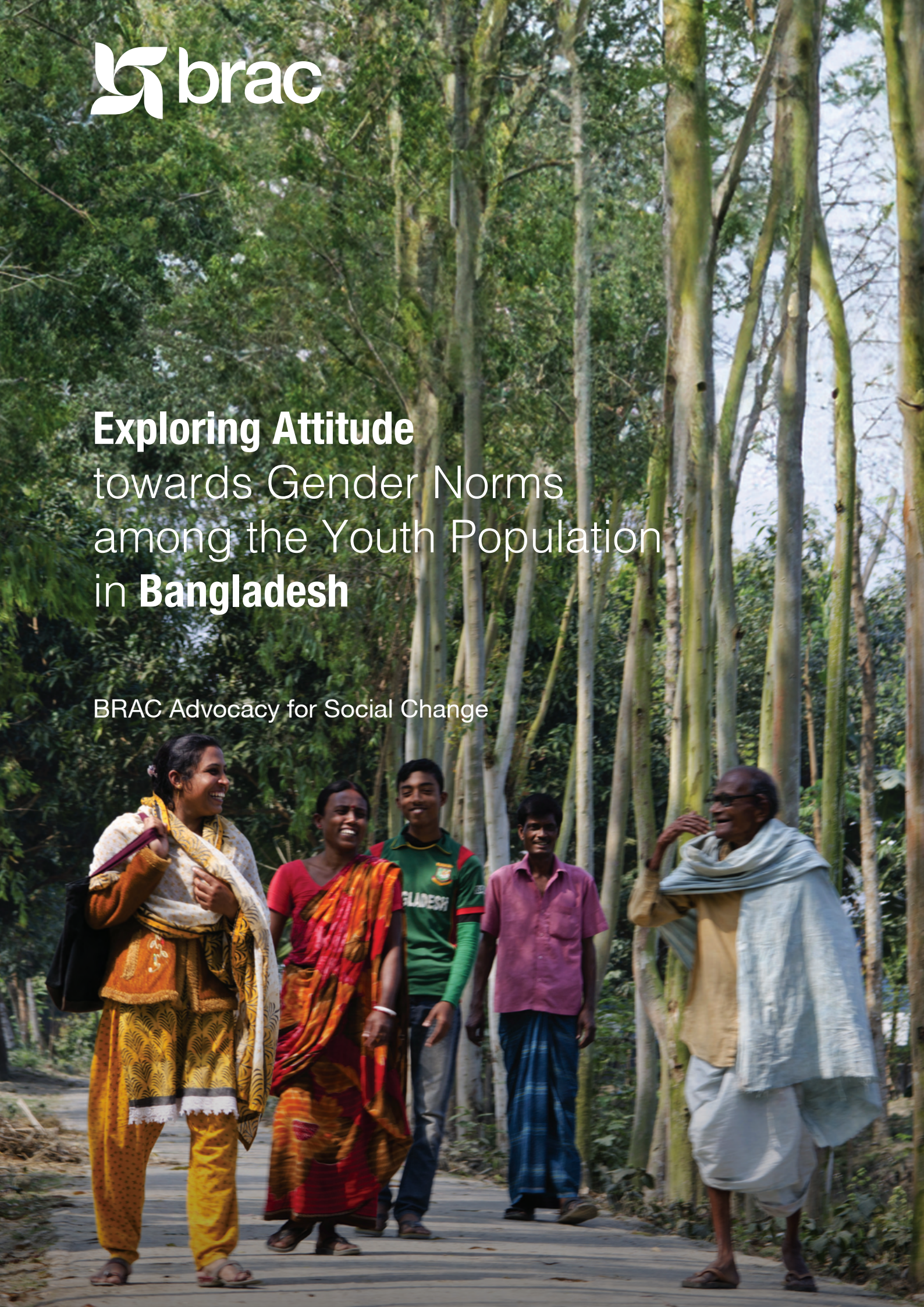

Exploring Attitude towards Gender Norms among the Youth Population in **Bangladesh**

BRAC Advocacy for Social Change

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Contents

List of **Acronyms**

ACE
Adverse Childhood Experience

ANOVA
Analysis of Variance

AGN
Attitude towards gender norms

AGNS
Attitude towards gender norms scale

CFNI-45
Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory

CMNI-46
Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory

COVID-19
Corona Virus Disease-19

EFA
Exploratory factor analysis

FGD
Focus Group Discussion

GEM
Gender Equitable Men

GSR
Gender stereotypical roles

GST
Gender Stereotypical traits

HITS
Hurt, Injured, Threatened, Screamed

IPV
Intimate partner violence

MRNI-SF
Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form

SDS
Sexual double standard

SES
Subjective socio-economic status

WEF
World Economic Forum

Executive **Summary**

Background

Gender norms are operationalised as socially constructed roles, behaviour, activity, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and girls. Gender norms play a crucial role in shaping the gender-specific behaviour of an individual in society. Being more than half of the population, the Bangladeshi youth is the prime actor in achieving gender equity and reducing gender-based violence. This study aims to understand Bangladeshi youths' attitudes toward gender norms (AGN). To this end, we first developed and validated a scale to assess AGN. Next, we explored whether different formative experiences of youths result in differences in AGN by identifying the individual and social factors contributing to these attitudes.

Methods

A two-stage mixed-method study was conducted. The first stage followed a qualitative approach in which 128 youths (aged from 18 to 35 years) from four districts participated in focus group discussions. The aim was to generate areas for assessing gender norms for the target population. In the second stage, a nationally representative multistage random sample of 2,790 young adults (mean age 26.60 years, SD 5.47 years, female 49.35%) were recruited from eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh. Participants responded to a structured questionnaire that included the attitude towards gender norms scale, adverse childhood experience, and intimate partner violence scale. Participants also reported the most triggering gender-related recent events and rated their valence. Both study procedures were reviewed and approved by the institutional review board (IRB) of the Institute of Health Economics of the University of Dhaka (IHE/IRB/DU/01/2022/Final).

Results

Stage 1 resulted in 40 normative areas (gender norms and roles) to assess the attitude of the youths. We converted each area into a gender inequitable declarative statement (item). For example, for "family expenses," we framed a statement, "A man should have the final words for large family expenses." Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses with the stage 2 data discarded 27 items, leaving a 13-item attitude towards gender norms scale (AGNS) with three latent factors: (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions. These factors differentiate individuals and can vary on various socio-economic, social, and psychological measurements. The combined AGNS score and its factors are also associated with intimate partner violent behaviour – one of the crucial outcomes of the AGN.

The mean AGNS score was 32.19 (SD= 9.38, median 31, range 13-65) for the whole sample. A higher score indicates a higher equitable AGN. The distribution of AGNS scores was slightly left-skewed, meaning that participants scoring less than 32.19 in AGNS were higher than those scoring above average.

Females (M= 34.07, SD= 9.99) hold significantly higher equitable AGN than their male counterparts (M= 30.67, SD= 8.37). Participants from the Rajshahi division (M=38.26, SD= 9.49) displayed the most equitable AGN, followed by participants from Chattogram (M=36.44, SD= 9.57) and Mymensingh (M=33.40, SD= 7.62). Youths from the Rangpur division (M=25.12, SD= 5.48) reported the least equitable AGN. Participants in urban areas (M=34.43, SD=9.14) showed more equitable AGN than those in rural areas (M=31.58, SD=9.35).

Nearly 73% of the respondents were married. Married and unmarried youths did not vary significantly in the total AGNS scores (p=.113). The mean intimate partner violence (IPV) score committed by the married participants was 5.70 (SD= 2.12, range 2-18). A higher IPV score indicates a higher incidence of IPV. We categorised the participants into four groups based on the AGNS scores quartiles. Participants in the lowest two quartiles (Q1 and Q2) committed significantly more IPV than the two higher quartile groups (Q3 and Q4). Further analyses revealed that participants belonging to the lowest two quartiles in the AGNS scores did not vary (p=0.99). Similarly, IPV committed by the participants in the highest two quartiles was indifferent (p=0.12). This result indicates that a reduction in the IPV was only evident when participants' AGNS score exceeded the median score (AGNS=31), implying this score could be a cut-off point differentiating participants from being less IPV to high IPV.

With increased education, participants reported more equitable gender norms, but the difference was only significant when participants had HSC and above qualifications. Parents' education was also linked with youth's AGN. As opposed to no-schooling, parents with secondary or above education influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths. Participants' adherence to religious practice was also associated with the AGNS scores. Interestingly, participants who did not perform any religious activity (M=36.56, SD=6.43) and who abide entirely by religious values (M=35.82, SD=11.17) showed more equitable AGN than those who performed irregularly. The two high equitable AGN groups did not differ significantly in the AGNS.

Multivariate analyses revealed that among all factors, living in Rangpur (β=-0.26), Rajshahi (β =0.21), and Chattogram division (β=0.16), female gender (β=0.20), higher secondary education (β=0.15), and very little adherence to religious practices (β=-0.13) were the strongest predictors of AGN. Finally, results showed that participants who were triggered by the success stories had a higher AGNS score, while participants who were triggered by events related to romantic relationship issues had less equitable gender norms.

Conclusion

To explore Bangladeshi youths' attitudes towards gender norms, this study, for the first time, provides an objective assessment tool (i.e., the AGNS). The AGNS gives a summative score for an individual's level of attitude towards gender norms, which can fall between 13 (least equitable) to 65 (most equitable). This 13-item brief instrument can be administered in less than five minutes. Due to its sound psychometric properties and easy administration, the AGNS would be an attractive instrument for policy, development, and intervention research.

Applying this scale to a nationally representative sample showed that gender norms of the Bangladeshi youths were clustered around three latent domains: (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions. Assessing the attitude towards these domains revealed that more than half of the youths lean towards inequitable gender norms. A person scoring less than 31 in the AGNS could be a potential candidate to commit violence in an intimate relationship. Sex, education (youths and their parents), upbringing and living place, and spiritual clarity were associated with the formation of differential attitudes towards gender norms.

Interventions to promote gender equity among youths should prioritise males, youths living in rural areas, youths with less or no education and ambiguous spiritual values. Consequently, intervention should increase sensitivity to gender-appropriate behaviours, clarify biological differences with gender inequality, and teach assertive approaches to manage family finances to reduce IPV and increase gender equity.

CHAPTAR 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Gender norms are operationalised as socially constructed roles, behaviour, activity, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and girls (Balk, 1997; Mackie et al., 2015; Samman, 2019). Gender social norms play a crucial role in shaping the gender-specific behaviour of an individual in society (Blum, 2020). How an individual perceives people of different genders in his/her personal and social lives depends largely on the gender norms in society. This study aims to explore the attitude of Bangladeshi youths towards gender norms and the individual and social factors contributing to the formation of this attitude.

Bangladesh has progressed in gender equality and women empowerment over the past two decades. The Global Gender Gap Report 2020, published by World Economic Forum (WEF), shows that Bangladesh has been able to close 72.6% of the overall gender gap, ranking top among the South Asian countries for the fifth consecutive time (World Economic Forum, 2019). Nevertheless, the deep-rooted social norms about discriminatory gender practices among the population need to be addressed to uphold this progress (Balk, 1997; Lundgren et al., 2013; Weber et al., 2019). Being more than half of the population, the youth is the prime actor in achieving gender equity (Barker et al., 2010).

The youth population in Bangladesh grew from 10 million in 1974 to 44 million in 2017 and is projected to grow to 48 million in 2026 and then start to decline. This suggests that the ongoing demographic dividend potential is still available to Bangladesh for decades. The nation's youth—the building blocks of their personalities, are essential to make the most of this demographic dividend and continued progress in social and economic indicators. With the bulk of the population being youth, it is more crucial that the nation invests in understanding their attitude and perception and facilitating the needs of the youth to make them a constructive force that can address social and economic issues and contribute to sustained governance and nation-building.

The awareness and perception of gender issues are also significant parts of attitude that will shape the country's prospects of reducing the gender gap (Baird et al., 2019). The following gender issues are of particular interest for this study: Gender wage gap, glass ceilings, gender-based violence, participation of women in economic decision making, participation of women in the labour market, wage gap, women's higher education, participation of women in politics and governance, participation of women in sexual and reproductive health-related decisions.

1.2 Assessing gender norms attitude

Given the complexity and cultural sensitivity of the gender norm construct, research on gender norms heavily relied on qualitative approaches. While qualitative methods provide a rich, in-depth understanding of the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of gender norms attitudes, they cannot infer conclusions on the state of the attitudes of a given population. Therefore, several scholars have developed quantitative measures such as scales to illustrate gender norms. This approach enables us to draw statistical inferences for a population on the magnitude of the gender norm attitudes. For example, scaling the gender norms attitude may guide us to locate individuals' or groups' position on the linear spectrum from the most inequitable to the most equitable.

One of the earliest attempts was the Gender Equitable Men (GEM, Pulerwitz & Barker, 2008) scale developed on men's attitudes toward sexual

behaviour. The GEM scale comprises of 24 items clustered under two factors: Equitable (example item: A couple should decide together if they want to have children) and inequitable gender norms (example item: It is the man who decides what type of sex to have). Since its inception, many studies have utilised this scale in various settings (Sayem & Nury, 2013; Weber et al., 2019). Another scale on men's roles is called "Male Role Norms Inventory–Short Form (MRNI-SF, Levant et al., 2013)," which has been developed to quantify men's conformity to the typical male social norms. The MRNI-SF has 21 items clustered under seven factors illustrative of the male role norms. The factors are (i) restrictive emotionality, (ii) self-reliance through mechanical skills, (iii) negativity toward sexual minorities, (iv) avoidance of femininity, (v) importance of sex, (vi) dominance, and (vii) toughness.

Three scales have been developed to assess perceptions of gender norms among adolescents (Moreau et al., 2021). The three scales target three areas, namely (i) sexual double standard (SDS), (ii) gender stereotypical traits (GST), and (iii) gender stereotypical roles (GSR). We found another two scales assessing conformity to either masculine or feminine norms.

