Gender Equality, Resistance, Responsibilities And Reaching Out
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**3.1 MEN'S RESISTANCE TO GENDER EQUALITY**

**3.2 WOMEN ACTIVISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGAGING MEN TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY**

**3.3 RESPONSIBILITIES: THE CHALLENGES OF RESPONSIBLE ACTION BY MEN**
Sri Lanka, an island in the Indian Ocean with an area of 66,000km, became independent in 1948.

The largest ethnic group is Sinhalese (estimated at 74% of the population), followed by Sri Lankan Tamils (12%), Muslims (7%), Indian Tamils (5%), small communities of Malays and Burghers (persons of Dutch or partly Dutch descent) and a small number of Vaddas, descended from the earliest inhabitants1. The country was ranked 76th in the Human Development Index in 2018 and classified as a High Human Development Country2.

Sri Lanka’s population has a literacy rate of 92%, higher than that expected for a developing country; it has the highest literacy rate in South Asia and overall, one of the highest literacy rates in Asia.

Sri Lanka’s youth literacy rate (ages 15-24) is 98%, which leads the region. School attendance is high in all areas, with no gender inequalities in enrolment or graduation rates, although the quality of instruction varies greatly across urban and rural areas3.

According to the 2018 Health SDG Profile, Sri Lanka’s World Health Organization life expectancy at birth provides an indication of overall mortality of a country’s population. In Sri Lanka, from 2000 (71.5 years) to 2016 (74.9 years), the life expectancy at birth has improved by 3.4 years4. In 2018, the infant mortality rate for Sri Lanka was 6.4 deaths per 1,000 live births5. GDP per capita purchasing power parity (PPP) in Sri Lanka averaged US$7,014.62 from 1990 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of $11,955.50 in 2018 and a record low of $3,613.20 in 19906.

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2 Human Development Index ranks countries in different tiers on each country’s life expectancy, education and per capita income. Sri Lanka has a high life expectancy and literacy rate.
7 https://tradingeconomics.com/sri-lanka/gdp-per-capita-ppp
Gender equality can mean several different things, such as
gendered representative equality (for example, gender quotas
in representation); gendered equal access to voice, gendered
civil rights or human rights; gendered equal opportunities,
gendered equal outcomes, equality in all gender relations –
in work, organisations, families etc, and the transcending
of gender (Hearn 2001). Given the above, Sri Lanka is ranked
109 out of 144 countries listed on the Global Gender Gap
Index (GGI) for 2017, having ratified the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
(CEDAW) in 1981. However, CEDAW recommendations
haven’t been able to be implemented for years, now due
to socio-political reasons in Sri Lanka.7

The country was one of the first in Asia to grant voting rights
to women, and, in 1960, it became the first nation to elect
a woman as prime minister. However, Sri Lanka’s national
parliament female representation is 5.8%. This is much lower
than the average for the high human development group
among which Sri Lanka is found (20.6%), and also lower than
the average for all developing countries (20.2%).

Pervasive gender stereotyping and its impacts were
highlighted as a continuing problem by the Committee
reviewing Sri Lanka’s report on its implementation of CEDAW.

The Committee is concerned about the persistence of
stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities
of women and men among the general public and the media.
It is concerned that gender role stereotyping perpetuates
discrimination against women and girls, and is reflected in
their disadvantageous and unequal status in many areas, such
as employment, decision-making, land ownership, education
including sexual and reproductive education, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against
women, including violence in family relations.

7 Stakeholder interview, 5 May 2021.
Many women in Sri Lanka have been victimised by some form of gender-based violence (GBV) at least once in their lifetime.

The Women’s Wellbeing Survey (2019) shows that one in five (20.4%) women in Sri Lanka has experienced sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime; and one in four (24.9%) women in Sri Lanka has experienced sexual and/or physical violence since the age of 15. Women, due to their vulnerable situations, inevitably are victims of GBV more than men, in a patriarchal society.

The prevalence of GBV in society violates the fundamental human rights of women and men, and impedes their free participation in the development and leadership process at large. The gamut of violence experienced by both partnered and single women, and girls, includes but is not necessarily limited to sexual and physical violence, forced and unwanted sexual relationships, sexual exploitation, forced and early marriages, cyber violence, dowry-related violence, unwanted pregnancies and sexual harassment.

There is a well-founded view that cases of violence against women and children are generally under-reported in the country, as well as globally.

In Sri Lanka, a country coming to terms with a nearly three-decade-long civil war, scholars are often hesitant to deploy masculinities as a “central conceptual framework” when analysing gender relationships in Sri Lanka (De Mel et al 2013). This means that advocates often want to speak about gender without discussing masculinities and the issues involved. Many debates on equality have historically either been about “equality without gender” or “gender-neutral” equality, which ignores the woman’s perspective and attempts to group gender as one issue, instead of focusing on gender differences and inequalities between men and women. This was found within the focus group discussions. In many countries, including Sri Lanka, gender equality is still seen as “just women’s business”; indeed, most of these debates, referring to gender responsibilities falling on women instead of men, are promoted and maintained by women; in some cases, women and women’s attempts to change may even be seen by some as the problem, rather than men’s resistance to change. If there is a social problem around gender equality, it is typically caused by men. The process of achieving gender equality involves both men and women, and requires men to speak up and take action to support women’s rights movements.
In Sri Lanka, there is often much resistance on the part of some women to involving men in gender and development work – driven by fears about the weakening of the feminist agenda, undermining women’s empowerment initiatives and putting power back into the hands of men. Within the Sri Lankan culture, there are male supporters of gender equality, and women go out of their way to choose the best male counterparts who can support their work related to gender equality. If not engaging men and boys in the effectiveness of development, initiatives may actually intensify gender inequalities. Furthermore, the word “gender” has been often misinterpreted by men as just another word that represents feminism. Hence there is a resistance of men to engage in gender-related work. Certain men resist gender equality in active, hostile and sometimes organised ways; for others, resistance is part of their practice, even if they say otherwise. Much of the active resistance by Sri Lankan men to a positive involvement in gender equality, stems from men's relations to power. The challenge of power for men exists in all spheres: personal, political, policy and academic. It involves challenging patriarchy as a system, challenging elite men’s power and the power elites (business, financial, governmental, military, transnational) of men, challenging the distribution of power, and challenging the concentrations of power in particular men’s hands.

