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study commences to find out the respondents' knowledge, perception and attitude on gender relations in two districts. The research provides insights into the opinions and observations on gender relations in the rural setting of Bangladesh. The five themes covered different aspects of gender at all three levels.

The knowledge level of the respondents was determined by focusing on education, food and nutrition, property and voting rights, dowry, divorce, legal age of marriage, etc. It was observed that the respondents had good knowledge about the equal need of food intake and nutrition of both male and female. The knowledge on the compulsory level of education was comparatively poor. A significant number of the respondents were aware about the legal consequences of giving and receiving dowry. Most of the respondents knew the minimum legal age of marriage for girls.

The study on the perception of the respondents shows that the entrenched patriarchal values and norms prevailed in the community. In general, men were given more preference than women in healthcare, workload, decision-making in different issues within and outside the family. The mobility and participation of women in the community was found restricted. Regarding decision-making in marriage, the daughter herself have little say; in many cases, the authority lies solely with the male member of the family especially father or elder brother. Perception related to the necessity of education is more balanced. Many respondents understood the importance of education for both boys and girls.

The attitude towards general perception of gender was less favourable while for discrimination and marriage the respondents showed more favourable attitude. The attitude towards empowerment and violence against women is somewhat neutral. This shows that while there was an inclination towards gender equality in issues such as access to education, marriage, more fundamental questions like role of women vis-à-vis men are mainly determined by traditional patriarchal norms. The qualitative component of the study usually reinforces the attitude of the respondents. However, in some cases, particularly discrimination in education and health, the interviews indicate a less favorable attitude than the quantitative findings. Level of education is the single-most factor shaping attitude in general with more education leading to more favourable attitude. This is proved in both analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression analysis. There is some evidence that people who are better-off economically are likely to have favourable attitude towards gender. However, there may be co-linearity between economic background and other factors, particularly education. Men and women have similar attitude towards gender relations. Attitude in most themes are not strongly influenced by age, religion, NGO membership, or occupation.

In conclusion, the findings of the study stresses that knowledge, perception and attitude towards gender norms and relations are very much interrelated although there may not be any causal linkages among them. On the other hand, it is also possible that they might influence one another. We found that despite having good knowledge on the different issues of the themes it did not affect the way the respondents perceive the issues dealt with in the study. Similarly, the attitude of the respondents cannot be completely explained by their knowledge and perception. On the basis of the findings, more emphasis could be given to the issues that show a less favourable outcome in terms of gender role and relations.

Appendix 1

Statements

A. General perception on gender

1. Society has created the male dominance over female.
2. The job of women is to produce children and take care of them; men should earn money.
3. Women always have to be soft and patient; they will not protest. And men will be strong. They can say and do whatever they want.
4. Men are better than women, so they can never be equal.
5. As at present women are working outside home, so men should also help out in household chores like washing clothes, cooking appliances, etc.

B. Gender discrimination

1. Zarina and Jalil are brother and sister. When Jalil grows up, he will take the responsibility of the family. So Jalil should be treated better than Zarina.
2. Men and women should have equal amount of food.
3. Shafiq and Rahela are brother and sister. Both of them go to school. They are really poor. So their father should think about higher education only for Shafiq.
4. Both husband and wife should have opinion regarding birth control.
5. Rahim and Karimon work in the field. Because Karimon works less, she should be given fewer wages.

C. Empowerment

1. Since husband is the household head, he should run the family.
2. For selling properties, the husband's decision is final.
3. Both men and women work for making and maintaining properties. So both should have equal ownership.
4. Only men should participate and talk in *shalish*, not women.
5. The father of one woman lives in another village. Suddenly he becomes sick. In the meantime, the woman's husband or other senior relative are not in the house. In this situation, the woman should go to see his father with taking anyone's permission.

D. Violence against women

1. If there are needs in the family, it is natural for the husband to be angry. In this situation, its normal if the husband beats his wife.
2. Women belong to mother's descent, so they should not be beaten.
3. Say dowry was supposed to be given during marriage. Some dowry was paid after the marriage. So it is natural for the parents, relatives, to put pressure on the bride for the rest of the dowry.
4. Some people think that women's character may be at risk if they are not strictly controlled (beaten, not allowed to go outside, etc)
5. Even if the husband does not allow the wife to go to her parents home forcibly, still the wife should obey the husband.

