

Subregional Conference



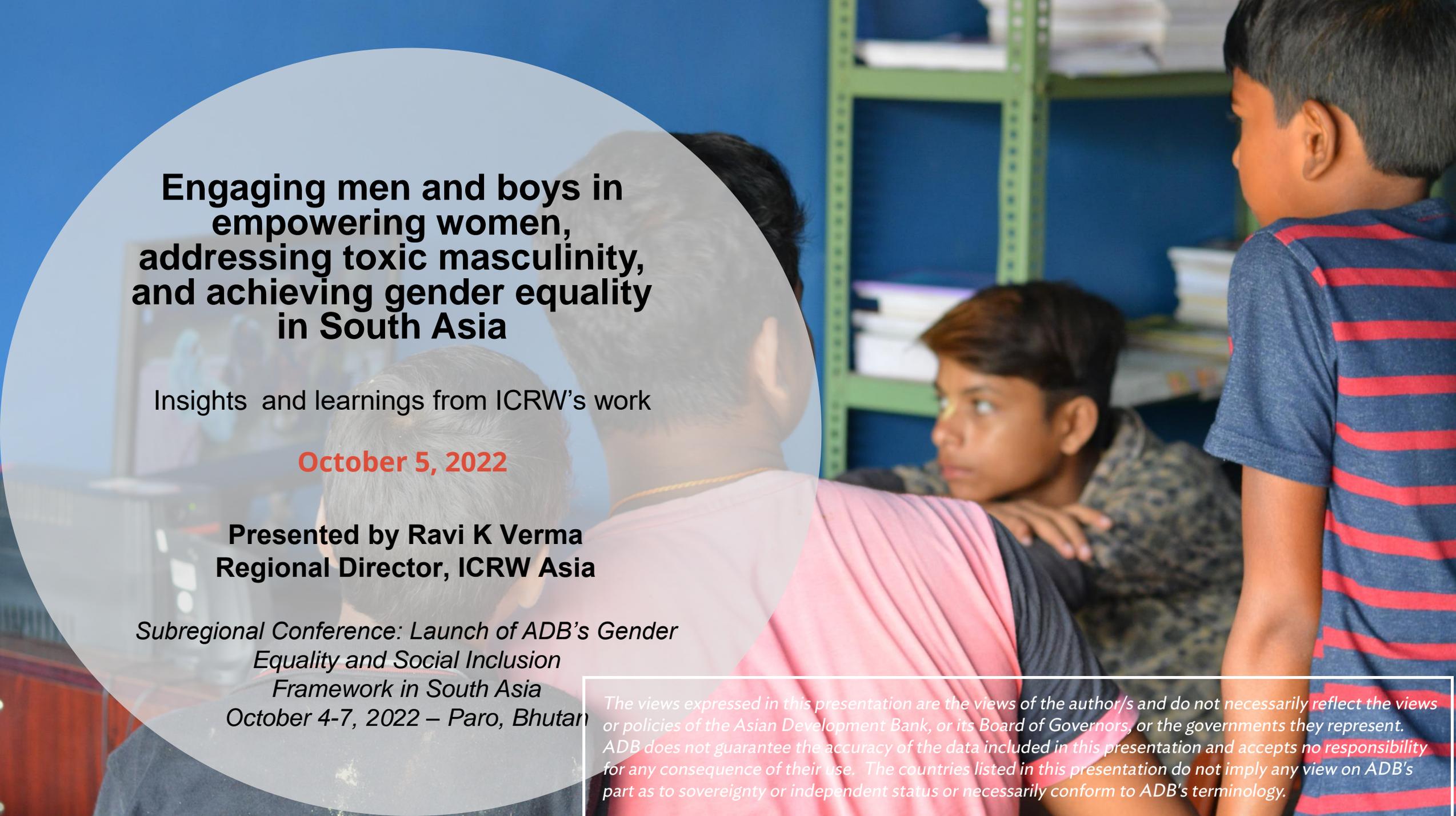
GENDER EQUALITY &  
SOCIAL INCLUSION

## Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in South Asia: Reflections and Way Forward for ADB

ADB

Paro, Bhutan | 04-07 October, 2022

ADB

The background image shows a classroom setting. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible, wearing a pink and white striped shirt. In the middle ground, a young boy with dark hair is looking towards the left. In the background, another young boy in a blue and red striped shirt is visible. The room has blue walls and green metal shelving units.