The 46-item Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-46, Parent & Moradi, 2009) contains statements about how people might think, feel or behave, measuring attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours associated with traditional and non-traditional masculine gender roles. Similarly, the 45 items Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory (CFNI-45, Parent & Moradi, 2010) assesses females' conformity to feminine gender roles.

The existing tools are restricted to specific gender and norms areas. For instance, GEM and MNRI-SF were designed for males, and SDS, GST, and GSR target adolescents. Similarly, CMNI-46 assesses conformity to male norms, while CFNI-45 measures the degree of conformity to female norms. The target areas of these scales also revolved around sexual behaviour. Due to the cultural sensitivity and changing nature of the gender norms, these scales might not be solely suitable for Bangladeshi youths—the issues surrounding the Bangladeshi gender norms are arguably shaped by local sociocultural nuisances and lived experiences. Hence, a new scale derived from and validated by the Bangladeshi youths is required to capture this group's attitude towards gender norms.

1.3 Research objective

The study aims to understand the awareness, perception, and attitude about gender norms in personal and social settings. The study also aims to understand whether different formative experiences of youth of different age cohorts result in differences in attitude towards gender norms by identifying the individual and social factors contributing to these attitudes. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the attitude towards gender norms among the youth of Bangladesh;
- To identify factors (individual, social, economic, and power dynamic) associated with the formation of attitudes towards gender norms;
- To assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence among the Bangladeshi youth;
- To examine if intimate partner violence committed by the youths varied with different levels of attitudes toward gender norms; and
- To explore gender-related events that trigger youths—do those events vary with various levels of attitudes toward gender norms?

CHAPTAR 2

Qualitative study to explore gender norms area among the youth (Stage 1)

2.1 Background

As there is no systematic evidence on gender norms for Bangladeshi youths, we adopted a qualitative approach to explore the areas where gender norms can be assessed. For example, we gathered youths' understanding and perception of gender-wise wages, gender-based violence, economic decision-making, etc. We conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with the target population, consulted with relevant expert groups, and reviewed existing research. The aim was to generate an initial item pool on the normative areas, which would be used to form an attitude towards gender norms scale for the Bangladeshi youth.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 Participants

We conducted eight FGDs with 124 participants aged from 18 to 35 years. The respondents comprised of all educational backgrounds and were selected purposively to ensure all sexes, locations, socio-economic backgrounds, educational, and occupational balances, etc. (Table 1).

Characteristics	Attributes	Number of Participants
Sex	Male	61
	Female	63
Location	Dhaka	23
	Narshingdi	27
	Bogura	36
	Cumilla	38

Table 1: Focus group participants' characteristics

2.2.2 Measures and procedure

Ethical clearance for this project was given by the institutional review board (IRB) of the Institute of Health Economics of the University of Dhaka (IHE/IRB/DU/01/2022/Final). Each participant gave written consent. We prepared a guideline to conduct the FGDs. Each FGD was held in places safe and comfortable for the participants. Two facilitators were present for each FGD; one facilitated the discussion while the second recorded the participants' verbal and non-verbal reflections. The entire FGD was tape-recorded. Next, we had expert groups consultation primarily on the findings of the FGDs.

2.2.3 Analyses plan

Following the qualitative thematic analysis, we analysed the FGD verbatims (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, we thoroughly read verbatims to make sense of the data. Secondly, we assigned code for concepts or ideas with similar meanings (e.g., relationship, financial decision, health, security, etc.). While coding verbatims, we incorporated variations in understanding gender norms for Bangladeshi youth. The three researchers did this process independently. Next, we collated and compared the codes from three researchers. Disagreements were fixed in the discussion. Third, we categorised codes under major higher-order themes (education, health, finance, etc.). All codes were written in declarative statement

forms to reflect gender norms in that specific code. For example, for the observation that "women do not have to go for a job if the husband or family is rich," we develop the statement, "If the husband earns sufficient, the wife needs not to earn." A few statements were collected from the existing tools and experts' comments. For example, most statements reflecting men's emotions and behaviour are derived from experts.

2.2.4 Results and discussions from qualitative exercises

A total of 72 statements reflecting gender roles, responsibilities, and behaviour were derived from the thematic qualitative analysis of the FGDs (see Annexure A). The research team reviewed each item and discarded duplicates, incomplete and irrelevant statements. Half of the original statements were eliminated through this process. Next, a workshop with 12 gender specialists at BRAC was conducted to thoroughly analyse items' contents and appropriateness to capture the Bangladeshi gender norms for the remaining 36 items/statements. After incorporating the workshop feedback, we sent the provisional gender norms items to three professors at Dhaka University and one journalist of a national daily. We asked them to check each item's relevance, clarity, and representativeness for the gender norms. As per the experts' suggestion, we amended a few items and added four statements. These four statements were primarily behavioural and emotional aspects of gender norms. The final 40 statements were written to reflect one's position on a gender norm spectrum (inequitable to equitable). The final items of the provisional attitude towards gender norms scale are presented in Table 2.

No.	Item.
1	The wife's income should be under the husband's control
2	Men should have anger
3	If the husband earns sufficient, the wife needs not earn
4	Women's primary responsibility is to cook and take care of family
5	Men should take all family expenses
6	Men have the right to punish wives
7	Boys never get raped or assaulted
8	For girl's safety, early marriage is acceptable
9	Third genders should not take part in all aspects of the society
10	Men and women have equal rights in every section of the society
11	Higher education is more important for boys than girls
12	It is better if daughters do not seek a share of the father's properties
13	Not being able to give a male child is a failure of a woman
14	Men have better-coping capabilities; hence they should enjoy extra benefits
15	Women get raped and assaulted due to their clothing
16	Women should get less pay than men in labour-intensive works
17	As a business employee, men outperform women
18	Not being able to give birth is a woman's failure
19	Pretty girls get jobs easily
20	Women get promoted easily
21	Sharing the workplace with the third gender is discomforting
22	Crying does not suit boys; it reflects their weakness
23	Men have more rights in a job than women
24	It is essential to have the wife's consent before sex
25	A girl's higher education can be considered only if she is meritorious
26	Girls are often inexpressive about their sexual desires; hence, boys should force
27	A family should have the final words for girls' higher education
28	Women should have the final words for abortion
29	It is not good to speak publicly about menstruation, sanitary napkin
30	It is challenging to find a suitable partner for highly educated girls
31	The husband or his parents should have the final words for the wife's conception
32	Men should have the final decision in using contraceptive measures
33	A girl should study until she gets a good marriage proposal
34	Whoever gets a loan, a man should have the final words for its usage
35	Men fit better in politics than women
36	When the wife earns, she does not obey the husband; hence, marital dissatisfaction occurs
37	Girls should not speak loudly
38	A man should have the final words for large family expenses
39	Boys should not suppress their pain
40	A man should have the final words for everyday family expenses

Table 2: List of Items for the Attitude towards gender norms scale

CHAPTAR 3

Exploring attitude toward gender norms among the youth (Stage 2)

3.1 Background

This is the leading study where we explored the attitude toward gender norms of Bangladeshi youths. A nationally representative youth sample shared their opinions on structured questionnaires comprising of the gender norms scale. In this chapter, we first briefly describe the development of the attitude towards gender norms scale. Next, we reported the key findings on the formation of gender-related attitudes.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Sample

Our sample comprised of 2,790 young adults recruited from eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh. There was an almost equal number of male (n=1,377) and female (n=1,377) participants. The mean age of the participants was 26.60 years (SD= 5.47 years). Males and females did not differ in age. The proportion of participants recruited from eight administrative divisions did not differ by gender. More than two-third (39%) of the participants were engaged in income-generating work; the rest were either engaged in voluntary work (30.79%) or doing nothing (30.22%). The working status between gender did not also vary. We found that less than 2% of the participants recovered from the Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19), while more than half of the respondents had double-dose vaccination. We further described sample characteristics in the results section.

3.2.2 Sampling method

The multistage random sampling was done in three stages: Area selection, household selection, and individual selection. Firstly, we randomly selected an area for our target respondents. All administrative divisions of Bangladesh were considered and thus the eight individual strata. District lists under each stratum were considered the first step sampling frame for district selection. Two or three districts were selected from each division through a systematic random sampling method (SRSM). Considering the population density in the Dhaka division, we selected five districts from this division. Districts were considered as the first level cluster (Primary Sampling Unit). The Upazila list under each district was considered the second step sampling frame for Upazila selection. We selected two Upazilas using an SRSM from each district, and Upazila was the second level cluster (Secondary Sampling Unit) for the study. The village/ para/ mahallah list under each Upazila was the third step sampling frame for the village/para/mahallah selection.

Following a similar procedure, we selected one village/para/mahallah from each Upazilla. Finally, from each village/para/mahallah, 35-45 participants were selected through SRSM by providing five fixed gaps for urban areas and 1 to 2 fixed gaps for rural areas. Village/para/mahallah was the study's tertiary sampling unit (3rd level cluster).

3.2.2.1 Household selection

Upon selecting the tertiary sampling unit (e.g., village/para/mahallah), we first randomly selected households for the target participants. We separated village/para/mahallah by 3 to 4 starting points (SP) to ease operation and allocation of jobs. The first household was selected through the date method. If the survey date is less than or equal to 5, then n was the survey date (e.g., if the date is 3, the third household from the starting point was selected). If the survey date is more than 5, then the selected household was date minus 5 (e.g., if the date is 7, then 7-5 = the second household from the starting point was selected). The succeeding households were selected by each alternative household interval (5 fixed gaps for urban and two for Rural areas). The

enumerator repeated the process until the desired number of households came. The Right-Hand Rule was used to select households and the Starting Point (SP). Following this rule, the investigator had to go to the households falling on the right-hand side once he or she reached the SP.

3.2.2.2 Individual selection

After confirming the household, the enumerator searched for the eligible respondents (18-35 years old) for the survey. If there were multiple eligible respondents, eligible members were listed in the CAPI based on their age (descending order). From the list, one respondent was selected through random number generation in CAPI. In non-response (due to rejection/ permanent unavailability), the interviewer continued systematic selection with a fixed gap until the successful interview. If the interview remained unsuccessful after two consecutive fixed gaps, the interviewer selected the immediate next household and continued until the success. After a successful interview, he/she made a systematic selection with a fixed gap. In non-availability, the interviewer made one back call during the interview day. If the respondents were available, then he would proceed with the interview. If the respondent was unavailable after one back call, he/she continued the selection with a fixed gap to achieve the targeted sample.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained together with the first study (IHE/IRB/DU/01/2022/Final). Each participant gave written consent. To avoid biased responses or non-response to gender-sensitive questions, we matched participants' gender with the interviewers. In other words, the male interviewer interviewed the male respondent, whereas the female interviewed the female.

3.2.4 Measures

3.2.4.1 Attitude towards gender norm scale

To understand the attitude toward gender norms, we developed and validated the attitude toward gender norms scale (AGNS) in the first study. From the focus group discussions and expert consultations, we derived 40 normative areas (gender norms and roles) to assess the attitude of the youths. We converted each area into a gender inequitable declarative statement. For example, for "family expenses," we framed the statement, "A man should have the final words for large family expenses." Participants responded to their agreement to each item on a five-point Likert scale (Completely agree=1, Agree=2, Uncertain=3, Disagree=4, Completely disagree=5). The sum of all item scores indicates a participant's total AGNS score, where a higher score indicates a more equitable attitude towards gender norms. Psychometric properties of the final AGNS are presented in the result section.

3.2.4.2 Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

Nine items are frequently used in public health research to assess the ACE level among study participants (Anda et al., 2010). Participants were asked before the age of 18 years if they had (i) experienced the divorce/separation of a parent; (ii) experienced a parent's incarceration; (iii) witnessed domestic violence; (iv) lived with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal; (v) lived with someone with an alcohol or drug problem, (vi) experienced socio-economic hardship since birth; (vii) experienced the death of a parent; (viii) was a victim/witnessed neighbourhood violence, or (ix) experienced discrimination or unfair treatment due to their race or ethnicity. The response options were yes or no for all items. An overall summary score was constructed by summing the total score of ACE

(range 0–9, with higher scores showing exposure to more ACEs). The internal consistency of ACE items was moderately acceptable (McDonald's Omega= 0.60).

3.2.4.3 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

The four-item HITS (Hurt, Injured, Threatened, Screamed) scale was used to measure the level of IPV in a romantic relationship (Sherin et al., 1998). The original HITS items asked participants if their partner committed the violence. In the present study, we asked participants themselves who committed this violence towards their intimate partner. For example, instead of asking, "how often does your partner: physically hurt you" we asked, "how often do you physically hurt your partner." Participants responded to each item with a 5-point frequency format: never, rarely, sometimes, fairly often, and frequently. Score values could range from a minimum of 4 to 20, and a higher score indicates elevated levels of IPV.

3.2.4.4 Socio–demographic covariates

We recorded participants' age, sex, and geographic locations. Subjective socio-economic status (SES) was assessed on a continuous scale ranging from 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest). We asked to report participants' religion and adherence to religious practices (e.g., religiosity). In response to adherence to religious practices, participants reported one of the six categories: not at all, very little, weekly a day, weekly more than a day, regular, and completely live in religious values.

3.2.4.5 Family and education

As for civic status, we recorded if participants were married, unmarried, or engaged in a romantic relationship. We also noted their family size and number of siblings. We collected both participants' and their parents' educational qualifications that range from no schooling, primary (1-5 years schooling), secondary (10 years schooling), higher secondary (12 years schooling), bachelor (16 years schooling), and masters or above (more than 16 years schooling). We also recorded participants' medium of educational attainment in three categories: Bangla, English, and Arabic/Madrasa. We used a single item to index the transmission level of parental attitude on a five-point Likert scale.