E. Marriage

1. Some say it has become so difficult to keep chastity of women that they should be married off at age of 14-15.
2. If girls do not get married quickly they become a burden of the family.
3. Men should take wife's permission before marrying for second time.
4. The status of wife is increased if dowry is given.
5. A father always wants the best for his daughter. So, he can force his daughter to get married without her consent.

Appendix 2

Perceived role of male and female in family based on educational status (%) (n=803)

Type of Activities	Sex	Illiterate	1 to 5	6 to 10	10+
Earning	Male	100 (485)	100(181)	100(116)	100(21)
	Female	26.6(129)	27.1(49)	31(36)	14.3(3)
Cooking	Male	0(0)	.6(1)	.0(0)	4.8(1)
	Female	99.4(482)	99.4(180)	100(116)	100(21)
Teaching child at home	Male	50.7(246)	64.6(117)	79.3(92)	95.2(20)
	Female	55.5(269)	68(123)	84.5(98)	76.2(16)
Household work	Male	6.4(33)	5.0(9)	5.2(6)	9.5(2)
	Female	96.5(464)	97.2(176)	98.3(114)	100(21)
Shopping/marketing	Male	99(480)	97.8(177)	99.1(115)	100(21)
	Female	3.3(16)	1.7(3)	2.6(3)	4.8(1)
Taking care of child	Male	44.1(214)	49.7(90)	54.3(63)	66.7(14)
	Female	92(446)	94.5(171)	96.6(112)	95.2(20)

Figure in the parenthesis indicate the number of responses

Appendix 3

Perceived role of male and female in family based on sex (%) (n=803)

Type of Activities	Sex	Male	Female
Earning	Male	100 (386)	100(417)
	Female	25.4(98)	28.5(119)
Cooking	Male	.3(1)	.2(1)
	Female	99.5(384)	99.5(415)
Teaching child at home	Male	67.1(259)	51.8(216)
	Female	61.4(237)	64.5(269)
Household work	Male	9.3(36)	3.4(14)
	Female	96.6(373)	97.4(406)
Shopping/marketing	Male	98.7(381)	98.8(412)
	Female	1.8(7)	3.8(16)
Taking care of child	Male	50(193)	45.1(188)
	Female	92(355)	94.5(394)

Figure in the parenthesis indicate the number of responses

Appendix 4

Women's participation in village *shalish* in terms of sex and economic status (%) (n=803)

Sex	Economic Status	Yes	No
Male	TUP	-	100.0 (5)
	Lower class	1.9 (3)	98.1 (154)
	Middle class	3.3 (2)	96.7 (59)
	Upper class	-	100.0 (8)
Female	TUP	15.4 (2)	84.6 (11)
	Lower class	3.5 (6)	96.5 (165)
	Middle class	4.8 (3)	95.2 (60)
	Upper class	-	100.0 (7)
Male	TUP	-	100.0 (3)
	Lower class	2.4 (1)	97.6 (41)
	Middle class	3.3 (1)	96.7 (29)
	Upper class	-	100.0 (11)
Female	Lower class	3.8 (2)	96.2 (51)
	Middle class	3.6 (1)	96.4 (27)
	Upper class	7.1 (1)	92.9 (13)
Male	Lower class	-	100.0 (14)
	Middle class	4.8 (1)	95.2 (20)
	Upper class	11.1 (2)	88.9 (16)
Female	Small class	5.6 (1)	94.4 (17)
	Middle class	-	100.0 (24)
	Upper class	-	100.0 (21)
Male	Small class	-	100.0 (3)
	Middle class	-	100.0 (5)
	Upper class	12.5 (1)	87.5 (7)
Female	Middle class	50.0 (1)	50.0 (1)
	Upper class	33.3 (1)	66.7 (2)

Figure in the parenthesis indicate the number of respondents

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