# Engaging men and boys in empowering women, addressing toxic masculinity, and achieving gender equality in South Asia

Insights and learnings from ICRW's work

**October 5, 2022**

**Presented by Ravi K Verma  
Regional Director, ICRW Asia**

*Subregional Conference: Launch of ADB's Gender  
Equality and Social Inclusion  
Framework in South Asia  
October 4-7, 2022 – Paro, Bhutan*

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# WHY GENDER?

- **Gender is an integral part of our lives**
  - It is **socially constructed**
  - Gender **intersects with many other axes of identity**- caste/class/religion etc. and **amplifies inequalities**
  - **Power and patriarchy** lie at the root of gender inequality and must be challenged
  - Gender is often **ignored** and **misunderstood**

- Therefore, ICRW adopts a **gender lens** to **understand** the world's problems and to **develop equitable solutions**.
- **Engaging men and boys** is a crucial part of ICRW's approach





# MEN AND MASCULINITIES

# WHAT IS MASCULINITY OR MASCULINITIES?

- Constructions of masculinity in any context are likely to be diverse
- Organized into hierarchies that are actively contested and negotiated,
- Intertwined with other forms of social organization associated with ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and nationality

- *RW Connell's pioneering work on masculinities*

Socially constructed attitudes, roles and behaviors around manhood internalized by men (and women) within the context of existing gender norms and relations.