3.2.5 Data collection

The project assigned a professional research organisation, Luminaries Research Limited, for data collection from the target population. Before commencing the data collection, the research team, BRAC, and Luminaries, engaged in in-depth consultation for smooth field operation. Luminaries recruited experienced data enumerators; the consultant team trained them on the data collection tool and procedures. Enumerators used KOBO toolbox to record interview responses. Luminaries were not involved in research tool development, data analysis, interpretation of the results, or writing this report. Data triangulation and data quality was ensured by cross-checking field responses intermittently during the data collection process.

3.2.6 Statistical analyses

We presented findings in tables and appropriate figures. We used mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables and frequency and percentage for categorical variables to describe the key findings.

AGNS and its factors were also presented in mean, median, and four quartiles. Group differences were assessed using either the Chi-square test, independent sample t-test, or analysis of variance (ANOVA). To identify the crucial predictors of AGN, we ran multiple linear regression. Qualitative descriptions of the triggering events were summarised into 11 major categories. A p-value of 0.05 was considered for the significance test in all cases.

CHAPTAR 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

We present results in several steps. First, we describe the attitude toward gender norms (AGN) for the entire sample and males and females separately. Second, we examined the association between AGN and intimate partner violence scores. We also established a cut-off score for the attitude towards gender norms scale (AGNS), differentiating acceptable from problematic scores. Third, we present the AGN scores across the eight divisions and participants' raising areas. Fourth, we explore factors associated with the formation of AGN. These factors are participants' educational attainment, parental education, and religiosity. Fifth, we identify the most crucial factors in predicting AGN among Bangladeshi youths. Finally, we estimate the link between triggering event types with AGNS scores. At the outset, we present the sample characteristics of this study.

4.2 The study participants: Characteristics of the youth

We present sample characteristics and distribution of major variables by gender in Table 3. Our final sample comprised of 2,790 participants recruited from eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh. There was an almost equal number of male and female participants. The mean age of the participants was 26.60 years (SD= 5.47 years). Males and females did not differ in age. The proportion of participants recruited from eight administrative divisions did not differ by gender. Thirty-nine percent of the participants were engaged in income-generating works; the rest were either engaged in voluntary work (30.79%) or doing nothing (30.22%). The working status between gender also did not vary.

As for AGN formative factors, we found that nearly two-thirds of the youths grew up in rural areas, which was true for both genders. As expected, most of the respondents reported belonging to Islam (91.54%), and there were only 8.28% Hindus. In response to the adherence to religious practices, 35% reported being regular; the rest were irregular religious performers. Only 3.62% reported fully living with religious values, while 1.2% reported not following religious orders. The level of religiosity varies with gender, with females being more regular performers of the religious rituals than their male counterparts.

Around 40% of our participants had secondary or equivalent educational qualifications. Nearly 27% had a higher secondary degree; an equal number had only primary education. Ninety-one participants completed a master's degree, and around 5% of the participants had no formal schooling. Females mostly completed secondary schools, but males had higher secondary and above degrees. Nearly all respondents had studied in Bengali schools, and only 3% were from Arabic or Madrasas.

The participants mainly belong to middle or lower-middle socio-economic classes. The mean SES was 6.31 (SD= 1.94) on a scale of 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest). As for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), females reported having more ACEs (MACE 1.45, SDACE 1.58) than males (MACE 1.14, SDACE 1.40).
Concerning parental education of the participants, we found that fathers of more than two-thirds of the respondents had either no schooling (32.04%) or primary schooling (34.25%). Fathers of around a fifth of the participants had secondary or equivalent education (20.07%). Fathers of female participants were slightly less educated than the fathers of male participants. In the mothers' educational qualifications, we saw that many had no schooling (39.50%) and completed only primary level (37.04%). Consistent with the pattern of father's education, mothers of

female respondents had less educational qualifications than the mothers of male participants.

Around two-thirds of the participants were married (72.49%). We screened if the participants committed violence with their intimate partners using the Hurt, Insult, Threaten, and Scream (HITS) scale. The mean HITS score was 5.70 (SD= 2.12), with men reporting significantly higher HITS score (M= 5.89, SD= 2.11) than women (M= 5.53, SD= 2.11), p<.001.

Characteristics		All (n=2790) % (n)	Male (n=1377) % (n)	Female (n=1413) % (n)	p- for difference*
Socio-demographic covariates					
Age (Mean, SD)		26.60 (5.47)	26.64 (5.24)	26.57 (5.68)	0.74
Marital status	Unmarried	26.58 (741)	40.99 (564)	12.54 (177)	<.001
	Married	72.49 (2021)	58.65 (807)	85.98 (1214)	
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0.93 (26)	0.36 (5)	1.49 (21)	
Division	Dhaka	22.72 (634)	22.51 (310)	22.93 (324)	0.97
	Chattogram	20.04 (559)	20.19 (278)	19.89 (281)	
	Barisal	6.74 (188)	6.68 (92)	6.79 (96)	
	Khulna	12.40 (346)	12.42 (171)	12.38 (175)	
	Rajshahi	12.76 (356)	12.93 (178)	12.60 (178)	
	Sylhet	6.34 (177)	6.10 (84)	6.58 (93)	
	Rangpur	11.47 (320)	12.06 (166)	10.90 (154)	
	Mymensingh	7.53 (210)	7.12 (98)	7.93 (112)	
Working status	Engage in income generating work	39.00 (1088)	38.71 (533)	39.28 (555)	0.29
	Engage in voluntary work	30.79 (859)	29.77 (410)	31.78 (449)	
	Doing nothing	30.22 (843)	31.52 (434)	28.95 (409)	
COVID-19 infection status	Yes	1.97 (55)	2.76 (38)	1.20 (17)	.004
	No	98.03 (2735)	97.24 (1339)	98.80 (1396)	
Vaccination status	No	16.74 (467)	16.05 (221)	17.41 (246)	<.001
	Yes, one dose only	27.10 (756)	30.36 (418)	23.92 (338)	
	Yes, two doses	56.16 (1567)	53.59 (738)	58.67 (829)	
Attitude towards gender norms	AGNS total score (Mean, SD) Level of AGN	32.39 (9.38)	30.67 (8.37)	34.07 (9.99)	<.001
	First quartile	29.14 (813)	34.79 (479)	23.64 (334)	<.001
	Second quartile	24.34 (679)	24.76 (341)	23.92 (338)	
	Third quartile	22.58 (630)	22.44 (309)	22.72 (321)	
	Fourth quartile	23.94 (668)	18.01 (248)	29.72 (420)	
AGNS factors (Mean, SD)	Gender appropriate behaviour	14.35 (4.87)	13.38 (4.21)	15.30 (5.26)	<.001
	Natural inequality	11.01 (3.68)	10.91 (3.70)	11.11 (3.67)	0.14
	Family financial decision	7.03 (3.12)	6.38 (2.81)	7.67 (3.27)	<.001
AGN formative factors,Raised before 16 years	Urban areas	28.60 (798)	28.98 (399)	28.24 (399)	0.67
	Rural areas	71.60 (1992)	71.02 (978)	71.76 (1014)	
Religion	Hindu	8.28 (231)	7.92 (109)	8.64 (122)	0.13
	Islam	91.54 (2553)	91.72 (1263)	91.36 (1290)	
	Christianity	0.04 (1)	0.07 (1)	0 (0)	
	Buddhist	0.14 (4)	0.29 (4)	0 (0)	

Characteristics		All (n=2790) % (n)	Male (n=1377) % (n)	Female (n=1413) % (n)	p- for difference*
Religiosity	Not at all	1.22 (34)	0.36 (5)	2.05 (29)	<.001
	Very little	14.66 (409)	15.63 (215)	13.73 (194)	
	Weekly a day	24.02 (670)	27.54 (379)	20.59 (291)	
	Weekly more than a day	20.98 (585)	27.11 (373)	15.00 (212)	
	Regular	35.50 (990)	27.11 (373)	43.67 (617)	
	Completely live with religious values	3.62 (101)	2.25 (31)	4.95 (70)	
Highest educational attainment	No schooling	4.81 (134)	3.42 (47)	6.16 (87)	<.001
	Primary/equivalent	17.54 (489)	14.04 (193)	20.95 (296)	
	Secondary/equivalent	38.49 (1073)	33.75 (464)	43.10 (609)	
	Higher Secondary/equivalent	26.76 (746)	31.13 (428)	22.51 (318)	
	Bachelor/equivalent	9.10 (255)	12.87 (177)	5.52 (78)	
	Master's/equivalent	3.26 (91)	4.80 (66)	1.77 (25)	
Medium of study	Bangla	96.71 (2558)	97.04 (1280)	96.38 (1278)	0.09
	Arabic/Madrasha	3.06 (81)	2.58 (34)	3.54 (47)	
	English	0.23 (6)	0.38 (5)	0.08 (1)	
SES (Mean, SD)		6.31 (1.94)	6.11 (1.99)	6.51 (1.86)	<.001
ACE (Mean, SD)		1.29 (1.50)	1.14 (1.40)	1.45 (1.58)	<.001
Father's Education	No schooling	32.04 (883)	25.79 (350)	38.10 (533)	<.001
	Primary/equivalent	34.25 (944)	34.86 (473)	33.67 (471)	
	Secondary/equivalent	20.07 (553)	20.93 (284)	19.23 (269)	
	Higher Secondary/equivalent	8.24 (227)	11.50 (156)	5.08 (71)	
	Bachelor/equivalent	4.10 (113)	5.38 (73)	2.86 (40)	
	Master's/equivalent	1.31 (36)	1.55 (21)	1.07 (15)	
Mother's Education	No schooling	39.50 (1093)	33.01 (449)	45.77 (644)	<.001
	Primary/equivalent	37.04 (1025)	39.04 (531)	35.11 (494)	
	Secondary/equivalent	17.24 (477)	18.68 (254)	15.85 (223)	
	Higher Secondary/equivalent	5.24 (145)	8.01 (109)	2.56 (36)	
	Bachelor/equivalent	0.76 (21)	1.10 (15)	0.43 (6)	
	Master's/equivalent	0.22 (6)	0.15 (2)	0.28 (4)	
AGN outcome	IPV committed (Mean, SD)	5.70 (2.12)	5.89 (2.11)	5.53 (2.11)	<.001

Note: SD = Standard deviation, ACE=Adverse Childhood Experience, IPV=Intimate Partner Violence. AGN= Attitude toward gender norms, AGNS= Attitude towards gender norms scale, SES=Socio-economic status

*P-values were obtained by chi-square and t-tests for categorical and continuous variables, respectively.

Table 3: Sample characteristics and the distribution of study variables by gender

4.3 Attitude towards gender norms (AGN)

To understand AGN, we developed the 40-item attitude toward gender norms scale (AGNS) in the first stage. In the second stage, we presented the 40 items of AGNS to the final sample. Examining exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed that 27 items should be discarded, leaving a 13-item AGNS with three latent factors. We present the final items forming AGNS in Table 1. The sum of all 13-item scores indicates a total AGNS score for a participant, where a higher score indicates a more equitable AGN. The three underlying factors are (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions. Indeed, there are many other aspects in which gender norms can be assessed, but for our study, these three latent factors emerged as the most vital determinant for the Bangladeshi youth during the study time. Internal consistency reliability for the full scale and its factors were found to be very good (Cronbach's alpha for full scale .84).

These factors can differentiate individuals and vary on various socio-economic, social, and psychological measurements (see below). The combined AGNS score and its factors are also associated with violent intimate partner behaviour, one of the crucial outcomes of the AGN.

4.3.1 Gender appropriate behaviour

Six items loaded on this factor, underlying meaning of all these items indicates that this factor could be named gender-appropriate behaviour (Table 4). For example, girls should not speak loudly; boys should not cry, etc., are societal expectations on gender-appropriate behaviours for girls and boys, respectively. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .77.

4.3.2 Gender equality/ Natural inequality

Four items loaded on this factor. Inspecting these items indicates that this factor could be termed "natural inequality." There is a strong agreement among the participants that both genders are not equal, and there is inequality by nature. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .71.

4.3.3 Family financial decisions

Three items indicate a latent construct emerged from "family financial decision." These items combinedly differentiate individuals on the family financial decisions. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .76. The mean AGNS score was 32.19, with an SD of 9.38 for the whole sample.

The percentage of responses for each item of the sub-factors of AGNS has been presented according to the sex of the sample in the following tables (4.1 to 4.13). The answer to each of the items has to be responded on a five-point Likert scale (Completely agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, Completely Disagree). The sum of all item scores indicates a participant's total AGNS score, where a higher score indicates a more equitable attitude towards gender norms. The mean AGNS score was 32.19, with a SD of 9.38 for the total sample.