Addressing inequality requires the full participation and cooperation of men, who hold more power in a conflict, and also in the social domain and who can constrain women’s choices. The focus in the research was on exploring the perceptions and effects of the gender equality process in Sri Lanka and why resistance comes from the men, what responsibilities men and women have, and how to reach out to both men and women to engage in promoting gender equality. Cultural practices and perceptions driven through patriarchal social set-up, and attitudes towards role of women in decision-making, are so pervasive that it may not be productive to merely implement ad hoc men engagement programmes on gender equality. The challenge on hand is to find ideologically consistent ways to strategically involve men and boys themselves in the context of gender equality.

Hence it was important to explore the manifestations of militarised masculinities, which are defined as stereotypical traits of manhood such as power, control and aggressiveness acquired through participation in armed forces, and provide recommendations on how we address structures, interests and institutions that underpin and drive conflicts and shape gender roles.

Objectives of the research

1. To address the causes of why men and boys are reluctant to engage in gender equality work
2. To propose recommendations to frame gender equality as in men’s and boys’ interest to get them to support it

Methodology

With this background, WILPF Sri Lanka conducted a research based on two research questions:

1. Why are men reluctant to engage in gender equality work?
2. What do women rights activists think about working with men and boys?

The research methodology was both qualitative and quantitative. Thirty-five interviews were conducted among both men and women, representing different nationalities and geographies who are actively involved in gender equality related work within Sri Lanka. Social media analysis was done as a research methodology.
Qualitative research consisted of one focus group discussion, and 25 individuals in-depth interviews consisting of young men and young women.

The qualitative research was designed with subject matter specialists, government and private stakeholders, activists who have thorough knowledge on the subject matter, or those whose decision-making is of paramount importance in gender roles. All interviews and discussions were conducted online due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. Both men and women engaged in qualitative research.

All appropriate ethical procedures, including informed consent and anonymity and “do no harm” principles were followed in interviews and data collection.

Qualitative data was analysed using content frame analysis. A perception survey was conducted reaching 200 people island-wide: 53.5% of the respondents were female, 45% of the respondents were male.

The remaining 1.5% were silent about their sex. These participants were selected by working with a network of people consisting of civil society and grassroots activists found through WILPF’s email contacts, Facebook, Survey Monkey, and actively working in the field. Participants would then recommend other people who might be interested in partaking in the survey.

The Research Findings section is divided into (2.1) Men’s resistance to gender equality (2.2) Women activists’ perceptions of engaging men to achieve gender equality (2.3) Responsibilities: the challenges of responsible action by men.

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The respondents consisted of 6% of Tamil-speaking people, 34% English-speaking people and 60% of Sinhala-speaking people. 62% were aged 18-29; 8% were older than 50; and 29% aged 30-49. Responses were received in all nine provinces of the country.
MEN’S RESISTANCE TO GENDER EQUALITY
Overall men’s resistance to positive involvement in gender equality comes from a wide variety of reasons: patriarchal practices, sexism, a desire to maintain power, complicity in current arrangements, definition of gender equality as “women’s business” and not the “main or most important issues”, preference for men and men’s company, as well as less-conscious psychological ambivalence and resistances (Hearn 2001).

The public survey was focused on identifying the perception of the general public, which was developed through the analytic process of fixed gender roles.

The analysis found:

1. Patriarchal values are accepted in society, but men do not agree that males and females have different roles. They agree that males also partake in household activities. 81.6% of men and women believe that both genders cook, do household chores and bring in household income. 86.5% of respondents believe that both parents will look after children.

2. 50% of the community mentioned that they believe men shouldn’t live by gender stereotypes, such as being the breadwinner of the family and participating in physical, labour-intensive work. However, 24.5% were neutral on responding to this question. 51% agreed that majority of Sri Lankans do not agree with these outdated attitudes and are ready to change. 78% believe that men freed from traditional masculine stereotypes enjoy better physical and mental wellbeing.
Accordingly, the national survey found that 80% to 87% of the population seem to be trying to break social stereotypes related to household chores. However, 10% to 17% are still more likely to accept the stereotypes regarding gender roles in the family. This gives the positive idea of men understanding gender equality, as 45% of the population are men, and justifies that understanding of gender leads men to accept a different ideology regarding gender equality.

It is also important to note that the majority of the community seem to understand that control, violence and stereotypes are not desired or positively viewed in Sri Lankan society, however, these forms of violence continue to occur (focus group discussions findings of female mobility control, sexual harassment, female tolerance of violence, men’s right to punish, alcohol and violence, culturally accepted low education). 85.5% stated that men’s resistance to promote gender equality occurs because they believe they are not responsible or from a “do not care” attitude. Here one can see that the Sri Lankan perception, that many don’t agree that the stereotypes about masculinities prevail.

However, there is a greater tendency that when a gender issue comes to the surface, there is resistance to overcome and combat stereotypes and masculinities. In both the quantitative and qualitative findings, especially within the government employee interviews, it emerged that in educated families, mainly middle-class and upper-middle-class families, there is an acceptance that both men and women should have responsibility in the family. However, in the official set-up, this attitudinal change still cannot be seen. In a public survey, 81.5% believed that both men and women should do the cooking and bring in household income. 86.5% believed that bringing children up should be done by both men and women.

This perception has been seconded by the public officials’ discussions and interviews, that in educated families both men and boys have equal responsibilities to women and girls in the family. It is the responsibility of the father to take care of the child, by giving maternity leave only to the mother after giving birth. Therefore, the mother as well as the father should have the opportunity to look after the child. 65% mentioned that they do not agree with the statement, “Girls and women should look pretty.” 39% were silent on the statement, “Girls and women are caring and friendly.” 88% resisted that boys are tough and messy.

