Final Report

Endline Survey and Situation Analysis of BRAC's Gender Work

Submitted to



Gender Justice and Diversity Programme (GJD)
BRAC Head Office, BRAC Centre
75, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212

Submitted by

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Abbreviations

AAF	Ayesha Abed Foundation
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ANC	Antenatal Care
ASK	Ain O Salish Kendra
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDFP	BRAC Dairy and Food Project
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEP	Community Empowerment Programme
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GJD	Gender Justice and Diversity
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HH	Household
HNPP	Health, Nutrition and Population Programme
HRLS	Human Rights and Legal Aid Services
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGI	Local Government Institution
MF	Microfinance Programme
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
PNC	Prenatal Care
SDP	Skill Development Programme
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UDP	Urban Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UPGP	Ultra Poor Graduation Programme
VAW	Violence against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

Background: BRAC's gender mainstreaming strategy broadens the scope of its integrated efforts to combat all forms of gender discrimination. It works to empower women at all levels of life by establishing gender equity and engaging men at all levels of life. The concept is to reshape socio-cultural gender norms and empower women to advocate for themselves in difficult situations. BRAC's Gender Justice and Diversity (GJD) Programme addresses issues of gender equity. It tracks progress across nine programmes using indicators developed through a gender mainstreaming approach centred on women empowerment, gender norms, and gender equality. HDRC's survey findings attempt to ascertain BRAC's contribution to programme participants in the intervention area from 2016 to 2020 at the organisational and community level to restructure BRAC's gender strategy from 2021 to 2025.

Objective: The survey captures the result of gender intervention and creates the reference points and milestones on Gender equality indicators for the upcoming phase of GJD. Also, it assesses the outcome/impact for Gender equality and women empowerment of BRAC interventions from 2016 to 2020.

Methodology: The survey utilised a mixed-method strategy. It conducted a structured survey with randomly selected women BRAC participants. Also, it conducted a semi-structured survey with BRAC staff for primary quantitative data. The survey covers 160 villages/mahallas from 40 Upazilas of 18 districts under eight divisions. It interviewed 4,000 women BRAC participants and 320 BRAC staff. Focus Group Discussions (19) and Key Informant Interviews (30) provide qualitative information.

Control over Income, Savings and Asset Ownership: Non-traditional livelihoods challenge gender stereotypes by representing the female population in gender-dominated occupations. About 12.8 percent of working-age women in BRAC-supported households are engaged in non-traditional livelihood opportunities. The involvement of women in non-conventional occupations is highest in Khulna (20.1%). When women can control their income, savings, and assets, it accelerates achieving gender equality and empowerment, ensuring sustainable economic growth and development. Among the female participants of the BRAC programme, three-fifths (61%) enjoy full control over their income. At the same time, nearly half of them (47%) can use their savings independently. Around two-thirds of them (63%) have ownership of the household's assets.

Household/Family Decision Making: A significant portion of females participate in taking a loan (65.5%) and using a loan (63.5%). However, few can decide to take a loan (8.1%) and use that loan (7.8%), respectively. Besides, 71.8 percent (13.7% independently and 58.1% jointly with husbands) can decide on their children's education. In terms of exercising democratic rights, nearly 54 percent of women can independently choose while casting votes. The scenario, however, is worse among women while making decisions about children's marriage (5.4%).

Engagement of Male Members in Household and Care Work: Recent development activities encourage and motivate men to participate in household and care work, and men have started contributing. Overall, 80.5 percent of men and boys are starting their household and care work engagement to some extent. In terms of men's contribution to household activities, 96.6 percent (highly 54.6% and moderately 42%) of female beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction.

Sexual Reproductive Health and Contraceptive Preferences and Menstrual Hygiene: Overall, 92.7 percent of women use family planning methods. The highest proportion (67.8%) mentioned using safe pills. More than half (57.3%) of the women need to jointly decide using the family planning method with their husbands. In comparison, one-fourth of the women can make their own decision (25.2%). The percentage of joint decisions about having children is 84.2 percent. Overall, 87.7 percent of

women mention about husband's cooperation during pregnancy. 41.2 percent of women can always decide regarding intercourse, while 50.5 percent can sometimes decide.

Participation in Community-Level Decision Making: Overall, less than one percent of women participating in community-level decision-making platforms, including LGI, School, Community level different committees. Only 0.7 percent of women BRAC beneficiaries have an active involvement with social and cultural groups, 0.2 percent have involvement with the standing committee at Union Parishad.