Factors	Items	Response category				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Totally disagree
		%	%	%	%	%
Gender appropriate behaviour	Girls should not speak loudly	34	48	2	10	6
	Women get raped and assaulted due to their clothing	25	38	5	21	11
	Men should have anger	24	53	2	17	4
	Crying does not suit boys; it reflects their weakness	19	52	3	20	5
	If the husband earns sufficient, the wife needs not earn	33	42	2	18	6
	Girls are often inexpressive about their sexual desires ; hence, boys should force	13	36	8	33	9
Natural inequality	Men have more rights in a job than women	10	41	3	33	14
	As a business employee, men outperform women	17	48	3	24	8
	A girl's higher education can be considered only if she is meritorious	15	42	3	24	11
	A family should have the final words for girls' higher education	17	45	3	24	11
Family financial decision	A man should have the final words for large family expenses	29	44	2	19	6
	A man should have the final words for everyday family expenses	24	47	2	21	6
	Whoever gets a loan, a man should have the final words for its usage	32	36	2	22	8

Table 4: Item-wise responses of the attitude towards gender norms scale (N=2790)

Factor 1: Gender appropriate behaviour (GAB)

1: Girls should not speak loudly

GAB is the first factor of AGNS which are represented by the items (1 to 6). It shows that 34% totally agreed and 47.5% agreed on the above statement where 10% and 6% responded to disagreed and totally disagreed respectively. About 18% of males totally agreed whereas 13% of females totally agreed to this. However, both male (3.0%) and female (7.0%) youth have reported very negligible percentage on the response I don't agree. Moreover, 4.7% of females and more than 1% of males reported absolutely don't agree.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item- 1: Girls should not speak loudly	Male n = (%)	551 (19.7%)	673 (24.1%)	25 (0.9%)	84 (3.0%)	44 (1.5%)
	Female n = (%)	406 (14.6%)	653 (23.4%)	28 (1.0%)	196 (7.0%)	130 (4.7%)
Total		957 (34.3%)	1326 (47.5%)	53 (1.9%)	280 (10.0%)	168 (6.2%)

Table 4.1: Percentage of responses to item 1 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS (attitude gender norm scale) according to sex

2: Women get raped and assaulted due to their clothing

It has been found that that 14% males and 11% females responded totally agreed where 20% and 18% responded agree on the above statement. About 9% of males disagreed whereas 12% of females disagreed. However, only a few numbers of males (4%) and females (8%) responded on absolutely do not agree. In the total percentage, it shows that 25% of the total youth perceives that woman are raped and assaulted due to their clothing, whereas 40% agree on that statement. Only 20% disagreed and 11% of the youth said absolutely do not agree.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-2: Women get raped and assaulted due to their clothing	Male n = (%)	396 (14.2%)	570 (20.4%)	61 (2.2%)	240 (8.6%)	110 (3.9%)
	Female n = (%)	314 (11.3%)	488 (17.5%)	61 (2.2%)	335 (12.0%)	215 (8.1%)
Total		710 (25.4%)	1058 (37.9%)	122 (4.4%)	575 (20.6%)	325 (12.0%)

Table 4.2: Percentage of responses to item 2 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS (attitude gender norm scale) according to sex

3: Men should have anger

Three-fourth (77%) of the sample has responded to agree and totally agree and rest showed disagreement. Among them 14.8% of males totally agreed with that statement whereas 9.4% of females totally agreed with this statement. For the response of agree on this statement, the percentage is almost same (26%) in both male and female youth. However, more females (10.8%) responded than males (6.6%) to the response don't agree. Moreover, 3.5% females and less than 1% males reported absolutely don't agree. It has been found that 34% totally agreed and 47.5% agreed on the above statement where 10% and 6% responded do not agreed and absolutely do not agree respectively.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-3: Men should have anger	Male n = (%)	413 (14.8%)	748 (26.8%)	12 (0.4%)	185 (6.6%)	19 (0.6%)
	Female n = (%)	261 (9.4%)	727 (26.1%)	26 (0.9%)	301 (10.8%)	98 (3.6%)
Total		674 (24.2%)	1475 (52.9%)	38 (1.4%)	486 (17.4%)	113 (4.2%)

Table 4.3: Percentage of responses to item 3 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS according to sex

4: Crying does not suit boys; it reflects their weakness

More than seventy percent of the sample have agreed with the statement. About 9.2% of male and 10.3% of females responded to totally agreed. Similarly, 27.4% males and 24.9% females responded on the response agree. However, females (10.5%) and males (9.7%) did not differ much on the respond don't agree. Moreover, 1.4% males and 3.8% females reported absolutely don't agree.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-4: Crying does not suit boys; it reflects their weakness	Male n = (%)	256 (9.2%)	765 (27.4%)	24 (0.9%)	294 (10.5%)	38 (1.4%)
	Female n = (%)	286 (10.3%)	694 (24.9%)	56 (2.0%)	271 (9.7%)	106 (3.8%)
Total		542 (19.4%)	1459 (52.3%)	80 (2.9%)	565 (20.3%)	144 (5.1%)

Table 4.4: Percentage of responses to item 4 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS according to sex

5: If the husband earns sufficient, the wife needs not earn

About three-fourth (75%) of the total sample agreed to with the statement. Among them 18.6% of males and 14.2% of females responded to totally agreed. For the response to agree the percentage of the male and female is 21.4% and 24.5% respectively. However, females (9.6%) and males (8.2%) did not differ much on don't agree. Moreover, 4.1% females and less than 2% males responded absolutely don't agree.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-5: If the husband earns sufficient, the wife needs not earn	Male n = (%)	518 (18.6%)	571 (20.5%)	12 (0.4%)	230 (8.2%)	46 (1.6%)
	Female n = (%)	396 (14.2%)	597 (21.4%)	37 (1.3%)	268 (9.6%)	115 (4.1%)
Total		914 (32.8%)	1168 (41.9%)	49 (1.8%)	498 (17.8%)	161 (5.8%)

Table 4.5: Percentage of responses to item 5 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS according to sex

6: Girls are often inexpressive about their sexual desires so that boys should force

Nearly 50% of the sample responded positively on this statement. Among them 7.2 % of men and 5.7% of females responded totally agreed. Similarly, 18% of men and 18.3% of females responded on agree. It shows same number of male and female agreed to the item. For the response of I do not agree on this statement, the percentage of the male and females are 16.2 % and 17.0% respectively. However, 3.5% of males and 7.0% of females responded to absolutely don't agree. In total, disagreement is 43.7%.

F-1: Gender Appropriate Behaviour (GAB)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item 6: Girls are often inexpressive about their sexual desires; hence, boys should force	Male n = (%)	202 (7.2%)	503 (18.0%)	123 (4.4%)	451 (16.2%)	98 (3.5%)
	Female n = (%)	159 (5.7%)	510 (18.3%)	75 (2.7%)	474 (17.0%)	195 (7.0%)
Total		361 (12.9%)	1013 (36.3%)	198 (7.1%)	925 (33.2%)	293 (10.5%)

Table 4.6: Percentage of responses to item 6 of Gender appropriate behaviour of the AGNS according to sex

Factor 2: Natural Inequality (NI)

7: Men have more rights in a job than women

Natural Inequality (NI) is the second factor of AGNS which is represented by the items number 7 to 10. More than half of the total sample (50.5%) agreed to the statement. Among them 5.7% of males and 4.1% of females responded totally agreed. Nearly same percentage (20% to 21%) of the both sexes have agreed that men have more rights in a job than women. However, in response to don't agree, 17.3% of males and 15.4% of females disagreed. Moreover, 9.8% of females and 3.9% of males responded absolutely don't agree.

F-2: Natural Inequality (NI)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-7: Men have more rights in a job than women	Male n = (%)	158 (5.7%)	578 (20.7%)	49 (1.8%)	483 (17.3%)	109 (3.9%)
	Female n = (%)	114 (4.1%)	559 (20.0%)	39 (1.4%)	429 (15.4%)	272 (9.8%)
Total		272 (9.7%)	1137 (40.8%)	88 (3.2%)	912 (32.7%)	381 (13.6%)

Table 4.7: Percentage of responses to item 7 of Natural Inequality of the AGNS according to sex

8: As a business employee, men outperform women

For the item number 8 of the NI, same number of males (23.8%) and females (23.8%) are in agreement that as a business employee, men outperform women. Two third (64.6%) of the total sample agreed with the statement. On the other hand, only a total of 32.6% disagreed with the statement.

F-2: Natural Inequality (NI)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item- 8: As a business employee, men outperform women	Male n = (%)	258 (9.2%)	663 (23.8%)	37 (1.3%)	347 (12.4%)	72 (2.6%)
	Female n = (%)	215 (7.7%)	665 (23.8%)	43 (1.5%)	326 (11.7%)	164 (5.9%)
Total		473 (17.0%)	1328 (47.6%)	80 (2.9%)	673 (24.1%)	236 (8.5%)

Table 4.8: Percentage of responses to item 8 of Natural Inequality of AGNS according to sex

9: A girl's higher education can be considered only if she is meritorious

More than half of the total respondent (58%) agreed that a girl's higher education can be considered only if she is meritorious. Similarity in percentages of males (20.6%) and females (22.2%) were found to the response agree. However, 17.8 % of males and 14% of females responded to don't agree. Moreover, 3.3% of males and 8.5% of females responded absolutely don't agree. Considering both male and female participants, most of them agreed with the statement. Therefore, it can be said that they are in favour of gender inequality.

F-2: Natural Inequality (NI))	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-9: A girl's higher education can be considered only if she is meritorious	Male n = (%)	159 (5.7%)	574 (20.6%)	54 (1.9%)	498 (17.8%)	92 (3.3%)
	Female n = (%)	257 (9.2%)	619 (22.2%)	33 (1.2%)	389 (13.9%)	115 (4.1%)
Total		416 (14.9%)	1193 (42.8%)	87 (3.1%)	887 (31.8%)	207 (7.4%)

Table 4.9: Percentage of responses to item 9 of Natural Inequality of AGNS according to sex

10: A family should have the final words for girls' higher education

Near about two-third (62%) of the total participants agreed (including both totally agree and agree) with the statement. That is, a family will decide whether girl will go for higher education or not. The table shows that similar percentage of both male (22.8%) and female (22.4%) responded to agree.

On the other hand, only 35.5% of the total participants disagreed with the statement. That is, they do not agree that a family should have the final verdict regarding their female member's higher education.

F-2: Natural Inequality (NI)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-10: A family should have the final words for girls' higher education	Male n = (%)	201 (7.2%)	635 (22.8%)	44 (1.6%)	366 (13.1%)	131 (4.7%)
	Female n = (%)	260 (9.3%)	624 (22.4%)	33 (1.2%)	316 (11.3%)	189 (6.4%)
Total		461 (16.5%)	129 (45.1%)	77 (2.8%)	682 (24.4%)	311 (11.1%)

Table 4.10: Percentage of responses to item 10 of Natural Inequality of AGNS according to sex

Factor 3: Family Financial Decision (FFD)

11: A man should have the final words for large family expenses

Family Financial Decision (FFD) is the third factor of AGNS which is presented by the items number 11 to 13. In responses to this statement, a three-fourth respondents (74%) have agreed. About 16.6 % males and 12.8% females responded to totally agree, 23.1% males and 20.9% females responded agree. On the other hand, 8.1% and 1.3% of males responded to I do not agree and absolutely do not agree respectively. In case of female participants, only 10.9% and 4.4% responded to I do not agree and absolutely do not agree on the statement that a man should have the final words for large family expense.

F-3: Family Financial Decision (FFD)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item-11: A man should have the final words for large family expenses	Male n = (%)	462 (16.6%)	645 (23.1%)	8 (0.3%)	226 (8.1%)	36 (1.3%)
	Female n = (%)	360 (12.9%)	582 (20.9%)	38 (1.4%)	305 (10.9%)	128 (4.4%)
Total		822 (29.5%)	1227 (44.0%)	46 (1.6%)	531 (19.0%)	164 (5.7%)

Table 4.11: Percentage of responses to item 11 of Family Financial Decision of AGNS according to sex

12: A man should have the final words for everyday family expenses

Near about three-fourth (71%) youth of the study have agreed with the statement. Among them 13.6 % of male and 10.4% of female have totally agreed with the statement. More than 25% of males and 21% of females responded agree. It shows that both male and females are in favour of the statement. On the other hand, only one-fourth sample (27%) showed disagreement with the statement.

F-3: Family Financial Decision (FFD)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item- 12: A man should have the final words for everyday family expenses	Male n = (%)	380 (13.6%)	714 (25.6%)	14 (05%)	231 (8.3%)	38 (1.3%)
	Female n = (%)	291 (10.4%)	589 (21.1%)	48 (1.7%)	355 (12.7%)	130 (4.7%)
Total		671 (24.1%)	1303 (46.7%)	62 (2.2%)	586 (21.0%)	168 (6.0%)

Table 4.12 Percentage of responses to item 12 of Family Financial Decision factor of AGN (attitude towards gender norm scale) according to sex

13: Whoever gets a loan, a man should have the final words for its usage

More than two-third of the sample (68%) has agreed that man should have the final words for usage of a loan, it does not matter who receives it. About 18% males and 14% female have showed strong agreement on the statement whereas 19% male and 17% female showed agreement with the statement.

In the response to I do not agree, near about 10% are males and 12% females chose this. On the other hand, only 1% males and 6% females showed strong disagreement. That indicates both males and females are in favour of the statement.

Figure 1 depicts the distribution of AGNS scores. The AGNS scores were slightly right-skewed meaning that participants scoring less than 32.19 in AGNS were higher than those scoring above average. Consequently, the median AGNS score was 31. We present AGNS total scores in four quartiles in Table 5.