Figure 2: In your opinion, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- Men have been taught to use violence
- It’s time men are freed from outdates masculine stereotype
- Men shouldn’t be bound to any gender stereotypes
- There are things all men can do to end the culture of violence against women
- Men freed from traditional masculine stereotypes enjoy better physical and mental wellbeing
- Majority of Sri Lankans do not agree with these outdates attitudes and are ready to change
- Most people want men to be respectful, caring and loving above all

Weere Weerasingham, MenEngage Gender Equality.
WILPF Sri Lanka Public Survey 2021

The study, which included desk research, a public survey and focus group discussions, identified the following causes for men’s resistance. They were categorised in three main broad tiers, where some causes were identified as having multiple roots. The categorisation of the causes was mainly on the experiences gathered through WILPF Sri Lanka activities for over 20 years, and also formed the leads that were provided by the focus group participants.
3.1 Research Findings for Persisting Masculine Stereotypes in Sri Lanka

Quantitative findings:
1. Masculinity – 57% of the public survey respondents believe that masculinity (the control and power men have) affects men's resistance to gender equality
2. Peer pressure – 65% of the public survey respondents believe that peer pressure is a cause
3. Women like to do light, less responsible jobs as they need time for raising children – 65% believe mother and household roles are embedded in their family circles
4. Don't believe that men and women should equally participate – 58% of the public survey respondents believe that men and women do not have different experiences at different platforms

Qualitative Findings through Focus Group Discussions:
5. Parents’ attitudes
6. Fear of social stigmatisation
7. Fear of loss of opportunities
8. Fear of losing men’s superior status
9. Law is favourable to them, need to protect the law for the power
10. Lack of knowledge on gender and impact of inequality
11. Beliefs that women have biological aspect to bringing up children
12. Women’s advocacy on women’s rights perspective is radical

The study used this categorisation of the causes to form the recommendations and identify the advocacy channels:
- Political engagement
- Cultural perception
- Law, legal framework and policies
- Professional equality
- Educational gap
- Civil society perception

Political engagement
With regard to women politicians, there was a tendency of wives or daughters of politicians to enter into politics. As a result of the advocacy by civil society organisations, 25% compulsory representation was introduced in 2018, and there is a tendency of female participation at local level, however political maturity of the local-level women participation is not satisfactory. Sri Lankan politics are mainly dominated by men at local, provincial and national levels. This domination has led to suppressed women engaging in the political decision-making process.

“To a greater extend the government sector as well as the corporate sector is still dominated by men at highest decision-making levels. This situation needs to be changed in Sri Lanka to achieve equal opportunities irrespective of their gender.” Activist – Disarmament

“Minimum quotas for provincial elections of 25% were introduced, but still the national parliament women representation is 5.3%. Women’s quota – despite the quota political parties are unwilling to nominate women because they are not considered winnable candidates. Men stated that women should be privileged only on the basis of entitlement and not on the basis of numerical value in representation in parliament. Sinhala and Tamil communities – again their masculinities sustain their supremacy and count.”
Mainly in the Sinhala community enjoy free compulsory education – women have been working shoulder to shoulder. The Sinhala community is used to it. There is a significant problem. Tamil community is widely visible. Interpretation of minority rights can be done.” Researcher

“Ensure 50% representation in politics – women are 52% of the population. Women should be given 50% representation in parliament.” MenEngage Gender Activist

“I see giving women a 25% chance in politics as an insult to women.” Youth Activist

“At political discussions focused on the political participation of women in Sri Lanka, women members of the Pradeshiya Sabha said, ‘When we speak, male members of the Council say obscene things and then the women are not allowed to speak.’ In these cases, the male MPs do not even say that it is wrong. They have the opinion that, ‘We are men.’” Youth Activist

Cultural perception

Men act out culturally framed roles of father, son, lover, scholar, warrior, businessman, worker and politician in their daily lives, constantly shifting from one to another. Each role involves a culture-specific mix of traits, such as courage, authority, aggression, rationality or love (De Silva).

Cultural issues always emphasise that men should be very brave and maintain a division between male and female functions. It is believed that a woman should always be with a man for protection.

“In male-dominated societies, women are accepted as second sex. Men always make plans and there is an opinion that women should help it. Decision-making is often done by men and women value it as a male task. When a marriage takes place, the woman primarily considers her partner’s economic strength. By doing so, she justifies the superiority of work men do than women.” Academic – Sociologist

Cultural issues always emphasise that men should be very brave and maintain a division between male and female functions. It is believed that a woman should always stay under man protection. In small days boys are given a gun as a toy, while girl is given a doll. Militarised masculinity is a root cause of the culture. The most recently the Police Department of Sri Lanka promoted a female officer to the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police and group of senior men police officers were objected on her promotion. The police officers pointed out that female officers are not in a position to promote to such ranks within the department.” Human Rights Activist

Cultural practices, perceptions driven through patriarchal social set-up have been socialised into seeing women as inferior, and they are unwilling to relearn to treat them as equals. Sri Lanka is still a patriarchal nation. Religious and cultural norms also generate men’s resistance to promoting gender equality in the country. Culture refers to a country’s customs, social behaviour, values and social stereotypes

Culture within Asian countries, to a certain extent, has made most men think they are superior to women and girls. Married men believe there should be a certain level of control over their wives in order to protect the family life. Furthermore, Sri Lankan culture (according to the focus group discussions) tends to believe that women should dress fully covered and behave in a neutral manner to avoid sexual harassment. The mother should take care of the children, socialise them, and do all the work related to the children. Culture has evolved in the last 30 years; previously youth and men did not have many opportunities to become involved in creative and critical thinking, therefore limiting the engagement of activities related to gender equality. In the past 30 years there has been a shift in generational perceptions. The culture of Sri Lanka has slowly become more globalised, and gender stereotypes have faded, along with more exposure to different cultures and the introduction of social media and technology. A large portion of time is dedicated to education.
Together with social media, social engagement has improved little, and citizens’ progress inputs to the policy making is far less than ideal. Social media has nevertheless been able to mobilise youth, by allowing for freedom of expression. Men and boys are not talking openly about harassment on public transport, some of them think it’s all for fun, because they don’t get punished for that.

The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) also allows for a Muslim man to marry up to four wives legally. The provisions under the MMDA leave the sole decision-making power of taking multiple wives at the discretion of the husband, without in any way considering the psychological, social and financial impacts of such a marriage on the previous wives and children. The unrestricted “right” of polygamy means that Muslim men who are unable to maintain plural marriages are still able to enter them, thereby placing multiple women and children in vulnerable situations. Many Muslim women who find themselves in polygamous marriages, were unaware that they were part of plural marriages and were unable to exercise any agency and autonomy on the matter (found in focus group discussions). For women, attempts at speaking out about the husband’s decision to take another wife is likely to result in ill-treatment, domestic violence and mental trauma. In some instances women are threatened and forced to live in plural marriages.

All religious leaders, mostly the All Ceylon Jamiiyathul Ulama, who hold an influential position with the community, and policy-makers are men. A majority of Muslim religious leaders are extremely patriarchal and believe that women don’t belong in public decision-making spheres. So it has been difficult to engage with people who come from such conservative standpoints.

