



FACT SHEET - WORKING WITH YOUTH TO REDUCE VIOLENCE

There has been little work done on masculinities, both as a field of inquiry and site of advocacy, in Sri Lanka. To address the gap in evidence-based studies of masculinities, CARE Sri Lanka undertook a study on men's knowledge, practices and attitudes toward gender and gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombo, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya and Batticaloa districts. The study is part of the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence, coordinated by Partners for Prevention, a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV regional joint programme for gender-based violence prevention in Asia and the Pacific, which explores gender-based violence and masculinities to inform evidence-based violence prevention interventions.

A recurring theme from the findings of this study is the importance and the need to work with young people. The findings in relation to first perpetration of forced sexual relations, as well as factors that make men more likely to perpetrate violence against women/women more likely to become victims of violence, all demand the need to focus on young people's sexual and reproductive health in order to prevent sexual violence. Furthermore, a significant rate of depression was found among young men, revealing the impact of economic stress, and the need to holistically promote the well-being of young people.

Key findings

YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

- ❖ The majority of perpetrators of sexual violence (60%) were between 20 and 29 years of age the first time they committed sexual violence.
- ❖ Significantly, 28% of the perpetrators were 15-19 years of age when they first committed such violence, indicating that it is vital to work with schools and young boys to prevent sexual violence.
- ❖ Men in the 25-34 age bracket have the highest rate of current partner violence, compared to other age groups, pointing to the need to also direct intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention efforts at men below the age of 25.
- ❖ Men who were abused in childhood were more likely to use violence against women in adulthood.

HARMFUL 'MASCULINE' BEHAVIOUR AND VIOLENCE

- ❖ The vast majority of men who reported perpetrating sexual violence (67%) said that they were motivated by sexual entitlement: that is, their right to have sexual relations with women. The motivation of sexual entitlement was most common among men who perpetrated sexual violence in Colombo (80%), compared to Hambantota where 41% reported sexual entitlement as their motivation. In Batticaloa and Nuwara Eliya, the figure was around 72%.



BROADENING GENDER: WHY MASCULINITIES MATTER – Attitudes, practices and gender based violence in four districts in Sri Lanka

- ❖ Engaging in sex with a commercial sex worker or transactional sex was highly associated with male perpetration of sexual violence against a non-partner.
- ❖ The more sexual partners that men had ever had, the more likely they were to have ever used sexual violence against an intimate partner. For example, men who had ever had four or more sexual partners were over six times as likely to have sexually assaulted a non-partner compared to men who had only ever had one sexual partner.
- ❖ Gangs provide men with collectives or fraternities of peers that shape and reinforce their normative attitudes, and can provide support for exploitative behaviour and violence toward women and other, marginalized, men.
- ❖ Eight percent of men had ever participated in a gang. The highest percentage of males reporting membership in gangs was in Colombo – the capital city with rapidly expanding suburbs, slums and a migrant labour population moving to the city for work – where 15% of men had been in gangs. Rates of gang membership in Hambantota (7%) and Nuwara Eliya (6%) were average, while they were lowest amongst men in Batticaloa (4%).
- ❖ Overall, 11% of men had ever been in a fight with a weapon. Nineteen percent of men in Colombo and 17% in Nuwara Eliya had ever been in a fight with a weapon, compared to 6% in Batticaloa and 4% in Hambantota.
- ❖ Men who have higher levels of empathy are less likely to perpetrate violence against an intimate partner.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOUTH

- ❖ Male respondents amongst the 25-34 year age group were found to be most at risk of depression, with 8% of 25-34 year old men showing high symptoms of depression and 8 percent also experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- ❖ A slightly higher proportion of men in the 25-34 year age group had ever experienced sexual violence by another man or homophobic violence than men in other age groups.
- ❖ Ten percent of men surveyed in Colombo had experienced sexual violence by another man, compared with 3% in Nuwara Eliya, 2% in Batticaloa and 1% in Hambantota.