Violence and Inequality: A total of 36.3 percent of women programme beneficiaries reported that they face discrimination or inequalities by their household members. 34.6 percent of them experience discriminatory behaviours from their husbands. Moreover, nine-tenths of the respondents think that any form of violence, including physical, sexual, and economic, is treated as violence against women. Overall, 36.9 percent of ever-married beneficiaries have experienced any form of physical violence by their husband in the last 3 years. In total, 51.1 percent have faced any form of psychological violence, and among them, 49.4 percent were mentally tortured by their husband. More than 96 out of every 100 respondents are victims of marital rape. Almost 58 percent of beneficiaries faced one or more intimate partner violence within the 3 years.

Prevention of Violence: 12.2 percent of women BRAC programme respondents informed that they stopped some form of violence against women in their family and community in the last three years. However, only 2.4 percent of BRAC programme participants mentioned that the male member of their household participated in VAWC prevention and protection activities in the last 3 years.

Participation in Child Marriage Prevention: Among the women BRAC programme beneficiaries, only 2.4 percent mentioned that male household members intended to prevent child marriage in the last 3 years. Among them, 24.2 percent (23 out of 95) successfully prevented child marriage.

Assistance of BRAC Programme in Prevention of Violence against Divorced Women: Overall, 7 out of 34 women BRAC programme beneficiaries mentioned that they received alimony or *denmohor* from their ex-husband after divorce; two of them received assistance to get that money from the BRAC programme, and one of them received skill development training from BRAC to start an income-generating activity but did not start any income-generating activities after receiving the training

Rights to Justice: Violence against women and girls is so socially normalised/accepted that survivors often do not feel violence against them is worth reporting. So, 87.2 percent of such survivors did not seek any assistance in this regard. Among the rest, the majority sought services from BRAC. BRAC managed to resolve 66.1 percent of the violence issues. Another 17.1% of women BRAC beneficiaries could resolve disputes through legal aid services, and 10.5% received court case support. Notably, 56 percent of the women BRAC beneficiaries do not know about government legal aid funds.

Child Marriage: 4.7% of BRAC beneficiaries reported marriage of girls under 18 years in the last three years in their households. In 4.3% of households, the incidence of child marriage took place. In the case of child marriage initiation, 75% of girls got married. In most cases, male members of the households took such initiative. There are encouraging reports as well. 5.2 percent of BRAC supported households stopped at least one child marriage**.**

End Assessment: In the intervention area, 60.7 percent of women in BRAC supported households have control over their income, 63 percent of women in BRAC supported households have an asset, and 47 and of women in BRAC supported households have control over their savings. The baseline data indicate that 33.7 percent of women had control over their income and family resources. In 5 years,

the increase is 27 percentage points regarding their control over income and 30 percentage points regarding their asset ownership. The overall average annual growth is 5.4 percentage points and 6 percentage points, respectively. The women's decision-making capacity has increased significantly regarding sexual intercourse with the husband. Among women BRAC beneficiaries in intervention area:

- 77 percent can make their own informed decision regarding contraceptive use
- 84.4 percent can make their decision (independently+jointly) regarding having children
- 78.3 percent of can make their decision regarding availing ANC/PNC services
- 66.8 percent of women can make their decision regarding the place of delivering the baby
- 85.7 percent can make their decision regarding sexual intercourse with their husband

Finally, among women BRAC programme beneficiaries, 54 percent experienced intimate partner violence in the last three years, which is a little lower than baseline (55%).

Organisational Climate: According to female staff working at BRAC offices, the organisational climate is equipped with gender-sensitive infrastructure. As a result, almost all women staff feel confident and safe in the BRAC working environment.

- Almost all female staff (99%) can freely comment on a work plan or any decision
- 99.4 percent of staff mentions that decision-making process considers female staffs' opinions seriously
- 97.8 percent of staff mentions that various committees in the workplace include female staff
- 97.8 percent of staff, according to BRAC's policy, female staff do not have to face any harassment or negative attitude while enjoying conducive facilities
- 99.3 percent of female staff feel safe in the workplace
- 95.2 percent of the female staff know about sexual harassment in the workplace and how to report such incidents
- 90 percent of offices have breastfeeding corner
- 85 percent of offices have separate toilets for male and female staff
- 92.5 percent of toilets for female staff and 75 percent toilets for male staff are clean, hygienic, healthy and usable.

Conclusion and Recommendation: BRAC Gender Justice and Diversity programme undertook steps at the policy level to reduce gender inequality in households and the workplace. However, the fruits of these steps will require continuous effort translated into reality at the household level. Women consistently find themselves in low status, lack of access in household and community-level decision making, low-paying jobs with few opportunities for advancement.

