Cactus Blooms:
Young Boys Negotiating Change

Progress & Learning Report:
A Study of Patang's Adolescent Boys and
Gender Equity Programme (2018-2021)

PATANG

**Nirupama Sarathy &
Abhisikta Dasgupta**

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Acknowledgement

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PART I - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Patang has been running the programme *"Empowering young boys to take initiative for an equitable and just society for both boys and girls"* since 2018 with support from Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (SKN). As it moves to the next phase of intervention, they felt the need for taking stock of the journey so far and developing a planned strategy to bring lasting change on the ground through the next phase of the intervention. Consultants were engaged for this purpose to study the programme and come out with a Progress and Learning Report. The report "Cactus Blooms: Young Boys Negotiating Change" is an outcome of this effort.

The study had the following key objectives:

- Explicate Patang's capacity to work with young boys and men on gender equality
- Document the progress made in working with boys and men and the learnings for the future
- Explain the key changes the project has been able to demonstrate regarding normative change for gender equality
- Identify gaps and provide recommendations and the way forward

The Qualitative study adopted both Primary and Secondary data collection methods. The secondary data was based on review of emerging literature in this specialized field, at global and national levels, accessed by the study team, as well as a detailed study of Patang's programmatic documentation.

Primary data included qualitative methods like:

1. a full-day participatory (virtual) Workshop involving all Youth Facilitators (YFs) from 10 villages for gathering field experiences
2. an online Quiz for YFs to assess their thematic depth and perspectives.
3. 4 Individual in-depth interviews with all programme team members
4. Two rounds of collective team conversations to help build an understanding of their collective approach and perspective, and contradictions and ambiguities, if any.

Further, the team was required to fill in some templates on roles and responsibilities, trainings attended, networks engaged with and changes observed in the participants, along with sharing the M&E KAP framework prepared earlier.

The analytical framework is informed by Heise's socio-ecological model and ICRW's Gender Inclusion Spectrum.

The current study report "Cactus Blooms: Young Boys Negotiating Change" has attempted to cover the following aspects in four major sections:

Mapping capacity development efforts of the team for boys' engagement and the gains so far in perspective, membership in networks, resource creation etc.

Capture and study the strategies adopted by the project for boys' engagement and how far those strategies were effective

Identifying key attitudinal and normative changes, the intervention has been able to bring among youth, in families, in the community and how

The **first section** provides a comparative analysis of the global and national discourse on engaging boys and men in gender work and the extent of Patang's alignment and difference from it. This is

aimed at facilitating further direction for the next phase of the programme.

The **second section** studies the adopted strategies and detailed activities of the programme over the last three years, and assesses their suitability and effectiveness towards actualizing the proposed goals. We would like to acknowledge that Patang adapted their way of functioning and delivered accordingly even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given that boys and men engagement in gender work is still an emerging field, and the indicators for monitoring and evaluation are still evolving, the **third section** on M&E discusses the importance of breaking down the indicators of 'equitable and just' in smaller, specific and executionable actions. It further deliberates upon Patang's unique advantageous location that can contribute to the ongoing discourse.

The **fourth section** on Team Capacity & Perspective draws from review of programme reports, interactions with the Youth Facilitators trained by the Patang Team and KIIs with all members of the Patang Programme team, studied against the programme outcomes and future requirements of the programme. It also charts out potential networking and collaboration opportunities with other organisations working on specific issues around Gender, SRHR and Mental Health of young people.

Key observations and findings are presented section-wise below along with recommendations under each section.

SECTION 1 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, APPROACH & PERSPECTIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The approach followed by Patang can be plotted somewhere in the Gender-Responsive / Accommodating part of the gender-inclusion continuum, while aspiring to be Gender-Transformative. It is heavily centred on the individual, interpersonal and (to a lesser extent) community levels of the Socio-ecological model.
- The programme needs a perspective shift from the current 'youth development with a generous layering of gender sensitisation education', to a greater focus on 'building reflective (political) youth leadership for gender justice and equity', with a specific focus on the role of boys and young men as *allies*.
- This would mean a) explicitly acknowledging gender norms, discrimination and inequalities, b) putting conversations around power and privilege, and c) ideas of masculinity and femininity at the centre of youth engagement, with a special focus on d) questioning the status quo, both of male supremacy, and heteronormativity, e) right from the individual to structural levels.
- For this, separate male-only and female-only spaces, carefully curated and facilitated, within the current programme are recommended. It could help uncover and explore deep-rooted complex and contentious issues, which may otherwise not emerge to the surface in mixed spaces.
- The programme may also consider the use of sports for girls and boys, as a consciously Transformative strategy.
- Intersectionality and Interdisciplinary Approach to gendered practices need to be brought in, including a) recognition of diversity in men's experience of power and privilege, b) looking beyond the gender binary and ableness. This would include engagement with caste and class politics, disability, spectrum of gender identities, etc.