Strong

Aggression

Risk-taking

Performance

Decision-making

Control

Sex

Mas

Violence

Proving

Superiority

Entitlement

Heterosexual

Provider

Homophobic

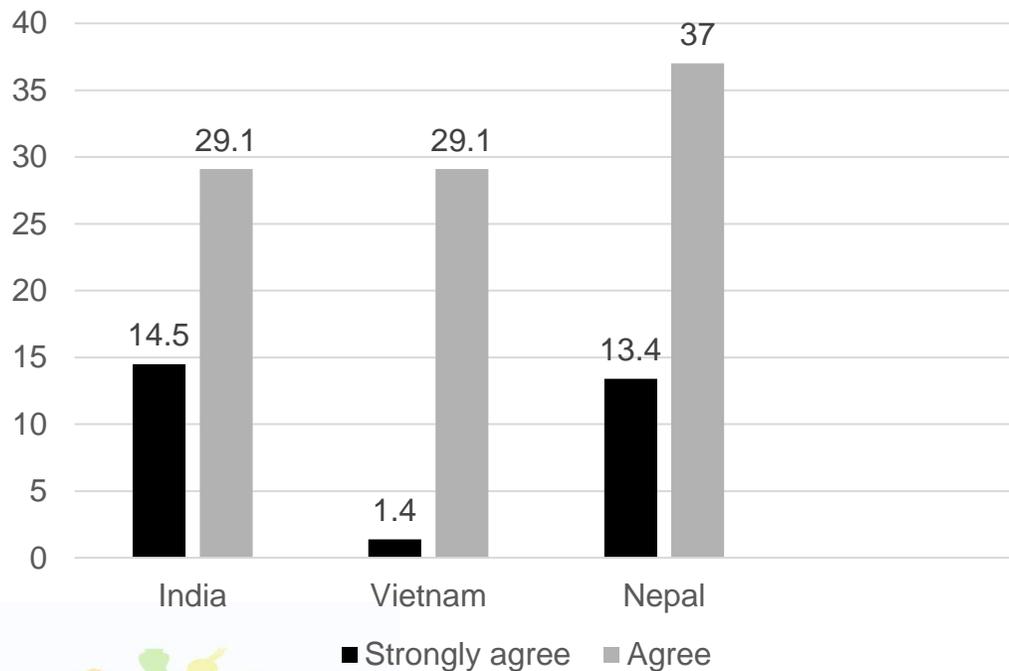
Defending

Power

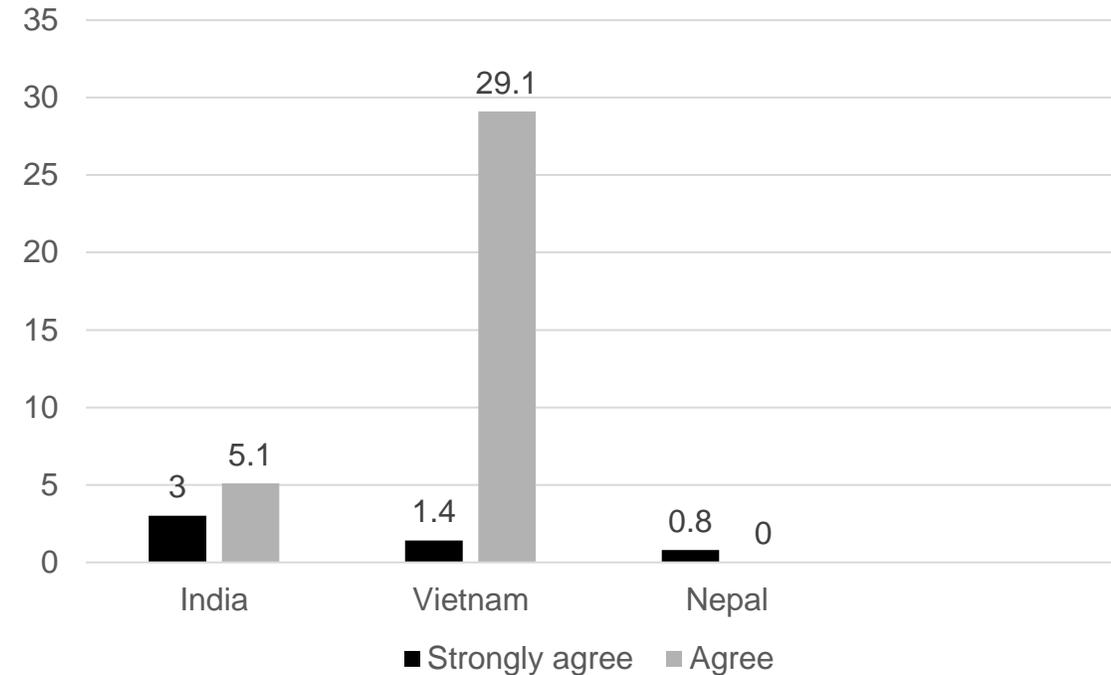
MASCULINITY:  
ASSOCIATED  
ELEMENTS

# MEN FEEL STRESSED ABOUT THEIR ECONOMIC ROLE

I sometimes feel ashamed to face my family because I am out of work