F-3: Family Financial Decision (FFD)	Sex	Answers				
		Totally agree	Agree	Uncertain I don't know	I do not agree	Absolutely do not agree
Item- 13: Whoever gets a loan, a man should have the final words for its usage	Male n = (%)	497 (11.8%)	542 (19.4%)	10 (0.4%)	289 (10.4%)	39 (1.4%)
	Female n = (%)	395 (14.2%)	460 (16.5%)	54 (1.9%)	329 (11.8%)	175 (6.2%)
Total		892 (32.0%)	1002 (35.9%)	64 (2.3%)	618 (22.2%)	214 (7.7%)

Table 4.13: Percentage of responses to item 13 of Family Financial Decision factor of AGNS (attitude towards gender norm scale) according to sex

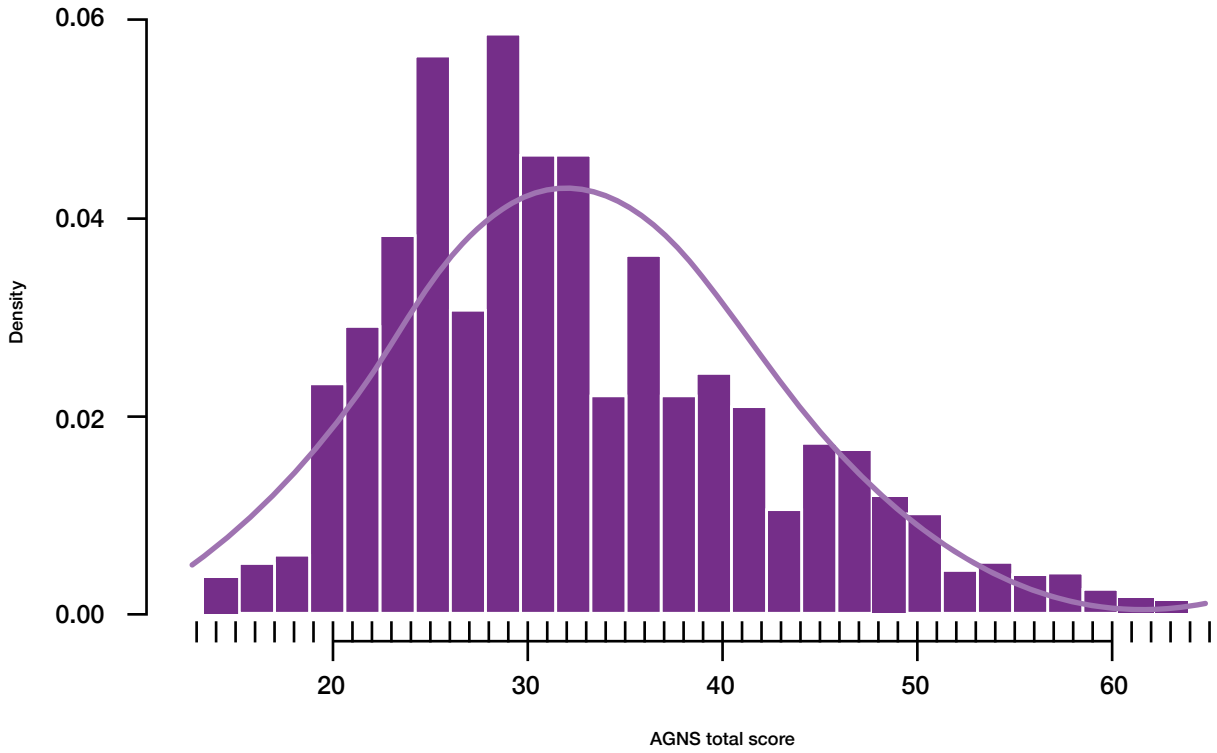

Figure 1: Distribution of attitude towards gender norms scores

AGN quartiles	Number	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum
First quartile	813	22.60	2.97	23	13	26
Second quartile	679	28.80	1.37	29	27	31
Third quartile	630	34.49	1.91	34	32	38
Fourth quartile	668	45.98	5.72	45	39	65
Total	**2790**	**32.19**	**9.38**	**31**	**13**	**65**

Table 5: Breakdown of attitude towards gender norms by the four quartiles

4.3.4 AGN across eight divisions

F (7, 2782) =88.43, p<.0001, ω 2=0.18. Participants from the Rajshahi division (M=38.26, SD= 9.49) showed the most equitable attitudes toward gender norms, followed by participants from Chattogram (M=36.44, SD= 9.57) and Mymensingh (M=33.40, SD= 7.62). Youths from the Rangpur division (M=25.12, SD= 5.48) reported the least equitable AGN. Factor-wise divisional distribution showed that youths from Rajshahi were equally equitable in their attitude towards gender-appropriate behaviour, gender equality/natural inequality, and family financial decisions. Youths of Chattogram scored higher for gender-appropriate behaviour and gender equality factors but poorer on family financial decisions.

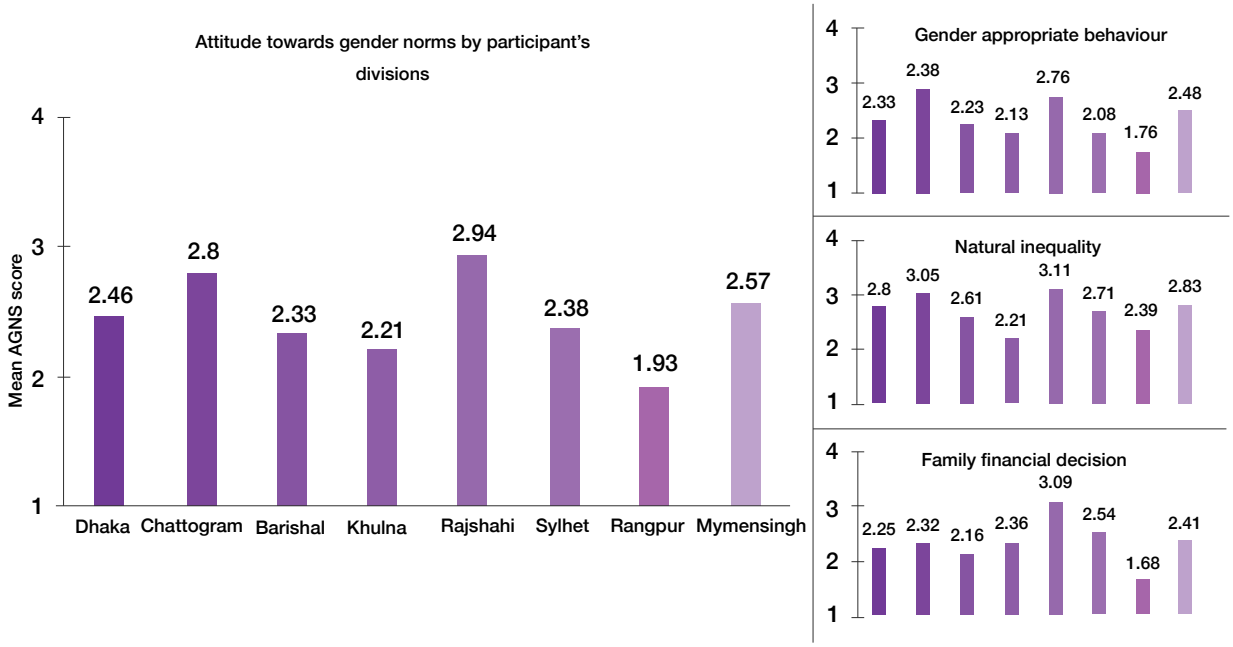

Figure 2: Division-wise distribution of the AGNS scores for full scale and its factors (inset). To maintain meaningful comparison across plots, the average item scores was used in the Y-axis

4.3.5 AGN by participants' upbringing place

The AGNS scores varied significantly with participants' upbringing areas (Figure 3). Participants who were brought up in urban areas (M=34.43, SD=9.14) showed more equitable AGN than participants who were brought up in rural areas (M=31.58, SD=9.35), (t=-7.32, Cohen's d=-0.31, p=<.001).

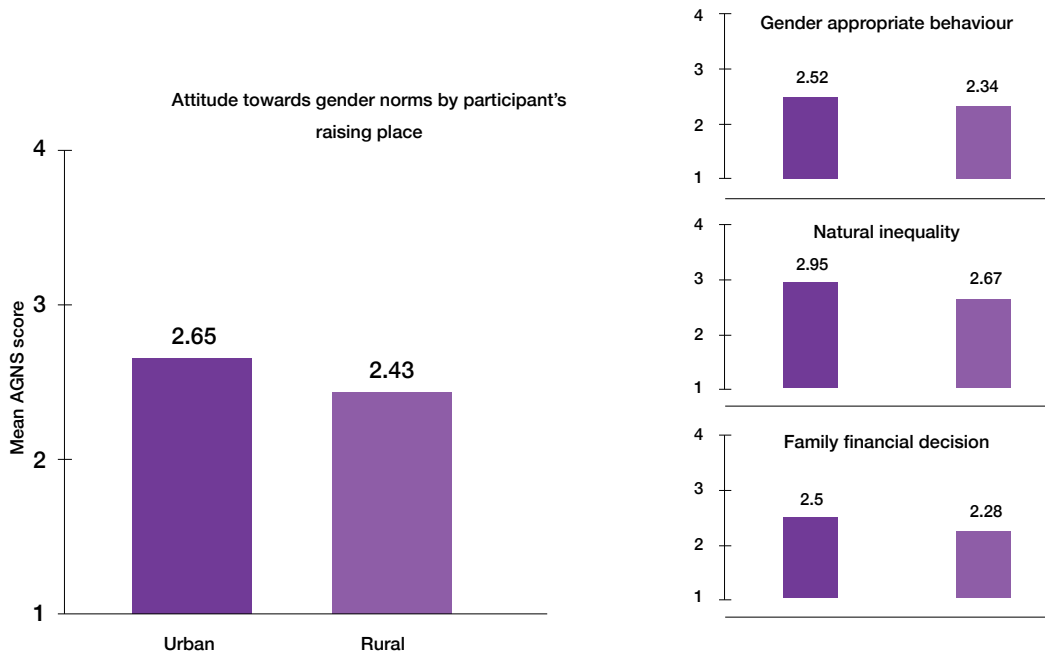

Figure 3: AGNS by participants' raising places for full scale and its factors (inset). The average item scores were used on the Y-axis for meaningful comparison across plots.

4.3.6 AGN by participants' marital status

Married and unmarried youths did not vary significantly in the total AGNS scores (p=.113), but marital status was a determinant of the natural inequality and family financial decision factors. Unmarried (M=11.55, SD=3.72) as opposed to married (M=10.82, SD=3.66) participants had a significantly higher score in the natural inequality domain (t=4.65, p=<.001), showing that the belief that there was a natural inequality between men and women was less apparent among unmarried youths. However, when deciding family finances, the unmarried youths (M=6.79, SD=3.08) held more inequitable gender norms than the married youths (M=7.13, SD=3.13), (t=-2.51, p=.012).

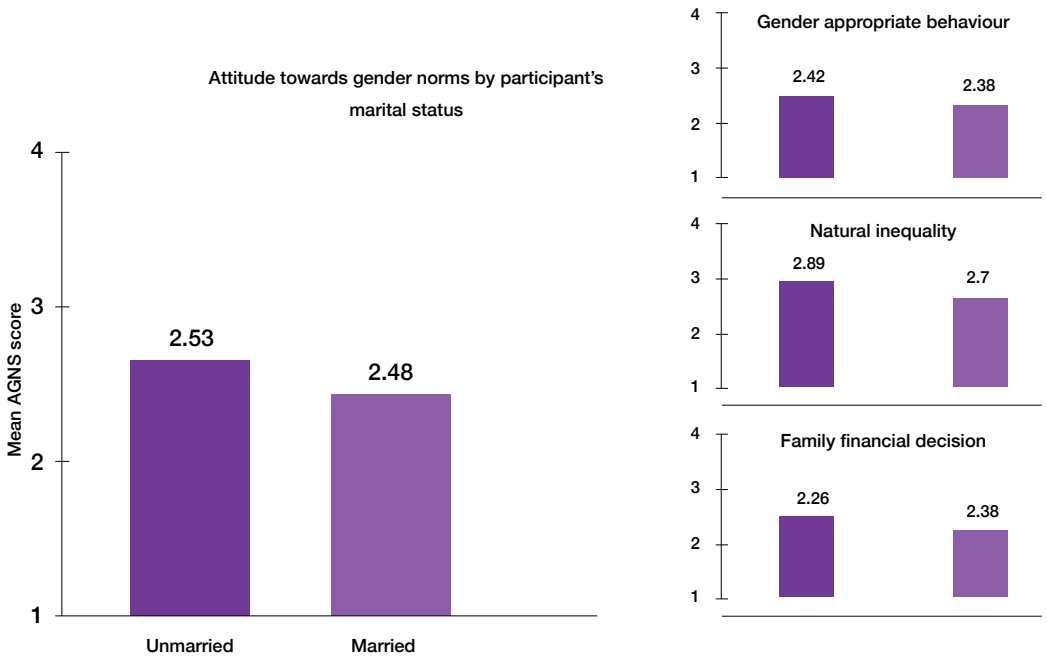

Figure 4: AGNS by participants' raising places for full scale and its factors (inset). The average item scores were used on the Y-axis for meaningful comparison across plots.

4.3.7 Association between AGN and IPV

Nearly 73% of the respondents were married. The mean intimate partner violence (IPV) score committed by these participants was 5.70 (SD= 2.12, range 2-18). We explored if IPV among the participants in a marital relationship varies with their AGNS scores. We categorised the participants into four groups based on the AGNS scores quartiles. As seen in Figure 5, the IPV scores were not equal for the four groups, F (3, 2389) =15.43, p<.001, ω2=0.02. Participants in the lowest two quartiles (Q1 and Q2) committed significantly more IPV than the two higher quartile groups (Q3 and Q4). Posthoc analyses revealed that participants belonging to the lowest two quartiles in the AGNS scores did not vary (Mean difference=-0.04, p=0.99). Similarly, IPV committed by the participants in the highest two quartiles was indifferent (Mean difference=0.28, p=0.12). This analysis indicates that a reduction in the IPV was only evident when participants' AGNS score exceeded the median score (AGNS=31), implying this score could be a cut-off point differentiating participants from being less IPV to high IPV.