“The teachings of Brahmanism came into our culture as a result of the relations between Sri Lanka and India from ancient times. With the extreme influence of culture on religion, God laid the foundation for the patriarchal social order. As a result of these influences, there is an opinion that a woman is always guilty. For these reasons, a woman always needs protection. There is a Buddhist view that women cannot go to the top of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi.”

Youth Activist

“Traditional women used to think that courage and presentation as something that came biologically to men, and to engage in such activities, therefore the society discriminated against women who engage in heavy works, trying to be a man. What would men think etc opinions exist in the woman.”

CSO leader for plantation workers rights

“It can be seen that patriarchal views are justified by women in family counselling programmes. You are a woman... so you have to practise endurance. Only we can protect the family. The best thing is to get beaten up.”

Gender Specialist

“The caste system in Sri Lanka is a serious threat to gender equality. It has a strong influence on cultural issues such as marriage.”

Constitutional Expert Attorney-at-Law

“It is wrong to speculate in a patriarchal social system that there are other divisions in society that go beyond the first division of gender. My opinion is that a woman is not a secondary sex.”

Academic Sociologist

Law, legal framework and policies

Sri Lanka’s legal system consisting of personal laws in effect in Sri Lanka includes a combination of English common law, Roman-Dutch civil law, and customary laws such as Kandyan law, Thesavalamai law and Muslim personal law. Customary laws are applicable to various communities: the Kandyan Sinhalese, Tamils of Jaffna and Muslims respectively. Without exception, the customary practices and customary laws of all these communities have transformed with time. General law is the law that governs majority of people, while personal laws also prevail. Culture, religion, economics and politics are the main factors affecting women’s rights, as found through the qualitative and quantitative research conducted.
In order to achieve sustainable development, there must be gender equality. Legal framework is often seen as adequate, but finds enforcement of law and implementation of law as the real issues. It is also important to note that people’s understanding about gender stays low, where state law is needed to take precedence over community laws, which are widely accepted as discriminatory to women.

“In the past, Europe was at a low ebb in terms of gender. At that time, women were treated like sex slaves. But due to the concept of free labour that arose with industrialisation, the bondage of women to society was abolished. Not every hegemonic idea is wrong. The norm should be to question right and wrong and to expand the girls’ access to ideas.” Youth Activist

For decades, Muslim women and groups working closely with victims have been advocating for reform to the MMDA and the Quazi court system alleging many discriminatory laws such as lack of minimum age of marriage, inequality process of divorce between men and women, polygamy, and many other discriminatory clauses. The Sri Lankan constitution, Article 16 provides: “All existing written law and unwritten law shall be valid and operative notwithstanding any inconsistency with the preceding provisions of the fundamental rights.” There is resistance towards Muslim leaders. The arguments put forward by said groups include that the MMDA is based on Shariah and cannot be reformed; however the Sri Lankan MMDA is a combination of multiple versions of Shariah law and local customs, and also includes anti-Shariah provisions such as the recognition of kaikul (dowry) which is forbidden in Islam.

“We have tried to work with these groups [political and religious leaders, and MMDA committees]. We have held discussions and meetings with them to obtain their support for reform to end the discrimination faced by women and girls. However, since the law is favourable towards men and contributes towards upholding the status quo [patriarchy] men haven’t been supportive. A majority of Muslim religious leaders are extremely patriarchal and believe that women don’t belong in public decision-making spheres. So it has been difficult to engage with these kinds of people who come from very conservative standpoints. We have tried to get men and boys involved in the reform discussion, tried to obtain their support for reform and for them to take on a more vocal stance. Because religious leaders have maintained that the MMDA is God’s law and therefore cannot be changed, lot of awareness had to be done to break that perception. I also feel women are more involved because the law is detrimental towards them. One thing I have noticed is that boys/men who have experienced the unfairness of Quazi courts, for instance because their mothers or sisters etc had to go through a divorce, are willing to listen and support.” Muslim Reform Activist

The most problematic issue with regard to the Quazi court system, is the behaviour and attitude of many Quazis towards women who access the courts. According to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) representative interviewed, the highest number of complaints received is with regard to inappropriate and insensitive behaviour of Quazis towards women and girls. Women’s organisations note numerous cases where courts have been biased against women seeking divorce or maintenance orders. Certain Quazis are entrenched in preconceived notions of the specific roles of women/wives, are against divorce and/or in favour of practices such as polygamy. This bias and the lack of professional training contribute to prejudiced judgements against women. For instance, women and girls who have faced domestic violence and cruel treatment at the hands of husbands, are often dismissed by the Quazis and asked to tolerate this treatment from their husbands.
In Sri Lanka, there are no restrictions for Muslim women to pursue legal careers as judicial officers and judges within the state court system, but they are unable to become Quazis, Board of Quazi members, adjudicators or marriage registrars as per the MMDA, as the positions are available only for “male Muslims”. These are state-salaried and tax-funded positions that directly prohibit qualifying women from applying on the basis of sex. Furthermore, one contributor revealed that families and Quazis often blame women when their husbands take another wife. In addition, wives and children in polygamous marriages face serious financial consequences, where anecdotal evidence suggests that husbands have divorced previous or subsequent wives on the basis of being financially incapable of sustaining plural marriages.

"Men’s resistance towards amending laws to promote gender equality could be seen in Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act of Sri Lanka, which is extremely discriminatory towards women. MMDA allows for child marriages, unequal divorce provisions for men and women, prevents women from holding key positions in the Quazi court system, allows for unrestricted polygamy, doesn’t provide for women and girls to consent to their marriages etc. Further, it was pointed out that Thesavalamai laws, a law which is governed by Northern territory, too are discriminatory to women and men were against repealing local Thesavalamai laws discriminatory to women too. Muslim men, mainly those who are religious leaders and politicians, have been a major barrier to reform the MMDA.” Journalist based in North

The legal framework in Sri Lanka on gender-based violence is relatively in place in respect to many offences, such as murder, rape, sexual abuse and harassment, incest, trafficking and child abuse. Amendments to the Penal Code in 1995 significantly updated laws and practices that discriminated against women for over many years. This 1995 amendment revised the laws on rape and introduced two new offences that criminalised two forms of SGBV (sexual and gender-based violence): sexual harassment and incest.

