Impact of an Integrated Intervention (SAFE) on Spousal Violence against Women and Girls in Slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Background

- Although intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common health, development and human rights issue worldwide evidence is still inadequate on what works in addressing IPV.

- Some interventions in Africa showed promise in reducing IPV at the individual level. However, there is no guidance on how to reduce IPV at the community level.

- Interventions addressing violence against women & girls (VAWG) often siloed and vertical.

- To address these gaps, an integrated intervention was developed for Dhaka slums and tested using RCT.
The context

- In Bangladesh, 53% of ever-married reproductive aged women report spousal physical and/or sexual violence (BDHS, 2007)

- 32% of currently married women report being economically abused by spouse (BBS, 2013)

- The rate of physical and/or sexual violence is higher in urban slums (66%) than in urban non-slum areas (45%) (UHS, 2006)

- Young females are more vulnerable to IPV (Naved & Persson, 2005)
Growing up safe & healthy (SAFE): The intervention

SAFE is an integrated multi-sectoral, multi-tier, multi-partner intervention addressing sexual & reproductive health & rights & VAWG in Dhaka slums.

Project partners:

- icddr,b (lead)
- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
- Marie Stopes Clinic Society
- Nari Maitree (We Can Alliance)
- Population Council
SAFE’s theory of change

Core intervention activities
- Interactive group session with females and males
- Community campaign
- SAFE health and legal services

Level 1 outcomes
Changes among group members
- Awareness regarding gender/rights/VAWG/law/services
- Communication and negotiation skills
- Isolation
- Self-confidence
- Help seeking
- Activism

Level 2 outcomes
Changes at the community level
- Awareness regarding gender/rights/VAWG/laws/services
- Help seeking
- Gender inequitable and violence condoning attitudes

Impact
- Reduced spousal VAWG
Study site and target group

- Study site – 19 slums within 2km from Marie Stopes Clinics in three areas of Dhaka city

- Main target groups:
  - Females aged 10-29
  - Males aged 18-35
  - Community leaders & the community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Level (Group n=600)</th>
<th>Community Level</th>
<th>Societal Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 two-hour participatory group sessions over 20 months on:</td>
<td>• Community orientation</td>
<td>• Sensitization lawyers, judges, prosecutors, police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender, rights &amp; VAWG</td>
<td>• Recruitment and engagement of community activists</td>
<td>• Sensitization of health professionals and marriage registrars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SRH &amp; rights</td>
<td>• Celebration of special days (drama, filmshow, rally, etc)</td>
<td>• Policy advocacy with judiciary, police, line ministries, NGOs, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laws/legal remedies</td>
<td>• Display and distribution of BCC materials</td>
<td>• Media campaign using TV and radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Available services</td>
<td>• One stop service center:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life skills</td>
<td>- Health services &amp; referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Attendance=5.8 sessions/group member</td>
<td>- Legal advice and representation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAFE evaluation design: RCT

Study Design

Baseline Survey → Intervention → Endline Survey

Arm A → Male groups
Arm A → Female groups
Arm A → Community Campaign

Arm B → Female groups
Arm B → Community Campaign
Training: Gender, Rights, Violence and SRHR

Arm C → Community Campaign

Service

Health
Legal

Service related Intervention

Qualitative formative
Quantitative and Qualitative monitoring
Qualitative evaluation
SAFE’s impact was measured not among the group members, but among a representative sample drawn from each cluster.
Sample size by arm at Baseline (2012) and Endline (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arms</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm A</td>
<td></td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>1504</td>
<td>542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Community+ Female + Male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm B</td>
<td></td>
<td>1491</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>536</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Community + Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm C</td>
<td></td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Community)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Arms</td>
<td></td>
<td>4458</td>
<td>1617</td>
<td>4581</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAFE surveys and analysis

- Mapping and household listing of 19 slums

- Formation of 234 contiguous clusters using natural or artificial boundaries with 50-100 households in between clusters as buffers. The clusters were randomly assigned to different arms

- This analysis includes currently married women (n=5,336)

- Difference-in-difference analysis was used for assessing impact
Results
Change in violence against currently married adolescent girls aged 15-19 years before and after the intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Physical or sexual violence</th>
<th>Physical violence</th>
<th>Sexual violence</th>
<th>Economic violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community + Female + Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community + Female</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community + Female + Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community + Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of SAFE on spousal violence against currently married adolescent girls in Dhaka slums, percentage points

### Physical and/or sexual violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Impact of Female Group</th>
<th>Impact of Male Group</th>
<th>Impact of Female and Male Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>-4.9</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
<td>-11.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>-9.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence many times</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Physical violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Impact of Female Group</th>
<th>Impact of Male Group</th>
<th>Impact of Female and Male Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe physical violence</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DiD estimates

- **p<0.05; * p<0.1**

\[c + f + m = \text{Community mobilization, female and male group intervention}\]
\[c + f = \text{Community mobilization and female group intervention}\]
\[c = \text{Community mobilization}\]
Change in violence against currently married young women aged 20-29 years, before and after intervention

**Physical or sexual violence**
- Community: 72% Before, 69% After
- Community + Female: 70% Before, 60% After
- Community + Female + Male: 60% Before, 55% After

**Physical violence**
- Community: 59% Before, 58% After
- Community + Female: 58% Before, 59% After
- Community + Female + Male: 52% Before, 55% After

**Sexual violence**
- Community: 49% Before, 44% After
- Community + Female: 49% Before, 49% After
- Community + Female + Male: 49% Before, 49% After

**Economic violence**
- Community: 33% Before, 31% After
- Community + Female: 36% Before, 36% After
- Community + Female + Male: 25% Before, 24% After
Impact of SAFE on spousal violence against currently married young women in Dhaka slums, percentage points

- Impact of Female Group \([(c+f)-c]\)
- Impact of Male Group \([(c+f+m)-(c+f)]\)
- Impact of Female and Male Groups \([(c+f+m)-c]\)

** p<0.05; * p<0.1

c + f + m = Community mobilization, female and male group intervention

c + f = Community mobilization and female group intervention

c = Community mobilization

Young Women aged 20-29

- Economic violence

-8.7**

-4.1

4.6
Discussion

- SAFE reduced IPV at the cluster level demonstrating that integration of group sessions; community mobilization & service provision works

- High migration rates and impact assessment at cluster level diluted the effect

- It can only be assumed that the effect size was much greater for SAFE group members
Married adolescent girls benefitted most indicating the need for targeting them in similar interventions.

It is important to work with both females and males for reducing incidence of physical &/or sexual violence.

Sessions with adolescents girls only proved to be a double-edged sword. It reduced frequency and severity of physical violence, but increased economic violence, emphasizing importance of working with both female and male groups.
Female group only intervention, however, reduced economic violence against young women indicating the need for devising different strategies for these two different age groups of females

More research is needed for finding ways to reduce physical & sexual IPV against young women
Acknowledgements

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- We are grateful to the slum population
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