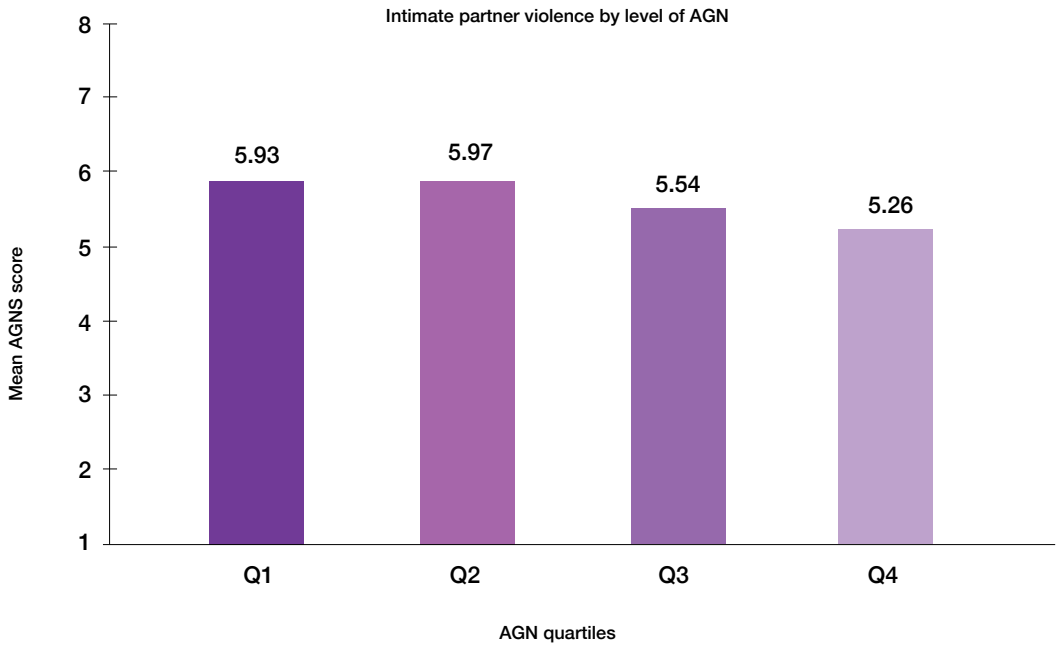

Figure 5: Association of participants' committing intimate partner violence with AGN quartiles.

4.3.8 Correlations of AGN with SES, age, ACE, and IPV

Socioeconomic status (SES) was inversely correlated with AGNS and its subscales, showing that participants with higher SES reported lower equitable gender norms. Similarly, participants who committed more IPV posed poorer equitable gender norms. However, the magnitudes of these relationships were low. There were no significant correlations between AGN with age and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
AGNS	1.00							
Gender appropriate behaviour	.86**	1.00						
Natural inequality	.78**	.46**	1.00					
Family financial decision	.75**	.47**	.44**	1.00				
SES	-.14**	-.16**	-.07**	-.08**	1.00			
Age	-.02	-.02	-.04	.03	.03	1.00		
ACE	.00	.07**	-.08**	-.02	.04*	.11*	1.00	
Self-committed IPV	-.14**	-.04	-.15**	-.17**	-.18**	.02	.25	1.00

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Note. AGNS=Attitude towards gender norms scale, SES=Subjective Socioeconomic status, ACE=Adverse Childhood Experience, IPV=Intimate Partner Violence

Table 6: Correlation coefficient of the AGNS and its subscales with SES, age, ACE and IPV

4.3.9 Formation of AGN: Participants' educational attainment

Participants with various levels of educational attainment scored differently in the AGNS (Figure 5). With increased education, participants reported more equitable gender norms, F (5, 2782) =11.52, p<.001, ω2=0.02. The posthoc test showed that the difference was only significant when participants had HSC and above qualifications. The differences in AGNS scores were statistically not significant between participants without schooling (M=30.32, SD=7.58) and those with primary (M=31.89, SD=9.46) or secondary schooling (M=31.89, SD=9.01). This pattern held for the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN. For family financial decisions, AGNS only differs for participants with a master's degree. In other words, up to a bachelor's degree did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure.

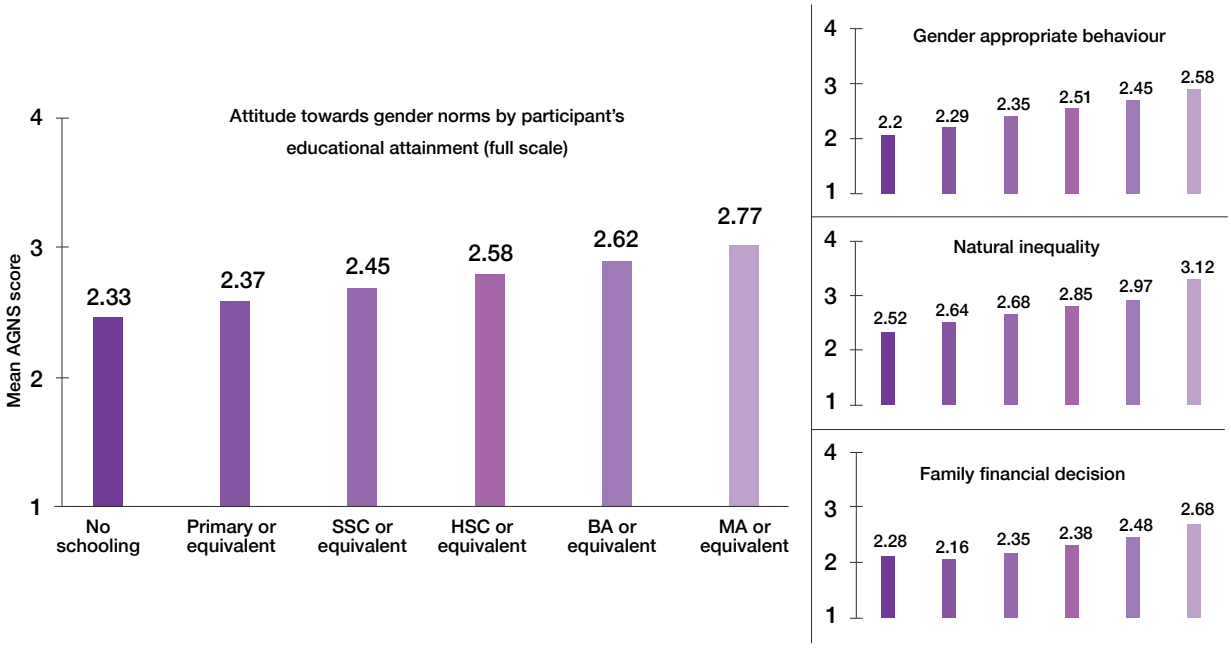

Figure 6: Attitude towards gender norms by participant's educational attainment for full scale and its subscales. The average item scores were used on the Y-axis for meaningful comparison across plots.

4.3.10 Formation of AGN: Participants' medium of study/types of schooling

Since only 6 participants had an English medium background, we excluded them from this analysis. The medium of study/types of schooling had no impact on the AGNS scores except for the natural inequality factor. Youths who had studied in Madrasa or Arabic medium (M=9.98, SD=3.46) had significantly fewer scores in the natural inequality domain compared to youths who studied in Bangla medium (M=11.08, SD=3.70), (t=2.64, p=.008).

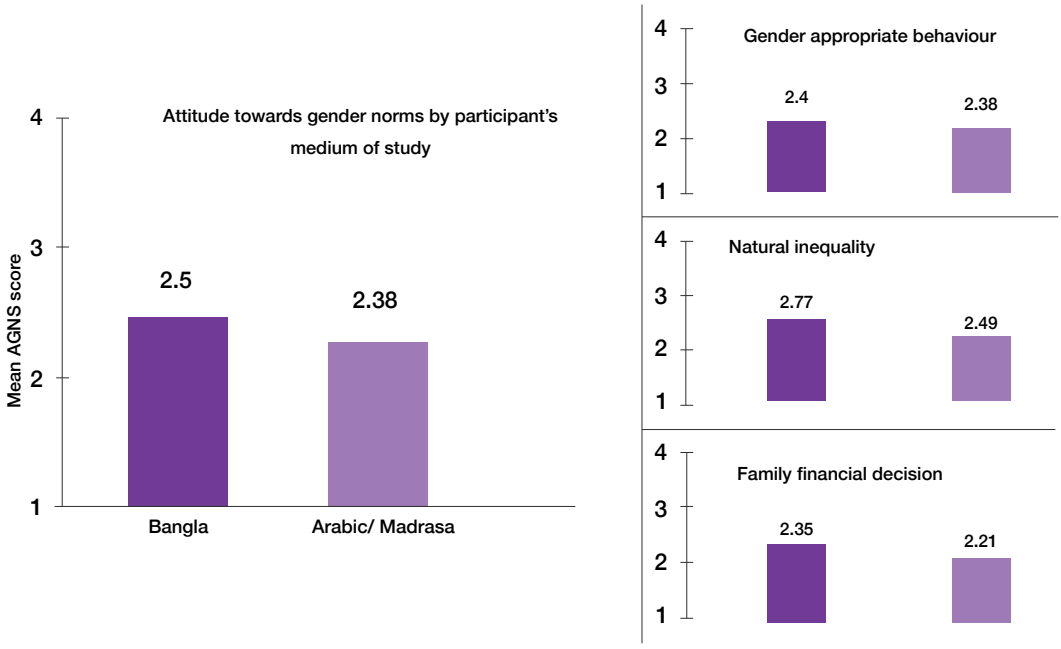

Figure 7: Attitude towards gender norms by participant's medium of study

4.3.11 Formation of AGN: Participants' father's educational attainment

As with participants' educational attainment, fathers' education was also associated with the youths' AGN. Illustrated in Figure 8, with increased fathers' education, participants reported more equitable AGN, F (5, 2750) = 23.43, p<.001, ω2=0.04. Pairwise comparison using Tukey's posthoc test showed that compared to no schooling (M=31.32, SD=8.87), except for the primary schooling (M=31.25, SD=9.37), each higher-order educational qualifications of fathers had a significant impact on the AGNS scores of participants. In other words, as opposed to no-schooling, fathers with secondary or above schooling influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths. This pattern held for the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN. For family financial decisions, AGNS only differs participants who had a higher secondary or above degree. In other words, up to a secondary level schooling of fathers did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure.

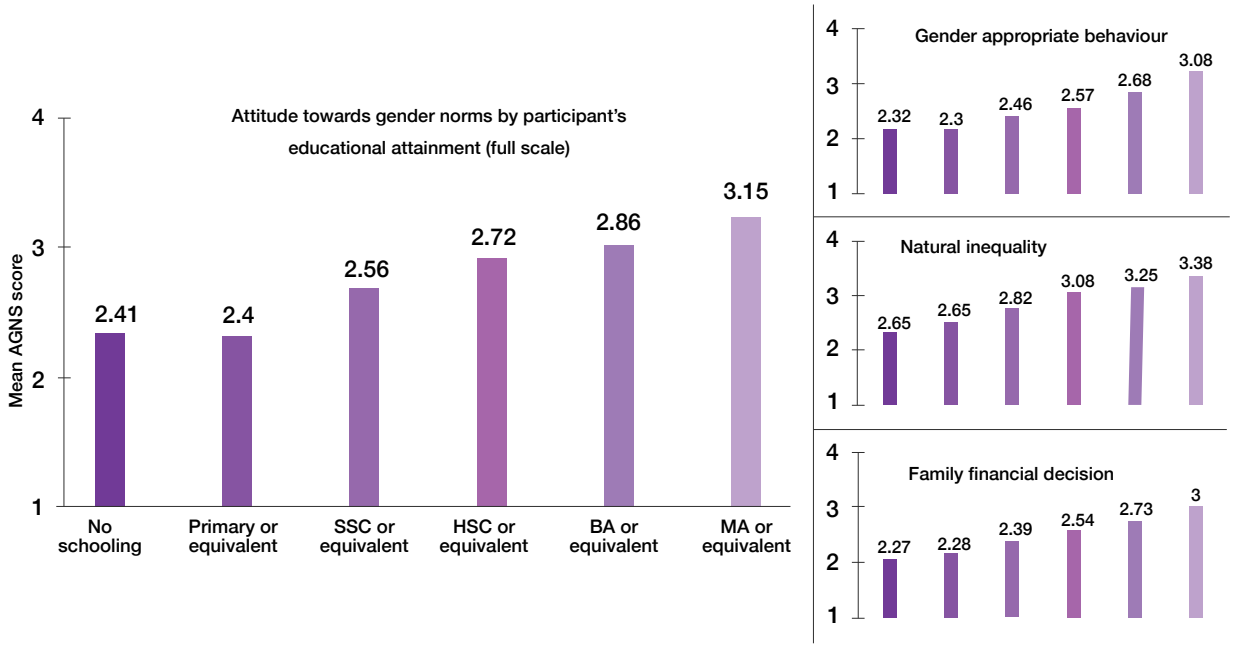

Figure 8: Attitude towards gender norms by participant's father's educational attainment for full scale and its subscales. For meaningful comparison across plots, the average item scores were used in the Y-axis.

4.3.12 Formation of AGN: Participants' mother's educational attainment

Mothers' education had significantly associated with the AGNS scores of the participants. As illustrated in Figure 9, with a higher level of mothers' education, participants reported more equitable AGN, $F(5, 2761) = 24.96$, $p<.001$, $\omega 2=0.04$. Pairwise comparison using Tukey's posthoc test showed that compared to no schooling (M=31.30, SD=8.74), except for primary education (M=31.62, SD=9.14), each higher-order educational qualifications of mothers had a significant impact on the AGNS scores of participants. In other words, as opposed to non-schooling, mothers with secondary or above education influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths. This pattern held for the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN. For family financial decisions, AGNS only differs participants with either a secondary or graduate degree. In other words, mothers without schooling or primary or higher secondary level schooling did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure.

