Chapter 17
Gender Transformative Change With Men:
Lessons From Two Decades of Field Interventions in India

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, the approach to address gender equality has been to empower women through education, collective organising, legal remedies, electoral participation, and institutional engagement. Empowerment of women undoubtedly increases women's awareness of their rights and their ability to confront discrimination and violence; however, engagement with men can make this process collaborative and address men's accountability towards advancing gender justice. This chapter describes the Centre for Health and Social Justice's efforts to engage men within a gender-transformative framework, in different domains of gender equality such as advancing sexual and reproductive rights, eliminating gender-based violence, addressing men's responsibility in care work, and supporting women's leadership in governance.

GENDER AND WORK WITH MEN: AN INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is an essential component of social transformation. Over the last 50 years there has been an increasing understanding of gender relations within the broader framework of social relations. Gender is understood as a social concept which includes the different socially prescribed roles and relationships of women and men which lead to a set of disadvantages faced by women compared to men. It evolved from the 'feminist' understanding of how 'patriarchy' or male-ordered society creates systematic hurdles and lack of opportunities for women. The UN system adopted the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women) in 1979 which recognized that women's rights needed to be understood and addressed specifically to achieve the overarching framework of human rights of 'all'. In development parlance the GAD (Gender and Development) approach emerged as a successor to the earlier WID (Women in Development) and WAD (Women and Development) approaches which saw women's development within a narrower framework of improving women's economic, educational or social 'situation' without questioning the overall framework of subordination that women faced, or their 'status' in society. An important hallmark of the GAD approach has been the acknowledgement that any efforts to improve or change women's status or bringing about gender equality needs to acknowledge and reconfigure the different gendered relationships, which are structurally hierarchical and discriminatory, that any girl or woman has at home, in society and in different institutions (Rathgeber,1990).

Gender transformative change has emerged as the new desirable intervention aimed at gender equality (Rottach, Schuler, &Hardee, 2009). These interventions are expected to enable critical examination of existing gender norms and dynamics within social systems and help foster change among those that are gender inequitable.

A call to involving men as supporters of women's empowerment and fulfillment of women's rights agenda was made by Gertrude Mongellain, 1995 at the Fourth International Conference on Women, better known as the Beijing Conference, calling for new partnerships between men and women into the 21st century. As the Secretary General of the Conference, she put things into perspective during her opening address when she said that it was important to look at women's issues in a holistic manner and just like women had struggled along with men for various struggles like the ones against slavery, colonialism and apartheid, it "was now the turn of men to join women in their struggle for equality"(Mongella, 1996). A similar call for involving men and boys in the domain of reproductive health and rights had been made through the Program of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at Cairo a year ago in 1994. While these conferences created an agenda for change, the experiences of working with men and boys were still few and when men had been involved with issues relating to women's development most of the initiatives were in the framework of men as 'decision-makers' or 'authorizers' since men wielded more power in the family and in society.

At the global level work with men on gender issues has intensified after the Cairo and Beijing conferences and has been seen in different dimensions like community-based programming, research and scholarship, activism and advocacy, and policy level interventions at the national and international levels (Flood, 2015). Some of the areas in which such work has focused on included HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender Based violence. Community based programming started by Promundo in Brazil, Engender Health in South Africa, SAHAYOG in India, Family Violence Prevention Fund in USA, and by Save the Children, Sweden in Nepal. An evidence review of interventions addressing men and masculinities in the field of violence and sexual and reproductive health identified 462 interventions, conducted between 2007 and 2018 which had been reported in peer

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