

## Briefing Document

### Gender Based Violence (Violence against Women and Children) Study in FRC Target Areas in Mannar District

According to the World Bank statistics in 2019, Gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women and girls (VAWG), is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. The numbers are staggering:

- [35% of women worldwide](#) have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.
- [Globally, 7%](#) of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner.
- Globally, as many as [38% of murders](#) of women are committed by an intimate partner.
- [200 million](#) women have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting.<sup>1</sup>

The global situation related to gender-based violence against women and children can be understood by viewing the above statistics by World Bank data which was published in 2019. To understand the issues related to SGBV (Sexual and Gender Based Violence) and wellbeing of women and children Family Rehabilitation Center (FRC) in Srilanka undertook a perception survey in their project areas. The geographical area focused for the perception survey was Mannar District in two divisions and they are Mannar town and Manthai west.

The methodology that was adapted to conduct the study started with reviewing the secondary documents that was available with FRC and having discussions to with the staff and the community volunteers to develop the questionnaires to carry out the perception survey as well as collect the qualitative information through focus group discussion. After the development of the questionnaires and finalizing it after the feedback from FRC head office, the Consultant provided an orientation session on the questionnaire as well as how to facilitate the focus group discussion in the community.

The stratified sample methodology was used to select the community members for the perception survey as well as for the focus group discussion. The total number of community members selected for the perception survey was from the six GN divisions were 360 and the total number of Focus Group Discussions conducted was 18. The age groups selected for the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

focus group discussions were between 18 -25 male and female and a mixed group with the age was above 25 years. The focus group for men and women was conducted separately.

The study was conducted to identify the, respondents to understand the perceptions and thinking pattern related to early marriage domestic violence, behavioral questions related to perpetrators, victims of SGBV, socio economic conditions when it comes to the victims and also the about the services available for the victims to complain and the attitudes of the officers and accessibility for those services.

The final outcome of the study recognized that overall, 60% of the respondents understands about the repercussions of the sexual and gender-based violence against women and men in the community. Likewise, the respondents have a fair knowledge about the services available and the approaches that can be adopted to overcome the situation. But due to the stereotypical believes and customs they follow, the community is reluctant to work towards the prevention of gender-based violence in the community.

Around 20% of the respondents believe that women should be obedient to male members in the community and they should follow all the cultural believes and rituals at home as well as in the community.

The perception related to early marriage initial (First level) finding says, 26% of the respondents believe that early marriage provides protection for adolescent girls who live in poverty.

In the 270 respondents 128 of them believed that the reason for gender-based violence is because the women act and behave like provoking men. Especially the reasons kept on was related to dress code, speech and behaviors at public forums.

The findings related to rights, choice and freedom (it can be men or women) explicit that they prefer a situation which is controlled by a person rather than a situation with caring, respecting each other with empathy and understanding each other.

The study analyzed primary data collected on social norms in the relevant project areas of FRC in Mannar District. Through the study focused on gender roles and stereotypes to identify common misconceptions that men and boys have about women and girls' empowerment. Therefore, there need to be a concerted approach to rolling out the training-of-trainers for male role models. The awareness-raising activities with men constitute one element among other longer-term efforts to advance transformative change in attitudes, practices, and behaviors at the different levels.

- Gender Norms, and Stereotypes are therefore a distinct and separate form of engagement for those who strongly believe in harmful traditions and norms needs to be developed. It is important to align the community-based awareness raising and its outcomes with other efforts under the gender justice programming/portfolio in Mannar District so that the intertwined outputs and outcomes have a stronger impact and lead to a sustained transformation of gender norms.
- The civil society partners should organize a designated learning process using a series of training-of-trainers modules. Furthermore, greater awareness raising on women's rights and women's participation is recommended for community members in ways that connect public and private spaces. This could include media and advocacy campaigns about women's rights and the contributions of women in the communities, alongside awareness sessions for men about women's rights and the importance of women's participation in decision making in society.
- Joint dialogue sessions between women and men within the communities are also recommended. It is important to develop a separate strategy to defend the gender-transformative changes generated by this work. This involves acknowledging the shifts in gender norms and maintaining and furthering those elements that contribute to gender equality, such as women being more visible in the public space, girls attending schools, or young women working outside the home. All of the varied ways in which women of all ages contribute to society and positive change need to be acknowledged, understood, and supported.
- A complementary strategy that supports male role models relates to specific support for youth, which requires capturing their interest through interactive methods and engagement. Critical reflections about one owns knowledge, attitudes, and practices will be necessary to advance change. It will be necessary to generate and broaden concrete opportunities for women across their life cycles to engage with, participate in, and contribute to community issues.

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