I sometimes drink or stay away from home when I can't find work

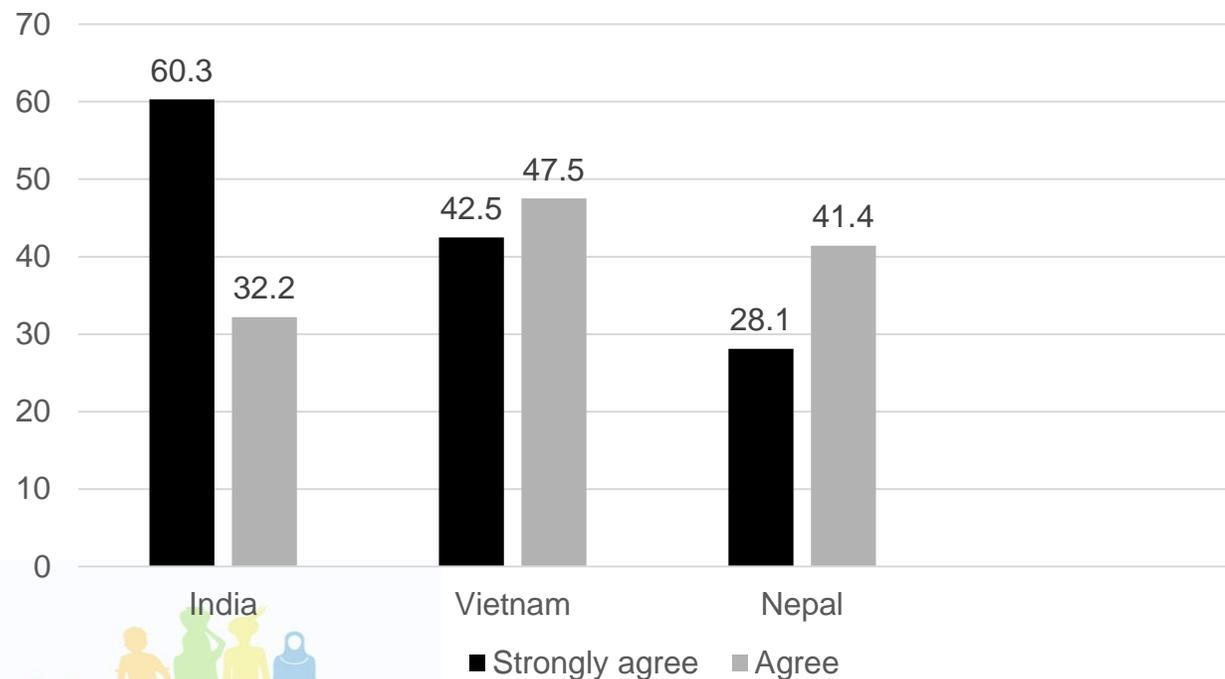


Masculinity, IPV & Son Preference studies

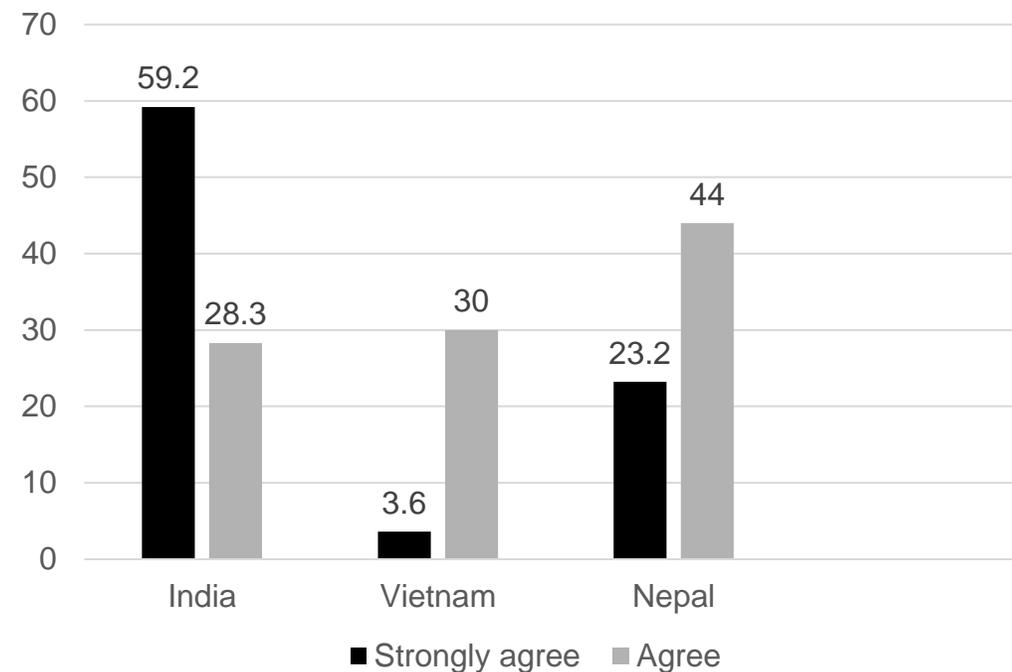


# THE PRESSURE TO ACT TOUGH

To be a man, you need to be tough



If someone insults me, I will defend my reputation, with force if I have to