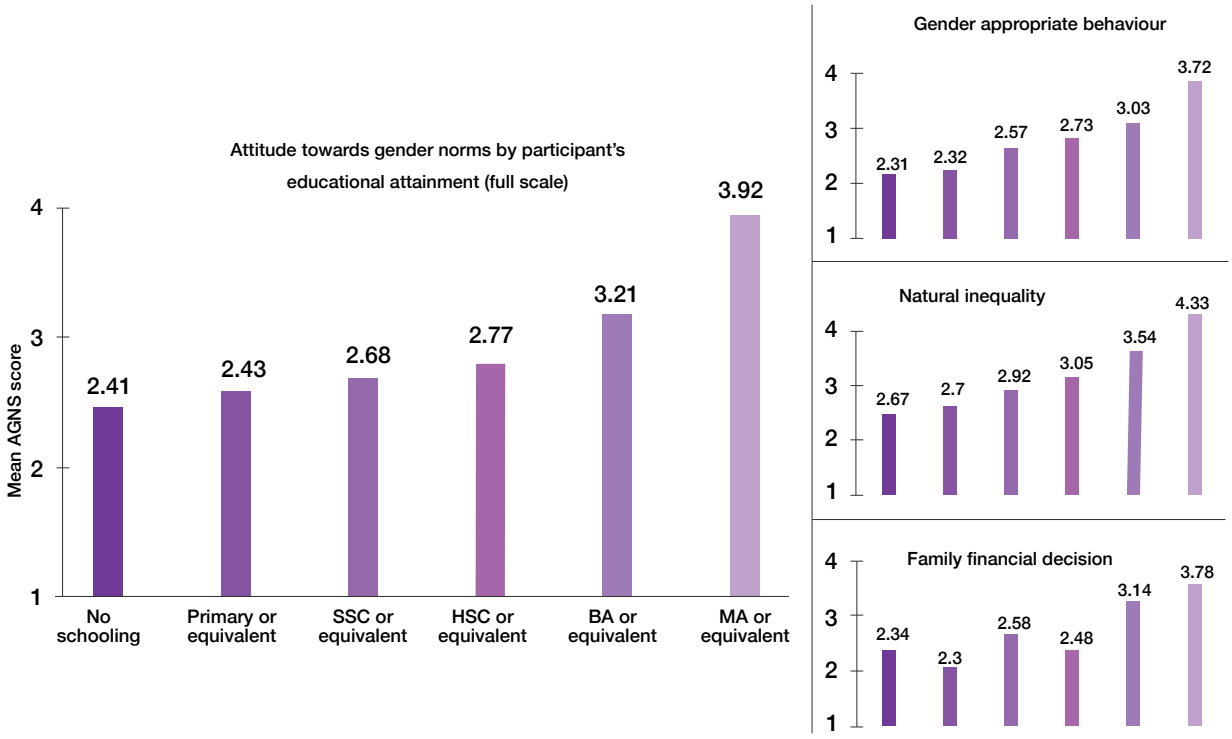

Figure 9: Attitude towards gender norms by participant's mother's educational attainment for full scale and its subscales (inset). To maintain meaningful comparison across plots, the average item scores were used in the Y-axis.

4.3.13 Formation of AGN: Participants' levels of religiosity

Participants' adherence to religious practice was also associated with the AGNS scores, F (5, 2783) = 20.69, p<.001, ω2=0.03. Surprisingly, participants who did not perform any religious activity (M=36.56, SD=6.43) and who completely abide by the religious values (M=35.82, SD=11.17) showed more equitable AGN than those who performed irregularly. The two high equitable groups did not differ significantly in the AGNS, t (0.74) = 0.40, p = 0.58. These two groups remained high in gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions but not significantly higher than the irregular groups, except for those who performed very little religious activities. As for the family financial decision, uninvolved religious performers scored significantly better than the irregular worshipers (Figure 10).

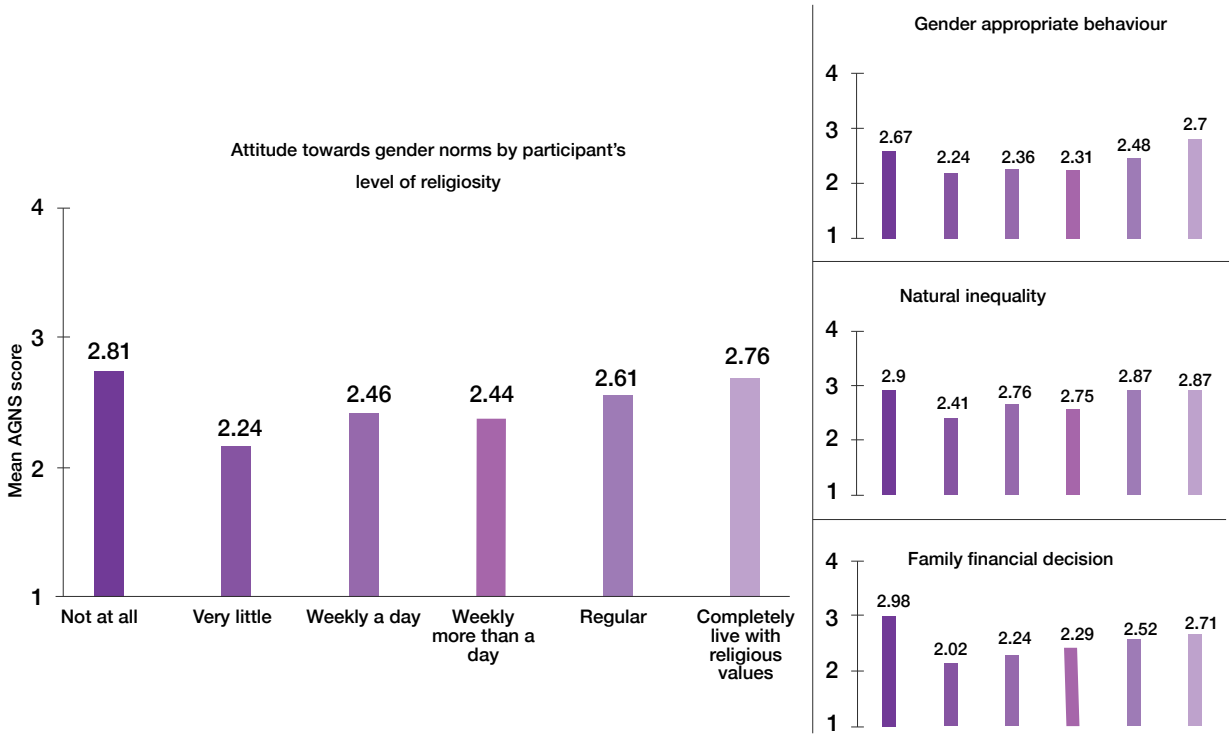

Figure 10: Attitude towards gender norms by participant's religiosity level for full scale and its subscales (inset). For meaningful comparison across plots, the average item scores were used in the Y-axis.

4.3.14 Determining the most important factors for AGN

To determine the most crucial factors for AGN formation, we conducted multivariate regression analyses incorporating all significant factors observed in univariate analyses. In the multivariate regression models, we entered age, sex, socio-economic status (SES), divisions, raising places, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), participants' own and parental educational qualifications, and religiosity.

We report the results of multivariate regression analyses in Table 6. For the total AGNS score, all factors jointly accounted for 30% of the variances except for age and SES; all other factors emerged as significant. Compared to males, females (B=3.70, 95% CI: 3.07, 4.38) pose a more equitable AGN. Compared to participants from Dhaka, participants from Rajshahi (B=5.99, 95% CI: 4.90, 7.08), Chattogram (B=3.71, 95% CI: 2.76, 4.66), and Mymensingh (B=1.27, 95% CI: 0.01, 2.53) showed elevated AGNS scores while participants from Barishal (B=-2.67, 95% CI: -4.00, -1.35), Khulna (B=-3.39, 95% CI: -4.52, -2.27) and Rangpur (B=-7.66, 95% CI: -8.78, -6.54) demonstrated lesser AGNS scores. As opposed to participants raised in urban areas, participants raised in rural areas (B=-0.72, 95% CI: -1.41, -0.04) reported significantly lower scores in AGNS. Adverse childhood experience was also positively and significantly associated with AGNS (B=0.35, 95% CI: 0.14, 0.57). As for religiosity, compared to participants who were regular followers of religious rituals, participants who performed very little (B=-3.34, 95% CI: -4.30, -2.38), weekly a day (B=-1.92, 95% CI: -2.76, -1.00) or weekly more than a day (B=-1.86, 95% CI: -2.73, -1.00) reported less equitable AGN. However, the AGNS scores were not different for regular followers from the completely non-followers or completely followers.
As for participants' education, compared to participants without schooling, participants with higher secondary (B=3.09, 95% CI: 1.44, 4.74), bachelor's (B=4.07, 95% CI: 2.23, 5.92), and master's level education (B=4.61, 95% CI: 2.30, 6.93) showed more positive AGN. Concerning father's education, compared to participants' father without schooling, participants whose fathers had secondary (B=1.26, 95% CI: 0.08, 2.44), higher secondary (B=2.35, 95% CI: 0.72, 3.97), bachelor (B=2.16, 95% CI: 0.07, 4.24) or master's level (B=4.67, 95% CI: 1.61, 7.72) education posed more equitable AGN. In the case of mother's education, we found AGNS scores did not differ significantly for participants with mothers who had no schooling, primary, secondary, or higher secondary levels of education. Compared to participants with mothers having no schooling, participants whose mothers had a bachelor's (B=5.74, 95% CI: 2.00, 9.48) or master's degree (B=12.67, 95% CI: 6.04, 19.30) demonstrated elevated AGNS scores. Among all factors, living in Rangpur (β =-0.26), Rajshahi (β=0.21), and Chattogram division (β=0.16), female gender (β=0.20), higher secondary education (β=0.15), and very little adherence to religious practices (β=-0.13) were the strongest predictors of AGN.

Predictors	B (95%, CI)		SE B	β	p-value
Age Sex	Male (ref)	-0.01 (-.07, 0.04)	0.03	-.01	.62
	Female	3.70 (3.07, 4.33)	0.32	.20	.00
SES Division	Dhaka (ref)	-0.18 (-0.36, 0.00)	0.09	-.04	.06
	Chattogram	3.71 (2.76, 4.66)	0.48	.16	.00
	Barishal	-2.67 (-4.00, -1.35)	0.67	-.07	.00
	Khulna	-3.39 (-4.52, -2.27)	0.57	-.12	.00
	Rajshahi	5.99 (4.90, 7.08)	0.55	.21	.00
	Sylhet	-0.64 (-1.98, 0.70)	0.68	-.02	.35
	Rangpur	-7.66 (-8.78, -6.54)	0.57	-.26	.00
	Mymensingh	1.27 (0.01, 2.53)	0.64	.04	.05
Raised before 16 years	Urban areas (ref)	-0.72 (-1.41, -0.04)	0.35	-.03	.04
	Rural areas	0.35 (0.14, 0.57)	0.11	.06	.00
ACE Religiosity	Regular (ref)	-0.04 (-2.79, 2.72)	1.41	.00	.98
	Not at all	-3.34 (-4.30, -2.38)	0.49	-.13	.00
	Very little	-1.92 (-2.76, -1.08)	0.43	-.09	.00
	Weekly a day	-1.86 (-2.73, -1.00)	0.44	-.08	.00
	Weekly more than a day	-1.86 (-2.73, -1.00)	0.44	-.08	.00
	Completely live with religious values	0.47 (-1.17, 2.11)	0.84	.01	.58
Education level	No schooling (ref) Primary/equivalent	1.35 (-0.19, 2.89)	0.78	.05	.09
	Secondary/equivalent	1.44 (-0.08, 2.96)	0.78	.07	.06
	Higher Secondary/ equivalent	3.09 (1.44, 4.74)	0.84	.15	.00
	Bachelor/equivalent	4.07 (2.23, 5.92)	0.94	.13	.00
	Master's/equivalent	4.61 (2.30, 6.93)	1.18	.09	.00

Predictors	B (95%, CI)		SE B	β	p-value
Father's education	No schooling (ref) Primary/equivalent	-0.20 (-1.16, 0.76)	0.49	-.01	.69
	Secondary/equivalent	1.26 (0.08, 2.44)	0.60	.05	.04
	Higher Secondary/ equivalent	2.35 (0.72, 3.97)	0.83	.07	.00
	Bachelor/equivalent	2.16 (0.07, 4.24)	1.06	.05	.04
	Master's/equivalent	4.67 (1.61, 7.72)	1.56	.06	.00
Mother's education	No schooling (ref) Primary/equivalent	-0.09 (-1.02, 0.83)	0.47	.00	.84
	Secondary/equivalent	0.98 (-0.21, 2.17)	0.61	.04	.11
	Higher Secondary/ equivalent	1.04 (-0.85, 2.93)	0.96	.02	.28
	Bachelor/equivalent	5.74 (2.00, 9.48)	1.91	.05	.00
	Master's/equivalent	12.67 (6.04, 19.30)	3.38	.06	.00

Note. Adjusted R2 = .30, p<.0001.
Note. AGNS=Attitude towards gender norms, SES=Socio-economic status, ACE=Adverse childhood experience

Table 7: Multiple regression model predicting total AGNS scores

4.3.15 Association between AGN and triggering event

We asked respondents to report the most emotion-provoking events related to gender norms they had recently encountered, witnessed, or became aware of from social media. Their responses were recorded and summarised under 11 major categories. Next, we inspected if different events triggered participants with different levels of AGN. As seen in Figure 11, participants who were triggered by the success stories had a higher AGNS score, while participants who were triggered by events related to romantic relationship issues had less equitable gender norms.