Sexual harassment is an offence under Section 345 of the Penal Code, which recognises sexual harassment in the public sphere including in employment and public transport. Incest was criminalised in Section 364A of the Penal Code and is an offence that largely victimises girl children in Sri Lanka. The 2005 Prevention of Domestic Violence Act provides for the issuing of protection orders for any person who has been subjected to, or is likely to be subjected to, domestic violence. Other laws related to addressing SGBV include the Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act No 20 of 1998, Section 2(2) drafted to prevent and punish sexual harassment that can occur during ragging, and labour laws to safeguard the rights of women workers. However the gaps in implementation and procedures in enforcing law seem to encourage crimes and discourage victims’ access to justice as a response to GBV.

Psychological abuse and economic abuse would not constitute a substantive offence in the criminal system. It is the responsibility of the state to provide adequate access to justice for its citizens. There is a serious delay in the justice system in Sri Lanka. The Membership Survey (2014) conducted by the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) showed that court delays and the inefficiency of the system are perceived by legal professionals surveyed as an “extremely serious” problem affecting public confidence in the Sri Lankan courts. Judicial commitment to case management is a strength in a system otherwise hindered by inefficiencies and delays, insufficient legal education and training, poor case management, and unequal access to justice.
However a few recent incidents show progress in expediting cases. The massive protests in the Jaffna and Gampaha districts against the rape cases of a schoolchild and a five-year-old respectively, saw an expedited court process, with the case being concluded and sentence given after careful judicial scrutiny in less than two and half years.

There is also resistance from some men to challenge the power they hold, especially from men in dominant social groups. These men perceive gender equality as a threat to their privileges and an attack on their way of life. Furthermore, most of the men in government pointed out that women take motherhood as granted.

Unlike in the private sector, most government-employed women take indefinite maternity leave, extra leave and/or benefits by getting superior approval, therefore making men who work carry an extra burden. According to them, this has contributed to their thinking that “women’s rights are merely to take advantages”.

However, civil society made a different view to this, as both men and women can suffer workplace harassment, although women are more prone to sexual harassment and discrimination for menstruation and pregnancy.

“There should be a strong focus on marital rape, maternity leave for women in the plantations and the hegemony perpetuated by the religious sector. Special attention should also be paid to gender-based violence.” CSO Leader

“The state land law needs to be amended and there are issues with equality in having the eldest son in the family after the father as the custodian of the property. They believe that the existence of Muslim law depends on patriarchy. This is an unequal treatment of women followers of Islam.” Human Rights Lawyer/CSO Leader

“In cases such as domestic violence, the procedure for obtaining orders in the event of a family member committing such an offence is time-consuming. There is a tendency in society to take the entry of a woman into the police force for a particular purpose as a serious issue.” Human Rights Activist

“It is very important to remove the existing special laws in Sri Lanka – personal and customary – Kandyan law, Muslim law and Thesavalamai law, and introduce one law to the country. Religious education in a country should give everyone the opportunity to study as they wish. Even in university education, religious education should not be limited to that community.” Attorney-at-Law

“Cyber abuse on women and girls is common in Sri Lanka. It is important to have an agency that can respond quickly to cyber complaints and maintain the privacy of these complaints.” Human Rights Activist

Laws prohibiting dowry should be introduced in India as well as in Sri Lanka. A Gender Commission should be set up to look into injustices in gender equality. There seems to be a very low tendency for cybercrime to be remedied and institutions should be set up to expedite the investigation of such complaints.” Gender Specialist

Professional equality

The fear of loss of opportunities if women get equal access to work and education is a reason to resist change. Some men believe that women’s involvement will affect their superior status. Furthermore it was pointed out in the focus group discussions out that female dependency is there; although women are educated they wish to do less responsible jobs, rather than taking leadership positions they preferred to take supporting roles.
In Sri Lanka, children can go to university through free education given by the state. In the Sinhala community, girls take the maximum benefit of the free education, even though some are battling gender stereotypes, such as girls should marry in their youth. However, girls of other communities, especially Muslim girls, have cultural and social barriers preventing them from having increased access to education. They should be encouraged to enjoy the state opportunities, which would help to reduce gender inequalities.

Stakeholders of government employees pointed out that the state gives free education to both boys and girls to choose their career path as they wish; therefore, there is no discrimination. In contrast, civil society stakeholders pointed out that although opportunity is given, social, cultural and economic barriers, as well as gender stereotypes, have affected some individuals as well as the communities at large, so whether all communities have access to education is a matter of concern in that context. A government stakeholder in the discussion pointed out that civil society takes incidents and highlights each uncommon issue, therefore giving a misrepresentation of the problem. For example, if during a five-year period in two provinces a child is raped, that event is highlighted. Using this perspective, the majority of the men, who are well behaved in the country, are not spoken for.

This conversation demonstrated there is a need for public gender education, especially for government authorities, to show that not only is there a clear misunderstanding, but also to emphasise the role of state officers to combat inequalities. It is important to understand that uncommon issues need to be paid attention to, because there are underlying root causes to the social problem.

In some professions, women representation is very low, such as female mediators. When nominating potential mediators, citizens tend to lean towards the older male demographic, who are more likely to hold important and public positions in the community. Currently, mediation services in Sri Lanka are delivered through more than 330 Community Mediation Boards, with about 8,500 volunteer mediators providing timely and accessible justice to communities island-wide. However, of 8,500 community mediators, only about 20% are women. Also, a stakeholder in the civil service is of the opinion that the administrative service will be militarised, on the basis of the appointment of retired military officers to the highest positions in the administrative service. He also said that due to these appointments, the average female and male officers in the administrative service will lose the opportunity to get promotions in the service.

At the same time, the entire administrative service system is in a state of disarray, as a person who has served in the military becomes the head of an institution belonging to an administrative service outside his or her jurisdiction, and seeks to change the field of that administrative service and the patterns that have been maintained in that field. Militarised masculinity has affected the legal system and the public service in Sri Lanka in many ways.

For example, Bimshani Jasin Arachchi was the first woman Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police for the Sri Lanka Police; however, she was removed from her duties. Despite achieving all the qualifications for the position, she was not allowed to hold the job solely on the fact that she was a woman. A case was filed against her stating that her appointment was a violation of the approved scheme of recruitment and promotion of the police, because women are not allowed to be DIGs. According to the existing Police Ordinance, 32 male Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) filed petitions in Supreme Court against her promotion. She sought justice, stating that her removal caused serious and irreversible damage to her career.