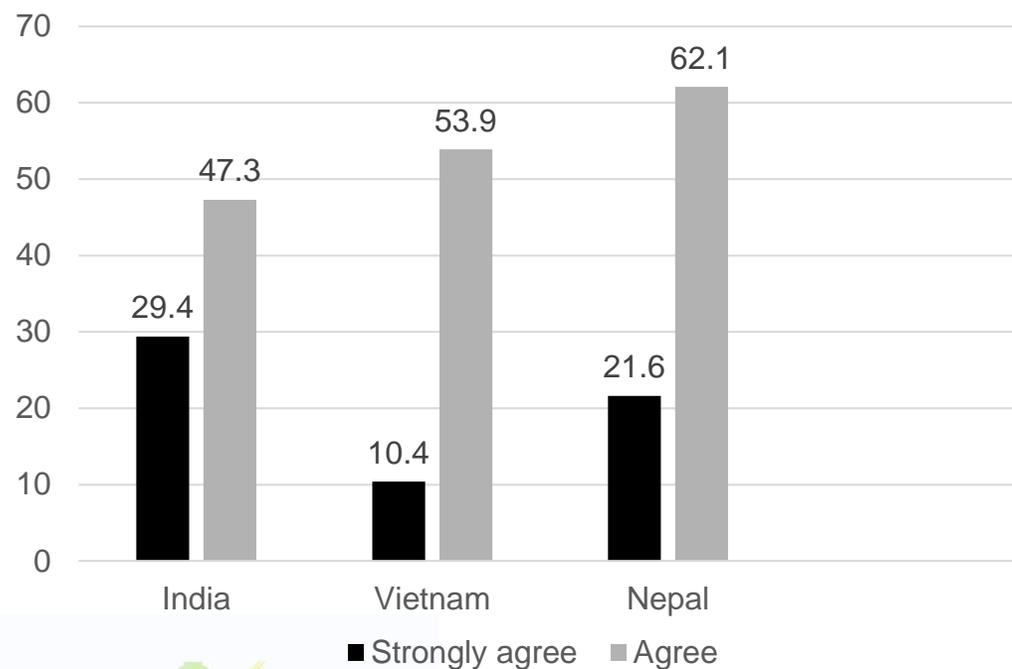


Masculinity, IPV & Son Preference studies

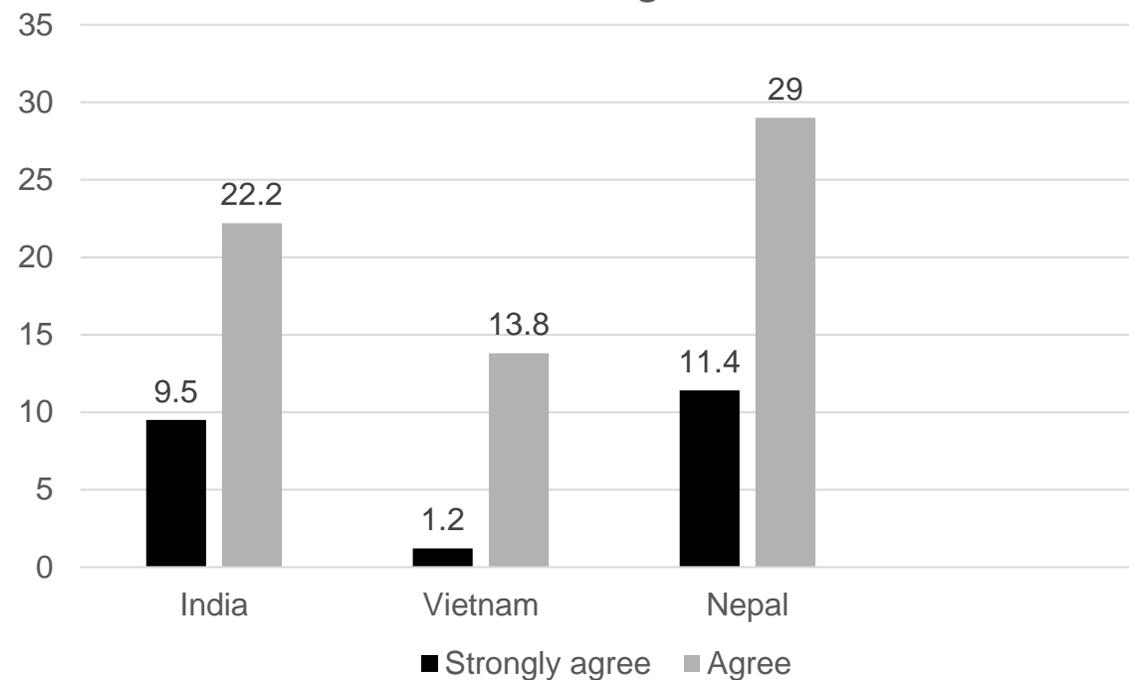


# CONTROL OVER WOMEN'S SEXUALITY

When I want sex, I want my partner to agree



I won't let my wife/partner wear certain things



Masculinity, IPV & Son Preference studies





and educated about gender equality by the same principal...



HOW DO WE WORK ON  
MASCULINITIES?