- Expanding the levels of ecological interventions, greater engagement with the community stakeholders like parents, schools, youth groups and community institutions, solidarity networks and media can be taken up in the next phase.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategy

- The Experiential Learning Centre, Kishore-Kishori Mela and YF Trainings by Patang have been very successful strategies which have strengthened the programme.
- The stakeholder engagement has expanded to cover ASHA, Anganwadis, other NGOs and networks. Parents' engagement has helped build buy-in for the programme in the community. Network could be expanded further as suggested.
- Patang now has a clearer lens for woking with boys. However, beyond individual knowledge and attitude change, the programme needs to open up spaces of vulnerability and conflict through skilled facilitation of reflection and sharing circles as non-judgmental supportive spaces, for boys and for girls, facilitated directly by the team.
- Patang's Sexuality and SRHR approach is a unique model that is evolving according to the needs of the community. However, the programme could benefit from having a more organized and inclusive curriculum / content as detailed below.

Content

- With change in thinking, attitude and behaviour towards gender roles & stereotypes, there is now more openness towards sex and sexuality education. SRHR content for youth facilitators can be expanded to include: Sensuality, Relationships/ Intimacy, Sexual Health, Sexual Identity, Sexuality to control others. These may first be taken up in focussed training for team members and YFs, and followed up in weekly/ monthly addas in the community, rather than as workshops/ trainings for community youth.
- The programme currently seems to have a 'Safeguarding' approach towards youth SRHR. But this has the risk of giving the impression that anything sexual is a bad thing. Young people who explore early on may feel sinful, even abnormal. It might help to take a pleasure-positive approach. This will also open conversations on consent, choice, making it more meaningful and not just a protective measure from violation.
- Beyond the SRH information approach currently being followed (menstruation, body parts, nutrition, safe sex etc.), there is a need to push the boundaries of comfort to also start talking about Taboos: Sex Work, Pleasure and sexual and non-sexual experimentation, age vs agency, Teenage Pregnancy, Inter-caste and Inter-faith marriage, Non-hetero sexualities, etc.

Methodology

- Creative methodologies are being very well used by Patang – theatre, comics, melas, games. Additional methodologies could include critiquing or using popular media and culture etc for norm change. The Kishore-Kishori Mela is a big success which has not only attracted young people, but also got the buy in of community members and created opportunities for partnership. This must be continued and expanded.
- Learning from that success, it will further help to add activities to encourage youth of all genders to access public spaces. Community mapping followed by creative safety audits, flash mob and Spectacular

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- Performative Actions are some of the effective ways.
- Interviews and Intergenerational Story-telling of positive gender equations in family relationships would be a good way to highlight and reinforce healthy relationships, while also building cultural appreciation and support.
- Similarly, role-model interactions and highlighting positive stories in campaigns would be effective to reinforce positive masculinity and empowerment of women.

SECTION 3 - MONITORING AND EVALUATION

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for clarity and consensus first within the team on defining the "equitable and just" in the programme goal, in practical, demonstrable and measurable terms. The existing draft framework of K-A-P for each level is a good move, but this needs to be translated on the ground by orienting and building consensus with the youth facilitators and young people.
- As it is a step-down intervention, the programme needs a results framework with indicators for every level – for the team, the youth facilitators, youth volunteers / community youth participants.
- Patang has made good efforts to document change stories from boys / young men as well.However, the programme needs to measure outcomes for girls/ women separately in order to determine connections between changes in attitudes, behaviors, and norms and whether male engagement efforts actually lead to changes in the lives of both men and women.
- There are many excellent examples of attitude change from the community youth and youth volunteers. However, currently, most are at the individual and family levels. The team needs a trained eye to look out for and identify possible changes at other levels.

- Further, individual attitude/behavioural change in relational settings needs to be cross-validated with desired impact in family/couple settings. Running a community-based intervention places Patang in an advantageous position.
- While it may be early to identify norm changes at societal and institutional levels, it is always useful to outline such parameters, so that they can be monitored for trend changes on an ongoing basis.
- Patang might consider creative approaches to come up with workshop ideas for accumulation of information from boys from time to time. Traditional quantitative and qualitative may not bring out reliable information in this particular scenario. Similarly, interactions with girls in the group need to be a part of evaluating KAP change within the group.