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“Women are perceived as the soft gender. As a police officer, our job demands long and uncertain hours of duty and many risks. People think a woman is not suited to the requirements of such a profession. Many hold a false belief that women are incapable of succeeding to the higher ranks of the police because we are unable to do what is perceived to be ‘male’ work. But, in reality, our women officers work long hours and they have engaged and are willing to be involved in frontline work. They joined the police because they liked the profession, knowing all the aspects of police work, including criminal investigations.” DIG Bimshani

DIG Bimshani is also a fierce believer that women must forge ahead to change the norms. She said, “Rule of law is the foundation of any country. The Sri Lankan Constitution has emphasised that individuals are subjected to the same laws in the same measure. Even though there are women in postings in the police, I think women are still under-represented. We must change this. Women can handle tough police operations just like men.”

DIG Bimshani expects all Sri Lankan women to be treated equally. “My expectation on behalf of all women is that we get a fair opportunity to prove our worth.

The same selection criteria, training standards and promotions should be applicable to women as those applicable to male counterparts. It is about time this country brings a change in the society. Regardless of the sector, women should not be deprived of earning recognition they deserve,” she said. “Meanwhile international resistance to gender inequalities develop in anti-militarism, organising against trafficking in women and children and other sexual violence, international trade unionism, organisation of homeworkers, fair trade movements, green campaigns, ethical consumerism, and so on. There is a growing amount of pro-feminist and pro-gender equality organising by men in the world. It includes considering in critical but positive ways the place of men in development work. In Sri Lanka, too, there are some men involved, and some have been involved in this research. Men’s transnational pro-feminist and pro-gender equality organising would be better developed in relation to the profound, growing challenges of globalisation than as a way of refinding their “lost” “deep masculinity” or a simple “male perspective”. Developing gender equality involves challenging men’s power and changing men; changing men involves deconstructing men; in the longer term this may involve the abolition of “men” as a ubiquitously important gender category.

The personal and the global continue to go hand in hand. Patriarchy, though incredibly strong and flexible, is not without its strains, splits and divisions, which we need to work on in developing gender equality.

“Boys involved in gender equality activities might be rejected by society, which creates domination towards women. Gender equality is preserved in taking steps to reduce the social pressure that exists within them.” MenEngage Gender Activist

A lot of people say the most suitable jobs for women is the teaching profession and eight-to-five jobs. Most of people in society do not like making decisions and doing influential jobs being done by woman. In this way they are trying to limit women to family-orientated jobs rather than decision-making powerful jobs. This in a way implements the idea that women have to be under the control of their spouses, and with family chores they are trying to keep them out of sight.

**Educational gap**

From the study, we have learned about the reasons for men’s resistance: masculinity, peer pressure, parents’ attitudes,
upbringing in extremely patriarchal settings, family, educational set-up, law being favourable to them, desire to maintain power. Also, lack of knowledge on gender and impact of inequality – education and awareness on these topics are important from a young age, as of lack of knowledge and education is the major cause of differential treatment. Lack of gender knowledge has affected the whole decision-making process. From childhood to teens, educating girls to wear pink and boys to wear blue, and girls to play with soft toys like dolls and boys to have hard toys, has promoted gender stereotypes and an environment of militarised masculinity. Peer group pressures have promoted militarised masculinity to youth. Misleading interpretation of concept of gender has caused men to resist engaging in gender equality.16 There are harmful campaigns in the country, which promote toxic masculinity.17 Lack of education at university level is also a huge concern. One of the reasons for ragging, also known as hazing or initiation, in the university is this lack of gender sensitisation. Ragging involves abuse, humiliation and harassment, and when this happens, it affects the younger generation’s sensitisation on gender and prevents them from understanding their role to combat gender inequality and militarised masculinities.

Some participants mentioned that gender and masculinity studies and minority studies are foreign-influenced concepts that are trying to become normalised in Sri Lanka. The narrow interpretations, which are connected with gender, have affected the resistance towards gender equality. Some participants mentioned that the concept of minority rights, which are discussed further in the following section, should be clearly interpreted. It was argued that the international community favours Tamil and Muslim minorities living in Sri Lanka, and the majority Sinhala community has not been considered. The Sinhala community feels like the minority when it comes to South Asia and global context. Hence education should go with principles of social cohesion, values and fundamental freedoms for a broader look at concepts to combat gender inequality, while the international community should bring holistic interpretation and actionable approaches to the concepts attached to gender equality. In 2021, the Kotelawela Defence University Bill was due to be presented to parliament. Sir John Kotelawala National Defence University (KNDU) currently trains most defence personnel in Sri Lanka. This bill was controversial, as it would have allowed the existing General to award degrees and a paid education system, decide entry qualifications, maintain academic quality and partner with other private and foreign institutions.

It was argued that this bill could destroy free education. Academics and civil society protested, and pointed out that militarised education is harmful to the country, as education systems run by military officials are different from the normal set-up. However some others believe that KNDU has a comprehensive gender studies programme, at both Bachelor’s and Master’s level. It has an updated curriculum relative to the national universities, and a gender equity and equality centre, which conducts trainings in the area.

Through the militarisation of education, militarised patriarchy can emerge in the curriculum and in the teaching process. That is, militarisation can lead to heroism and a breakdown in gender equality. Only male kings and war heroes are glorified in the education of history in this country. The only thing about women that has always been included in the history curriculum is that queens made sacrifices in support of kings. However, women such as Queens Anula, Lilavati, Kalyanavati and Sugala, are ignored, perhaps because those historical characters challenge the patriarchal ideology that women are mere assistants of men. Even in the history of modern militarisation, female heroines are not discussed. If education is somehow militarised, future generations will carry on embracing gender inequality.
One of our respondents indicated that in universities that provide gender justice and gender-related studies, the classes covers only women’s rights and women’s roles, and argued that this is discriminatory towards men. In India, there is a gender council that can report gender issues independently to the commission, and there is no cumbersome judicial process like there is in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka needs such a commission. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka does not have a minister for women and children. Colombo Law Faculty does not include gender studies for a basic law degree.

**Civil society perception**

Some of the participants mentioned that failure to understand the Sri Lankan perspectives and address the root causes of the gender inequality is the issue.

“International focus is not the local focus. NGOs do not necessarily represent the needs of the country. They represent funding agencies’ agenda. This is not necessarily people demand or people needs.” MenEngage Gender Specialist

Minority rights and majority rights should have the definition that every human being is represented. It can be ethnic minority, religious minority, gender minority. Although such words should be carefully interpreted, unfortunately in Sri Lanka “minority” is basically geographically subjective.