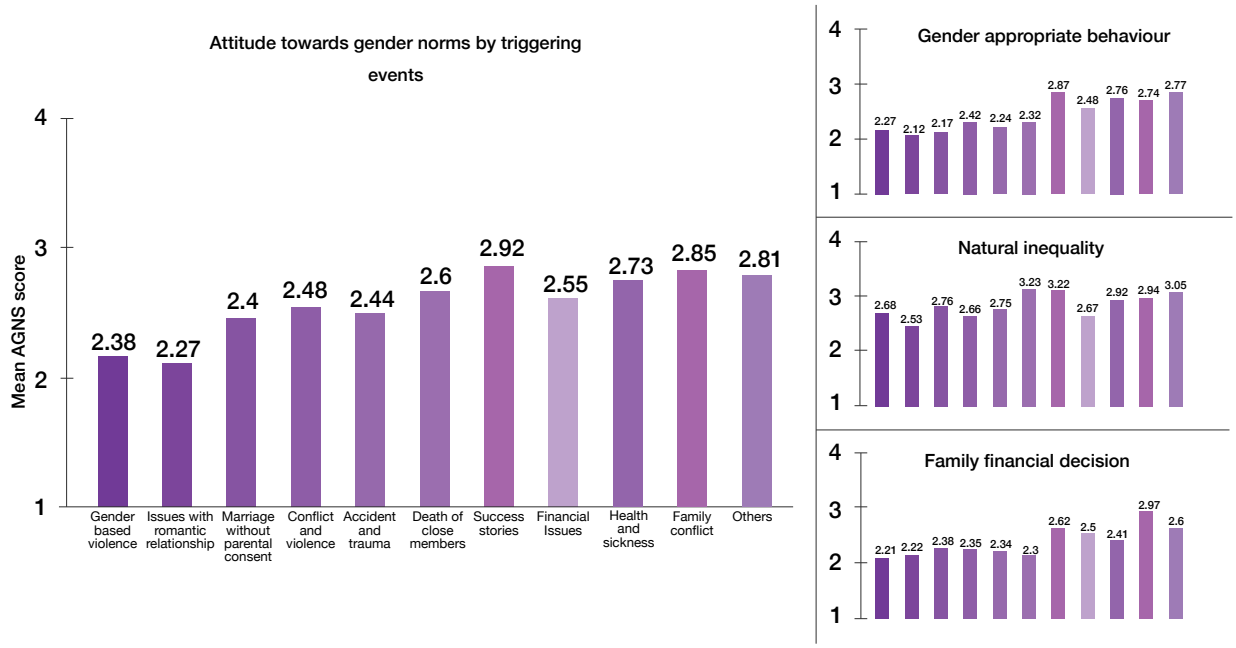

Figure 11: Association between AGN and triggering event types

CHAPTAR 5

Discussion

The present study was aimed to explore Bangladeshi youths' attitudes towards gender norms. To measure gender norm, no scale or questionnaire were available in Bangladeshi context. Therefore, in the first stage, the researchers focused on developing a standardised scale to measure AGN of the youth population. With this purpose a qualitative approach was followed in which 128 youths (aged 18 to 35 years) from four districts participated in focus group discussions. Derived normative were then converted to gender inequitable declarative statements (item). Following appropriate statistical analysis, a 13-item attitude towards gender norms scale (AGNS) with three latent factors: (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions was developed. These factors differentiate individuals and can vary on various socio-economic, social, and psychological measurements. The AGNS gives a summative score for an individual's level of attitude towards gender norms, which can fall between 13 (least equitable) to 65 (most equitable). A higher score indicates a higher equitable AGN. This 13-item brief instrument is easy to administer. Due to its sound psychometric properties and easy scoring procedure, the AGNS would be an attractive instrument for policy, development, and intervention research.

In the second stage, this scale (AGNS) was applied to a randomly (multistage) selected nationally representative sample of 2,790 young adults (mean age 26.60 years, SD 5.47 years, female 49.35%) from eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh. Participants responded to a structured questionnaire that included the attitude towards gender norms scale, adverse childhood experience, and intimate partner violence scale. Participants also reported the most triggering gender-related recent events and rated their valence.

Objective 1: To assess the attitude towards gender norms among the youth of Bangladesh

Results showed that gender norms of the Bangladeshi youths were clustered around three latent domains: (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions. Assessing the attitude towards these domains revealed that more than half of the youths lean towards inequitable gender norms (Table 4, 4.1-4.13).

As higher score indicates a higher equitable AGN, the distribution of AGNS scores was slightly right-skewed (Figure 1), meaning that participants scoring less than 32.19 in AGNS were higher in number than those scoring above average. Though disappointing these findings represent the scenario of Bangladesh. While comparing between male and female proportion, there was an almost equal number of male and female participants. Bright side of the finding is females (M= 34.07, SD= 9.99) hold significantly higher equitable AGN than their male counterparts (M= 30.67, SD= 8.37). Though in each item of the domain females exhibited agreeableness with the statements as their counterpart. (The mean age of the participants was 26.60 years (SD= 5.47 years). Males and females did not differ in age.)

Objective 2: To identify factors (individual, social, economic, and power dynamic) associated with the formation of attitudes towards gender norms

Beside sex, education (youths and their parents), upbringing and living place, and religiosity clarity were associated with the formation of differential attitudes towards gender norms.

Eight divisions

An interesting finding is across all eight divisions AGNS was not equal (Figure 2). Participants from the Rajshahi

division (M=38.26, SD= 9.49) displayed the most equitable AGN, followed by participants from Chattogram (M=36.44, SD= 9.57) and Mymensingh (M=33.40, SD= 7.62). Youths from the Rangpur division (M=25.12, SD= 5.48) reported the least equitable AGN. It is worth to mention that the proportion of participants recruited from eight administrative divisions did not differ by gender, it means that gender did not play a vital role in this finding. It was also found that youths from Rajshahi were equally equitable in their attitude towards all three domains/factors. On the other hand, youths of Chattogram scored higher for gender-appropriate behaviour and gender equality factors but poorer on family financial decisions. Males from Chattogram though exhibited gender equality in first two factors but they tend to keep the money matter in their hand. Inter-generational practice could have played a role in developing such attitude. Differences in these divisions clearly raises questions. Especially, as both Rajshahi and Rangpur are in the northern part of Bangladesh, difference in their AGN needs further investigation. At this stage it is difficult to identify the causes without research evidence.

Urban and rural

Participants in urban areas (M=34.43) showed more equitable AGN than those in rural areas (M=31.58) (Figure 3). This result is expected as people living in urban areas are exposed to lifestyles where it contributes in developing equitable AGN compared to rural people.

Married and unmarried

Nearly 73% of the participants were married. Married and unmarried youths did not vary significantly in the total AGNS scores, but marital status was a determinant of the natural inequality and family financial decision factors. Unmarried (M=11.55) as opposed to married (M=10.82) participants had a significantly higher score in the natural inequality domain showing that the belief that there was a natural inequality between men and women was less apparent among unmarried youths. That can be considered as a good sign as unmarried participants showed a favourable attitude towards gender equity in this particular domain. However, when deciding family finances, the unmarried youths held more inequitable gender norms than the married youths. The explanation could be that as married participants are sharing a live together for better understanding or handling of household expenses they had to rely on their partner. On the other hand, unmarried youths who are earning are managing their expenses all by themselves. For them it is difficult to comprehend that money matter decisions could be shared with life partner.

Educational attainment

Participants with various levels of educational attainment scored differently in the AGNS (Figure 6). With increased education, participants reported more equitable gender norms, but the difference was only significant when participants had HSC and above qualifications. For the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN, there was no significant differences between participants without schooling and those with primary or secondary schooling. Interestingly, for family financial decisions, AGNS only differs for participants with a master's degree. In other words, up to a bachelor's degree did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure.

Medium of study

The medium of study/types of schooling had no impact on the AGNS scores except for the natural inequality factor. Youths who had studied in Madrasa or Arabic medium had significantly fewer scores in the natural inequality domain compared to youths who studied in Bangla medium (Figure 7).

Parents' education

Parents' education was also linked with youth's AGN. As opposed to no-schooling, parents with secondary or above education influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths.

Illustrated in Figure 8, with increased fathers' education, participants reported more equitable AGN, results showed that compared to no schooling, except for the primary schooling, each higher-order educational qualifications of fathers had a significant impact on the AGNS scores of participants. In other words, as opposed to no-schooling, fathers with secondary or above schooling influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths. This pattern held for the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN. For family financial decisions, AGNS only differs participants who had a higher secondary or above degree. In other words, up to a secondary level schooling of fathers did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure.

Mothers' education had found to be significantly associated with the AGNS scores of the participants. As illustrated in Figure 9, with a higher level of mothers' education, participants reported more equitable. Statistical analysis indicated that compared to no schooling (M=31.30, SD=8.74), except for primary education (M=31.62, SD=9.14), each higher-order educational qualifications of mothers had a significant impact on the AGNS scores of participants. In other words, as opposed to non-schooling, mothers with secondary or above education influenced forming a positive AGN among the youths. This pattern held for the gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions of AGN. For family financial decisions, AGNS only differs participants with either a secondary or graduate degree. In other words, mothers without schooling or primary or higher secondary level schooling did not make any difference when deciding on family expenditure. Therefore, it shows that parents' level of education (HSC or higher) significantly contributed to developing equitable gender norm among the participants.

Religious practice

Participants' loyalty to religious practice was also found to be associated with the AGNS scores. Interestingly, participants who did not perform any religious activity (M=36.56, SD=6.43, N= 34) and who abide entirely by religious values (M=35.82, SD=11.17, N=101) showed more equitable AGN than those who performed irregularly. The two high equitable AGN groups did not differ significantly in the AGNS. These two groups remained high in gender-appropriate behaviour and natural inequality dimensions but not significantly higher than the irregular groups, except for those who performed very little religious activities (N=409). As for the family financial decision, uninvolved religious performers scored significantly better than the irregular worshipers (Figure 10). These findings are quite thought provoking, both extreme groups have favourable attitude towards gender norm. Possibility is high that both these groups' practices gender equity in their lives. Though further inquiry is needed to explore into the matter, it could be assumed that both these groups' male members have respect towards female counterpart and it might have contributed in the findings.

Objective 3: To assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence among the Bangladeshi youth

Objective 4: To examine if intimate partner violence committed by the youths varied with different levels of attitudes toward gender norms

Nearly 73% of the respondents were married. The mean intimate partner violence (IPV) score committed by the married participants was 5.70

with a range of 2-18. A higher IPV score indicates a higher incidence of IPV. It was explored if IPV among the participants in a marital relationship varies with their AGNS scores. We categorised the participants into four groups based on the AGNS scores quartiles (Table 5). As seen in Figure 5, the IPV scores were not equal for the four groups. Participants in the lowest two quartiles (Q1 and Q2) committed significantly more IPV than the two higher quartile groups (Q3 and Q4). Analyses revealed that participants belonging to the lowest two quartiles in the AGNS scores did not vary. Similarly, IPV committed by the participants in the highest two quartiles was indifferent. This analysis indicates that a reduction in the IPV was only evident when participants' AGNS score exceeded the median score (AGNS=31), implying this score could be a cut-off point differentiating participants from being less IPV to high IPV. A person scoring less than 31 in the AGNS could be a potential candidate to commit violence in an intimate relationship. This association of AGNS and IPV is a crucial finding of the present study. Programmes targeting to increase gender equity among youth will contribute in reducing IPV.

Socioeconomic status (SES) was inversely correlated with AGNS and its subscales, showing that participants with higher SES reported lower equitable gender norms. However, the magnitudes of these relationships were low. There were no significant correlations between AGN with age and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Figure 6).

Objective 5: To explore gender–related events that trigger youths. Do those events vary with various levels of attitudes toward gender norms?

To find whether there exists any association between AGN and triggering event, we asked the participants to report the most emotion-provoking events related to gender norms they had recently encountered, witnessed, or became aware of from social media. Their responses were recorded and summarised under 11 major categories (Figure 11). Participants who were triggered by the success stories had a higher AGNS score, while participants who were triggered by events related to romantic relationship issues had less equitable gender norms. This finding suggests that those who were inspired by other persons' success stories have favourable attitude towards gender norm. On the other contrary, youths who were easily triggered by the news/stories related to romantic relationship exhibited unfavourable attitude to gender equity.

Determining the most important factors for AGN

To determine the most crucial factors for AGN formation, we conducted a multivariate analysis. It revealed that among all factors, living in Rangpur (β =-0.26), Rajshahi (β=0.21), and Chattogram division (β=0.16), female gender (β=0.20), higher secondary education (β=0.15), and very little loyalty to religious practices (β=-0.13) were the strongest predictors of AGN (Table 7). Programmes focusing on these predictors can planned to address the issues of gender equity.

CHAPTAR 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

To explore Bangladeshi youths' attitudes towards gender norms, this study, for the first time, provides an objective assessment tool (i.e., the AGNS). The AGNS gives a summative score for an individual's level of attitude towards gender norms, which can fall between 13 (least equitable) to 65 (most equitable). This 13-item brief instrument can be administered in less than five minutes. Due to its sound psychometric properties and easy administration, the AGNS would be an attractive instrument for policy, development, and intervention research.

Applying this scale to a nationally representative sample showed that gender norms of the Bangladeshi youths were clustered around three latent domains: (i) gender-appropriate behaviours, (ii) natural inequality, and (iii) family financial decisions. Assessing the attitude towards these domains revealed that more than half of the youths lean towards inequitable gender norms. A person scoring less than 31 in the AGNS could be a potential candidate to commit violence in an intimate relationship. Sex, education (youths and their parents), upbringing and living place, and spiritual clarity were associated with the formation of differential attitudes towards gender norms.

Despite different NGOs involvement/effort in mitigating gender inequity, the present scenario is not very promising. Therefore, interventions to promote gender equity among youths should prioritise males, living in rural areas, with less or no education and ambiguous spiritual values. Consequently, intervention should increase sensitivity to gender-appropriate behaviours, clarify biological differences with gender inequality, and teach assertive approaches to manage family finances to reduce IPV and increase gender equity. Moreover, researches can be conducted to find the underlying causes of gender inequity as trans-generational issues, patriarchal system, societal expectations etc. could play a role as contributing factors in maintaining the gender inequity. Followings are some specific recommendations:

- The efforts to empower women and girls must be continued through various programmes
- Engage men and youth to create a gender equitable society in all programmes related to gender and development
- Adopt the intervention strategies regarding gender equality to break the rigidity within the family structure
- To create equitable AGNS, ensure at least a higher secondary education for all through an inclusive educational system
- Adverse childhood experiences need to be reduced through various programmes
- Focusing and publishing news on social and traditional media must be sensitive to gender norms and gender equity
- The present study should be considered baseline quantitative evidence on the national gender norms scenario held by the youths. We strongly recommend follow-up studies to pursue this area for a clearer picture.

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