## INSTRUMENTAL APPROACH

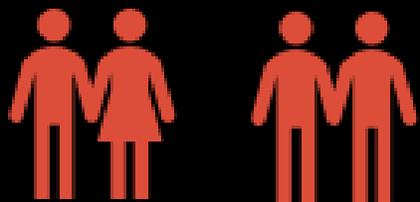
- Build on existing power relations rather than challenge them
- Addresses symptoms not root causes
- Gender understood as “women’s issues” rather than as a relational concept
- Engages men only to produce better outcomes for women
- Does not focus on men’s own realities and need for transformation



## TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH?

- Challenges and changes existing inequitable power relations
- Pauses and reflects on men’s realities
- Goes beyond giving and receiving information
- Creating dissonance as an approach – critical thinking
- Establishes safe spaces and a supportive environment for reflection

**ICRW adopts a gender transformative approach to deconstruct ‘masculinity’ & address power relations**



**HUSBANDS/PARTNERS**



**FATHERS**



**SERVICE  
PROVIDERS**



**ADOLESCENTS/YOUTH**

**RECOGNIZE DIVERSITY  
IN MEN'S ROLES...**



**LEADERS,  
STAKEHOLDERS**

# INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

Use of participatory methodologies: activities/real life experiences encourage discussion/reflection (e.g. role plays)

Content on thematic areas including gender, masculinity, body, SRH, self-efficacy, relationships, violence, etc.



# ENGAGING TEACHERS, MENTORS, CHANGE LEADERS

- **Trainings focus on**

- Building understanding of concepts related to gender, masculinity, power, violence, etc.
- Self-examination of own's attitudes & behaviors
- Enhancing leadership and facilitation skills

- **Changing institutional environment**



# ENGAGING BOYS AND MEN IN THEIR REALITIES

- Using sports to address issues of violence, toughness, peer pressure, male bonding
- Using role models like coaches
- Creating peer groups and mentors for wider engagement
- Use of 'teachable moments'



Bottling up feelings makes one feel like a pressure cooker

It would be nice to talk to someone – if they ask how are you? Or understands the pressure of your job

## Framing messages on gains of gender equality

What kind of relationship would you like? Try to walk along with your wife - why always walk ahead and alone?

Wouldn't it be nice to hug your child?

- ◆ Why should men change? And why should women change – the connect is through different pathways
- ◆ The idea is to create an emotional connect and motivate change to reduce similar harms for the next generation.

Prep 1

### HOW TO MAKE PARIVARTAN WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

Like The Right Kind Of Coaching, Parivartan is a mix of teaching strategy and refining technique. The strategy is firstly to teach boys to respect and honor girls and women and secondly to help them understand that violence never equals strength.

The technique, however, is up to you

#### HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

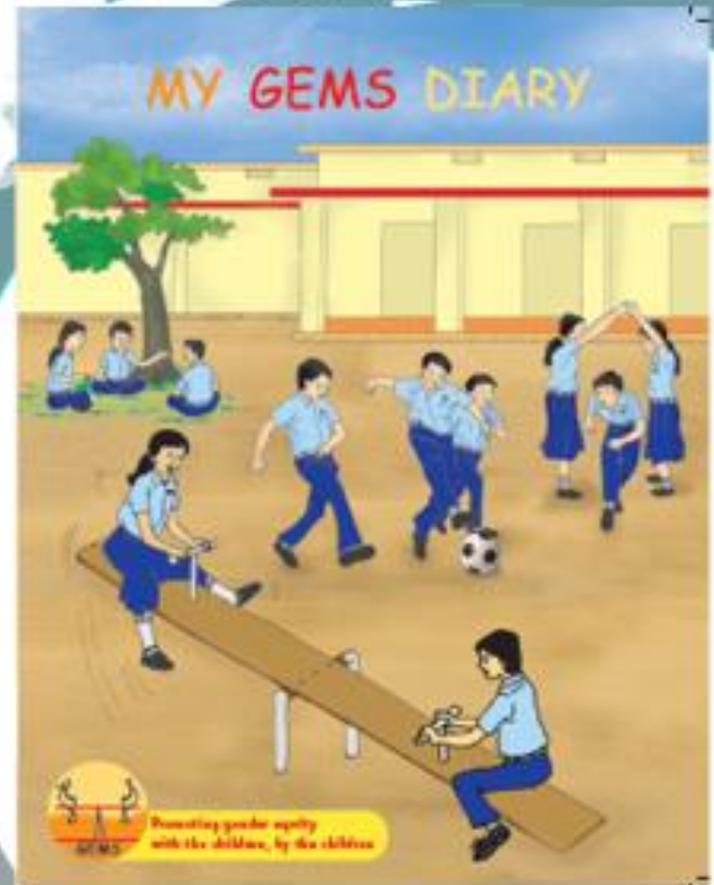
- 1. Make use of your voice and your style as your attitudes are used to hearing and responding to it
- 2. Choose examples that are relevant to your team, from their sport, their community or current events they're talking about.
- 3. Make the lessons and drills you've been teaching a medium to deliver the Parivartan message.
- 4. Take the team captain's and senior player's help to deliver the lessons and add to the team's participation.