“If you take entire geographically Sinhala ethnicity, in the local context Sinhalese people are a higher percentage that Tamils and Muslims. But in South Asia region, 25% of the population are Muslim, 14% are Tamil but Sinhala people represents a small minority insignificant. In globally, especially international forums, Sinhala people are neglected when it compares to Tamil and Muslim. Even at the UN Human Rights Council what Sinhala people say their grievances never listened.” MenEngage Gender Specialist

If an international programme is to function on the international level, interpretation of words are very important. The majority pointed out that rather than gender equality, gender unity should be used, in order to attract both male and female contributions, and also to make men understand that this is not an international so-called “agenda” commonly referred to in resistance campaigns. The term “gender equality” is seen as antagonistic and has a negative connotation within the Sri Lankan context, whereas “gender unity” evokes a sense of togetherness, implying working towards a common goal. Men often hear “gender equality” and assume that women are trying to compete and oppose them, when they feel as though they have not done anything wrong. “Gender unity” seems to be more widely accepted by Sri Lankan men to align with the message of being fair in relation to gender.

“Those who work for gender equality, have been sarcastically looked at by men who ask, “Do they have a family life, how that husband lives with this woman, so-called women activists,” or “Feminists don’t like to discuss the natural interdependence of the sexes. They are so busy ‘empowering’ women, most of them are never married, divorced or don’t have children.” Women’s Rights Activist

Adding to this, men argued that feminists have been doing harm to women by making themselves very unpopular, not only with men, but with other women, with an example given of the recent controversy surrounding Mrs World, when she forcefully removed the crown from Mrs Sri Lanka, who she accused of being divorced and therefore not eligible for the prize.
“Harmful effects of toxic masculinity: Campaigns like HeforShe, MenEngage should be stopped.” Gender Specialist – Male

“I am a journalist – so often write journalistic articles as well as social media posts on various issues pertaining to women’s rights. As someone based in Northern Sri Lanka, I also am in touch with various community women’s groups in this region, fighting for their rights, and help out as needed – mentoring, writing, engaging in public protests, awareness campaigns etc.

Some men are co-operative but by and large they are not. The men from childhood have been socialised into thinking they are superior and their sisters, mothers and wives are there to serve them. They see gender equality as losing ground, and so fight actively against it.

Not as well publicised but in my community, men were against repealing local Thesavalamai laws discriminatory to women too. I see most of the older generation as a lost cause. There are a few sincere men, but most show up at these initiatives just to sabotage it.

It’s better to socialise the next generation of boys to see women and girls as their equals. The same likewise with girls – who are even now in many of our traditional societies socialised from a young age to be inferior.”

Journalist, Northern Province
Our research shows that the criticism is that activists who work in the area of gender, speak only on women’s rights rather than both men’s and women’s rights, and there are claims that in some instances men suffer more than women, which is never addressed by women activists. GBV can be defined as any form of violence used to establish, enforce or perpetuate gender inequalities and keep gender hierarchies in place.

“It mostly takes the form of men’s violence towards women and girls, but also includes violence towards men and boys, such as where many beach boys faced male rape or the abuse of men who have sex with men or transgendered people, men who have become a trafficking victim. Even in the day-to-day life too men has stories of overburdened, harassed, victimised and neglected.” Attorney-at-Law22

Women activists argue that it is not speaking about accusing men or individuals, but exposing and addressing the abuse, injustice, discrimination and disrespect experienced by women at the hands of men, in public and behind closed doors.

“A useful strategy for challenging GBV is to help men (the main perpetrators) to see the benefits of rejecting violence – such as having more intimate relationships with their partners.” Gender Specialist

WILPF Sri Lanka asserts that 16 Days campaigns are women-driven, but should be male- and female-driven, identifying that both men and women are equally vulnerable, the only difference is that men never cry and claim that they are victims. Although there are a number of women in higher education, the number of decision-making women is quite low. National female representation is just 5%. In the findings, there were three distinct views on this.

View 1: Sri Lanka has given enough space for women to enter into politics, but women are not much interested, they are more into household work and employment that can balance their responsibility as a mother. Women are more into easily manageable jobs and resistant to have stressful, responsible jobs.
3.2

View 2: Women do need to enter into politics, but they have not been given the opportunity. So like the 25% given for local representation, the quota system should be introduced for parliament.

View 3: Despite the quota, political parties are unwilling to nominate women, because they are not considered winnable candidates. Women are more powerful, they do not need a quota system, what they need is the opportunity to contest and to stop backstabbing and character assassinations.

Media

Stakeholders pointed out that in sexual harassment cases, most of the media reports target victims (female) and try to find victims’ mistakes rather perpetrators (male). Most of the reporters are men. When it comes to the media sexual interpretation of female gender, it is mainly as a sexual object. Also, in advertising, women are usually portrayed as sexual objects. According to the experience of the women politicians, they opined media has given less space to their voice and their work.

Even television programmes that included female politicians, mainly highlighted the faults and weaknesses of women, rather than giving them the benefit of the doubt and providing more balanced coverage. But the media gives more than enough space to male politicians, even if they have nothing to say, and highlights the things they do.

As a woman parliamentarian said, "Some social media posts circulating since yesterday, insulting female politicians who participated in a political TV programme with me a few months ago, have been brought to my attention. While I appreciate the overwhelming support I have been getting in this space, I also wish to set the record straight. Women for generations have been compared, pitched against each other and also been severely and disproportionately criticised for our looks, educational qualifications and intelligence compared to any male politician.

I have said this before but let me repeat myself, these personal attacks are patronising at best, downright misogynistic at worst."23

As social media usage is widely spread in today, Sri Lankans use social media to insult women and female politicians. Sometimes if a woman or female public figure posts on Facebook about a serious issue that affects the country or society, most of the people look at that post very sarcastically and post unsuitable comments.

Recently in Sri Lanka there was a furor in social media, regarding a statement by gold medallist athlete Dinu Perera24 that gave the idea "men are nothing". For that she was bullied throughout Facebook, for example, "There are plenty of nice men in our lives who led us to nice paths, so no women have the right to say such things.

