



Report on

Sessions for Men social actors, women on GBV, gender norms, decision-making, and inclusion



“Strengthening the Feminist Movement to Fight Against Violation of Rights”

Organized by: Nice Foundation
Supported by: CREA-FON
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Introduction

The training sessions held across Shalua (Dumuria), Townghona (Dumuria), Bolabuniya, and Parbotiyaghatta (Botiaghata) between July 12 and July 23, 2025, were organized by the Nice Foundation to create awareness, challenge harmful gender norms, and promote inclusive community practices. Additionally, our 7 CSOs conducted 7 sessions with individuals in Barisal, Bagerhat, Jessore, Jhenidah, Satkhira, Comilla, and Cox's Bazar. A total of 221 (81 at Nice Foundation and 140 at 7 CSOs) participants were present in these sessions. These sessions brought together a wide range of community stakeholders including teachers, religious leaders, NGO workers, elected officials, youth, and parents to engage in open discussions around gender-based violence (GBV), decision-making within families, social inclusion of marginalized groups (especially transgender people and persons with disabilities), and equitable roles for men and women in society.



The sessions aimed to foster a culture of respect, empathy, and accountability, where all genders, regardless of their social identity or background are treated with dignity and given equal opportunities to thrive. Special emphasis was placed on the roles of education, social awareness, and collaborative decision-making in preventing GBV and achieving lasting gender equality.

Objectives of the Sessions

1. Increase Awareness of Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

To educate participants about the different forms of GBV, including emotional, physical, economic, and sexual violence, and to encourage early identification and reporting of abuse in families and communities.

2. Challenge Harmful Gender Norms and Stereotypes:

To critically reflect on traditional gender roles, expectations, and biases that perpetuate inequality and violence, especially against women, transgender persons, and people with disabilities.



3. **Promote Shared Decision-Making in Families and Communities:**

To encourage joint decision-making between men and women within households, fostering greater communication, respect, and shared responsibility.

4. **Support Inclusion of Marginalized Groups:**

To highlight the importance of inclusion and equitable treatment of third gender individuals, persons with disabilities, and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups in education, employment, and community life.

5. **Strengthen Community Engagement for Prevention:**

To inspire local leaders, teachers, parents, and religious figures to take proactive roles in preventing GBV and advocating for gender equality at the grassroots level.

6. **Encourage Positive Male Engagement:**

To involve men and boys as allies in the movement against GBV and to promote their role in building equitable and respectful relationships with women and other genders.



Key Theme and Findings

1. Violence and Discrimination Against Women and the Third Gender:

- All sessions acknowledged that GBV is not limited to women; it affects transgender individuals, people with disabilities, adolescents, and other marginalized groups.
- Although violence against women has decreased in some areas, there is a noticeable rise in violence against men and the third gender, especially in Batiaghata sessions.
- Case Highlight: In Shalua (19 Dec 2024), a child was raped. The perpetrator was arrested and is currently in jail.

2. Importance of Education and Awareness:

- All participants agreed that sustainable social change is not possible without education.
- Mothers' education was emphasized as vital for children's growth and values (as noted by community and religious leaders like Bidhan



Mondal and Debu Mukherjee).

- Inclusive education practices for children with disabilities and the third gender were advocated.

3. Decision-making in Families:

- The trend of male-dominated decision-making is slowly shifting, with more voices supporting joint decision-making within households.
- Bharati Dhali (Women Leader) emphasized that decisions should ideally be made jointly by spouses to ensure respect and balance.
- Stories were shared where women had no inheritance rights and endured abuse after marriage due to societal neglect.



4. Male Attitudes and the Need for Perspective Change:

- Some male participants showed progressive thinking, acknowledging their past biases and expressing a desire for change (e.g., Kamalesh, Debabrata, Biplob).
- However, patriarchal norms still dominate, and many men continue to resist women stepping into new roles or public spaces.
- Criticism and resistance against women's advancement remain prevalent.

5. Role of Religion and Culture:

- Religious leaders contributed positively, asserting that religion can promote gender justice.
- Rituals such as 'Kumari Puja' during Durga Puja show the cultural acknowledgment of both male and female sanctity.
- Faith leaders called for internal reflection and compassion in shaping gender roles and respect.

6. Inclusion and Social Tolerance:

- Respect and inclusion of the third gender and persons with disabilities were discussed at length.
- There was a consensus that early integration in schools and communities would help reduce



discrimination and build empathy.

- Gita, an NGO worker, highlighted misuse of disability stipends and mistreatment of persons with disabilities within families.

7. Response and Prevention of GBV:

- Participants stressed the need for immediate reaction against any form of GBV, whether it occurs in homes or society.
- Nice Foundation was praised across all sessions for facilitating these discussions and raising awareness.
- Participants reported a significant reduction of child marriage in some areas due to continued awareness and interventions.

8. Suggestion and Way Forward:

- Promote moral and value-based education for children.
- Conduct such awareness sessions frequently (suggested by Debabrata Mondal).
- Engage community leaders, teachers, and religious figures in advocacy against child marriage and GBV.
- Encourage open communication between parents and children; provide counseling support as needed.
- Root causes of GBV were identified as:
 - Patriarchy (Male-dominated family and society)
 - Economic issues (e.g., unequal ownership, control over resources)
 - Social Bias (e.g., colorism, body-shaming)
 - Psychological Abuse (e.g., emotional neglect, silent suffering)

Conclusion

These sessions indicate that gender-based violence, inequality, and harmful gender norms still persist. However, an increasing number of individuals across professions and communities are ready to confront these challenges and bring about change. Education, awareness, and shared responsibility are key to achieving a more inclusive and equitable society. The sessions organized by the Nice Foundation have played a significant role in initiating these critical conversations at the grassroots level.

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