The gender dimension at the household level is still fragile. Any unforeseen challenge shakes the balance of gender dimension at home. One such example is the COVID-19 pandemic. Different researches and surveys indicate that violence against women and girls has increased. This pandemic provoked an increase in child marriages (for girls). Within the COVID-19 pandemic, this survey could not provide reliable evidence of increased women's participation in decision-making or decreased intimate partner violence in 2019, when there was no pandemic.

However, according to female staff working at BRAC offices, the organisational climate is equipped with gender-sensitive policy and infrastructure. As a result, almost all women staff feel confident and safe in the BRAC working environment.

Recommendations based on learnings from BRAC Gender Justice and Diversity programme are the following:

- Θ Need to enhance the accessibility of women in all spheres of life.

- The community needs awareness and constitute a protection cell to prevent any forms of violence against women.
- Need to facilitate meetings, training and workshop for a better understanding of gender-related issues. So that people are gender-sensitive, and males and females can make informed choices.
- Need to aware and train marriage registers and religious leaders to reduce child marriage.
- Organise awareness campaigns in schools to inform students of child marriage, dowry, polygamy, sexual harassment, and engagement of men and boys in care work at the household and family law of our country.
- Need to constitute women activists at the rural level and train them for their voice raising against all sorts of discrimination against women.
- Many women did not seek support anywhere regarding violence against them. The majority of the women do not know of the legal aid fund to help women victims of torture. The women need to receive such information to become courageous and feel that help is available if sought.
- Inform people about the E-Governance platform created as a grievance redress mechanism using toll-free numbers 109 (women and children abuse).

Summary of Indicators

Indicator (Household level)	Status
1.1: % of women participating in community-level decision-making platform including LGI, School, Community level different committees	Less than 1%
1.4: % of working-aged women in BRAC supported households are engaged in non-traditional livelihood opportunities	12.8%
1.6: % of men and boys actively engaged in addressing VAWG and gender discrimination	• 2.4% (of the household where male members participated the preventing VAW&G) • 24.2% (23 out of 95) man or boy members of BRAC programme participant's households prevented child marriage
1.7: % men and boys engaged in household and care work/ % of women satisfied with their daily time use	• Men and boys engage in household and care work: 80.5% • Women expressed satisfaction: 96.6% (of the 80.5%) and overall 77.8%
2.1: % of women in BRAC supported households have control over their income and family resources	• Control over their income: 60.7% • Control over their asset: 63% • Control over their savings: 47%
2.2:% of women programme participants equally participate in household-level decision making in terms of education, SRHR	• Decision making in terms of education: 71.8 percent (13.7% independently and 58.1% jointly with husbands) • Decision making regarding the use of family planning methods: 82.5% (independently: 25.2% and jointly 57.3%) • The decision regarding having children: 87.7% (independently: 3.5 and jointly: 83.2%) • The decision regarding intercourse: 41.2% always and 50.5% sometimes
2.3: Proportion of women experiencing intimate partner violence	57.7%
2.4: Number of BRAC participants prevented violence (domestic and community) incidents against women and girls (including prevented child marriage)	12.2% (492 BRAC participants out of 4030 surveyed)
2.4a: % of girls in BRAC supported households, married under 18	• 4.7% of BRAC beneficiaries reported that they initiated marriage of girls under 18 years within the last three years. • In the case of child marriage initiation, 75% of girls got married.
2.5: % of BRAC participants, of which X% are women, were able to resolve disputes through legal aid services (legal advice, ADR and court case support)	17.1% of women BRAC beneficiaries were able to resolve disputes through legal aid services, and 10.5% received court case support

Indicator (Household level)	Status
2.7: Number of survivors of violence (including intimate partner violence), of which X% are women, received any legal support or counselling	• 12.8% of women (516 women out of 4030) experienced violence • 96.7% (499 of 516 women experiencing violence) received any legal support or counselling
2.6: % of women who recovered dower with BRAC support became economically empowered through skills development	7 out of 34 women recovered alimony or denmohor with BRAC support, and 1 of them received skill development training from BRAC to start an income-generating activity

Indicator (Organisation level)	Status
3.4.1: % of BRAC offices equipped with gender-sensitive infrastructure and practices	• 90% of offices have breastfeeding corner • 85% of offices have separate toilets for male and female staff
3.4.2: % of women staff feel confident and safe in BRAC working environment	• 99.3% of female staff feel safe in their workplace • 97.8% of female staff do not have to face any harassment or negative attitude • 99.4% of staff mentions that the decision-making process considers female staffs' opinions seriously