Only women who have been in toxic relationships, abused or raped can say something like that." Most of the people who have expressed this ideology were women.25

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24 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8uZo0u8ngw
25 Amanda Abeysooriya identifies these women as "pick me up women", who are worrying about their man finding a quest.
Recognition of men’s responsibilities will involve debate, clear policy statements, publications and other materials, education and teaching, professional interventions, pro-feminist “men’s work” and “boys’ work”, and research.

Governments need strategies on moving men away from power and oppression as part of a strategy for women’s and gender justice. A distinction needs to be drawn between support between and for men that encourages domination, and support between and for men that diminishes domination.

They can be understood as taking more conscious responses into mainstream organisations. Other responses have occurred within educational work and youthwork; initiatives around violence, such as men’s programmes against violence, work in prisons, campaigns against violence, pornography, rape and sexual assault. Initiatives are necessary not only in the state but throughout all areas of social life, in business, community, media, religion, and other public and private fora.

Some stakeholders clearly understand that youth and boys need to be engaged, but there is no mechanism to mobilise them (creating structures of consultations and partnerships).

“Family counselling services need to be further popularised and maintained more efficiently and pre-marriage counselling institutions need to be established.” Constitutional Lawyer

“There is no issue that women have in Sri Lanka, those activists made everything a big issue, they use Western words: ‘gender equality’, but it should be ‘gender unity’.” Government Employee

**Militarised masculinities: CSO and government network elaboration is important**

Another clear area of responsibility for men, is to stop men’s violence. Violence almost always means denying equality and voice to someone else; violence is profoundly unequal and undemocratic. It is not possible to make a strict distinction between men’s sexuality and men’s violence, in this kind of society at least.
A lot of what men do needs to be relabelled as violence. This includes child abuse, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, rioting, crime, policing, soldiering, wars, football hooliganism, public disorder. It might seem hard to talk about crime and violence without talking about men, and yet this has been done quite successfully for a long time. Crime and violence are very largely a problem for men, and they are also resources to show certain masculinities to others. Similarly, much violence needs to be understood as men’s conscious, deliberate actions and as forms of particular masculinities. Men’s violence to women, children, young people, and each other needs, indeed demands, not just patching up the problem, but the changing of men and “normal masculinity”. Examples include what is seen as the “normal” behaviour of certain men and boys, as fathers, teachers, workmates, schoolmates and so on, in reproducing ordinary, everyday violence to others and each other. Governmental and other policies and strategies should take a clear position that opposes violence, tells boys and men not to be violent, advocates policies that encourage men to behave in ways that facilitate women’s equality, and makes it clear that the realisation of such changes depends partly on men in politics and policymaking, and their own gendered actions. Men need to be ready to learn, to listen, to be educated, to be humble, and to find out about gender equality from those who have expertise in this field. This may be a difficult position for many men to take. We have the responsibility to assist this in the education of boys in schools and elsewhere. Self-education; changing patriarchal practices and the education within families; men in groups; men’s programmes; agency policy development, in criminal justice, health, social services and other agencies; schools and educational institutions; campaigns and public politics. A comprehensive curriculum covering civic education role of citizens avoiding hate speech, discrimination, stigmatisation, gender roles and the schools connecting parents, children and teachers, is very important.

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26 Mohammed Fizarth, focus group discussion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogues</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Peer discussion on gender equality and combating masculinities. Involve state officials to talk about gender equality. More awareness for men and boys on gender aspects, harmful effects of toxic masculinity. Campaigns like HeForShe, MenEngage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual participation in activities</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>Actual interactions to respect all genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quota system and compulsory representation</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>Systems needs to be strengthened. Holding men and boys accountable for harmful practices and role of men in holding men in their circles accountable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude changes</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>Campaigns, also famous male personalities, can advocate. For example, men love their cricket heroes. They can be involved in the campaigns to disseminate knowledge and awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of opportunities</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>Establish and strengthen governance systems for women to engage in political participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through education</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>It’s better to socialise the next generation of boys to see women and girls as their equals. The same with girls – who are even now in many of our traditional societies socialised from a young age to be inferior. The correct method by which the factor of masculinity should be educated from school education.</td>
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Awareness programmes, peer discussions and continuous discussions on how gender unity can affect women and in turn affects men, would enable them to be more involved in gender equality work. They should be involved in campaigns, also famous male personalities can advocate.

Mixed communities, protecting women and rights, also reduce the pressure on men. Ensure women are not discriminated against for their biology – menstruation, pregnancy etc.

Ensure women have equal work and study opportunities and equal pay. Some of these are already there in labour law, although publicly flouted by companies.
In conclusion, it can be said that from childhood to teens, educating girls to wear pink and boy to wear blue, and girls to play with soft toys like dolls and boys to have hard toys, has promoted gender stereotypes and an environment of militarised masculinity. Peer group pressures have promoted militarised masculinity to youth. State laws should take precedence over community laws.

Community laws are discriminatory to women. “Men are the gatekeepers of current gender orders and are potential resisters of change. If we do not effectively reach men and boys, many of our efforts will be either thwarted or simply ignored.” (Kaufman in Ruxton, 2004:20)
1. Establish clear, conceptually consistent definitions, objectives and strategies for working with men and boys to clarify the links with strategic thinking on gender equality, women’s empowerment and men and boys’ involvement.

2. Use advocacy campaign engaging men and boys strategically, such as involving famous male personalities like cricket legends.

3. Rather using the expression gender equality, use gender unity.

4. Amend/repeal laws discriminatory to women and strengthen enforcement of the law.

5. Reconstruct educational policy and local curriculum to incorporate equality, consent and impunity, gender roles, harmful concepts such as militarised masculinities and respecting each other. Develop a gender-responsive sexuality education module for university students, with feedback and inputs for men and boys from university.

6. Educate/sensitise general public, mainly politicians, to make them aware of laws, legal framework and the importance to adhere to rule of law, democracy and governance.

7. Update law enforcement agencies on their gender bias/discriminatory policies. Law enforcement agencies and institutions should be gender-neutral as much as possible.

8. Generate a separate court system to look after gender-related matters, to encourage victims to seek legal assistance.

9. Create a national-level mechanism to mobilise youth and men, by establishing a structure of consultations and partnerships.

10. Implement CEDAW recommendations.

11. Implement a gender-responsive sexuality education module for university students, with feedback and inputs for men and boys from university. This module should also include GBV, SGBV, harassment and ragging in university environments.

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Gender Equality Resistance, Responsibilities And Reaching Out