In the same way, make a clock for your brother or sister.

**Think and write:**

1. Is your clock the same as your brother's or sister's clock? Draw a picture of your clock. How is it different from a clock? Is the picture for a brother or sister? Do you agree with the difference? Why or why not?
2. Do you want to change anything in any clock? If yes, to which clock and what?



# USING INNOVATIVE TOOLS

# Positive results include...

- ✓ Increased communication and reflection
- ✓ Positive shifts in gender attitudes
- ✓ Increased reporting of violence
- ✓ Improved bystander intervention
- ✓ Creation of safe spaces and enabling environment



# MASCULINITIES AND COVID-19

Are men involved in unpaid care and household work?

What about men's mental and physical health?

What about the vulnerabilities of marginalized men (e.g. migrant laborers)

What are men experiencing during COVID-19? What role are gender and masculinities playing?

IS TRANSFORMATION HAPPENING?

Why is there a rise in domestic violence?

How are men handling economic stress?

How are institutions responding to the situation?



GENDER EQUALITY &  
SOCIAL INCLUSION

ADB



**One of the key learnings is that...**

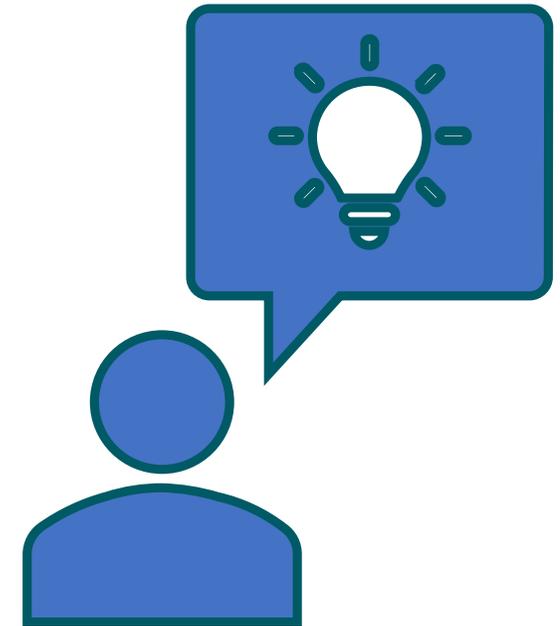
**GENDER TRANSFORMATION IS A PERSONAL &  
COLLECTIVE JOURNEY...**



'why do you move your hands so much',

# LESSONS LEARNED

- Men and boys are also oppressed by gender regime
- Effective messaging avoids a zero-sum equation, but also sets realistic expectations
- Start when boys are young and adapt through life transitions
- Intersectional with other systems of oppression
- Must be accountable to women's programming, movements, and needs
- Address structural imperatives that promote and sustain inequity
- Create spaces and services where men and boys can discuss and seek help
- Need interventions that promote how to 'unlearn' and undo 'biases'



# THE WAY FORWARD

- More sustained and long-term effort to promote alternative, positive masculinities
- More programs that adopt a socio-ecological perspective as a whole
- More in-depth and contextual evidence is required to understand the factors that aggravate and/or mediate harmful behaviors and norms
- Understanding how men are responding to gender equality, their fears, anxieties and struggles
- Understand the role of technology and the new (social) media
- Need regional, national and global networking





**ICRW**

INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

PASSION. PROOF. POWER.

**THANK YOU!**