SECTION 4 - TEAM CAPACITY & PERSPECTIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- While the evolving and innovative ways of engaging with boys for gender work adds to the discourse of this emerging field, it has been reflected by the staff and found during the study, that they need rigorous conceptual training.
- It is important for the team to be aware of the debates and dilemmas, contradictions and consensus within the male engagement space – as much has already been discussed in this emerging field, and Patang's work could be enriched and strengthened by it. A compendium of readings and resources may be put together, along with an intensive internal training for the Team on perspective-building.
- Some training needs identified by the team are – on adolescent reproductive health, legal awareness, policies and schemes. They also require handholding for revisiting and upgrading the SRHR content, in a non-

curriculum format, and preferably in the use of sports for lifeskills and SRHR.

- The team members' awareness and stances on recent issues needs to be explored further, especially given that they did not seem to have divergent views or disagreements even on contentious issues, despite the remarkable diversity within the team

- It is also nice that the trainings of YFs closely follows the team trainings, which reduces hierarchy in youth programming, and also ensures the step-down model works well. However, the different capacities and exposure levels of the team members and YFs need to be realistically considered, else the outcomes may not match expectations.

- The need is felt to have a review, along with honest reflection as to which processes are best done by the team directly and which may be done by YFs, according to the capacity and need.

The report closes with overall insights and recommendations and concluding reflections on the way forward.

OVERALL REFLECTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The programme is a great opportunity for Patang to consolidate and deepen their gender work of the past decade.
2. The mixed gender programming adopted by Patang presents a unique opportunity to create an innovative model of community-based young men engagement for gender equity for both men and women. However, the right mix of gender-segregated and gender-mixed programming needs to be adopted, else there is the risk of the programme remaining at a superficial / comfortable level.
3. Further, the movement from individual to community to institutional and structural levels, needs to be planned and plotted carefully, so as to take it towards norm change.
4. The programming content and methodology could have a mix of theoretical/conceptual grounding, along with redefining popular culture for norm change. There is a need to expand the discourse beyond positive masculinities to include intersectionality and multiple gender and sexual identities, while deepening the SRHR content..
5. Gender being a complex and contentious issue, a rethink and review of the step-down Squirrel model is recommended, with clear roles to be delineated for processes to be led by the team, and those to be led by the YFs. Further, indicators need to be evolved, data collected and monitored separately for young men and young women, and at each level, to truly assess the power shifts and normative changes over the course of the programme.
6. Patang, with its vast experience on youth development through creative programming is very well-suited to design and demonstrate an innovative and sustainable mixed gender programme to change male attitudes and patriarchal norms to empower young women and establish an equitable and just world for all.

PART II - STUDY CONTEXT

Patang is a registered charitable trust established in 2003 with a vision to create a platform for young people to actively engage them in social justice issues. Based in Sambalpur (Western Odisha), the organisation is working towards building a society where young people take initiative for positive social change, with a strong emphasis on developing their knowledge, skills and confidence.

Over the years, it has evolved as a Regional Youth Support Center with multiple programmes to build youth leadership in the eastern region of the country. Since inception, it has been working on the thematic area of "Gender Equality". However, a specific intervention on Gender and SRHR took shape with a grant from YIF (Youth Innovation Fund), National Foundation for India in 2014.

During the course of their intervention on gender with young people from the marginalised communities, they felt the need for working with young boys to bring normative changes in the villages in Sambalpur. For the last three years, with support from Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (SKN), they have tried to understand the nature and process of boys' engagement in their specific context and developed materials for capacity building accordingly.

As Patang moves to the next phase of the intervention, they felt the need for taking stock of the journey so far and developing a planned strategy to bring lasting change on the ground through the next phase of the intervention. In this regard, the said Consultants have been engaged to come up with a Learning Report.

Profile of Consultants

Nirupama Sarathy is a development practitioner and consultant with 15+ years of experience in programme design, management and evaluation, with a specific interest in issues of identity, education and environment. She brings wide and varied pan-India experience of adolescent and youth development, women's rights and gender campaign work in diverse settings, like educational institutions, grassroots communities, national and international collectives, with a specific focus on building empowered leadership towards gender justice, peace and sustainability.

She has held various roles as India Country Program Manager (ActionAid-YUW), partner Director (HCL Foundation's 'My Scholar'), Board Member (ComMutiny-The Youth Collective), 16 Days Campaign Lead (Prajnya), Senior Advisor (Patang), multiple positions at Pravah, and done a range of freelance consultancy and voluntary work with UN bodies, national and international NGOs, educational institutions and youth groups, in areas spanning programme design, management and evaluation, TOT & facilitation, participatory training & curriculum design and policy work.

She has had exposure to the context in Western Odisha, for over a decade, building capacities of regional partners and local teams on gender, education and youth engagement,a nd has served as Guest Faculty for the MSW Course at Sambalpur University. She has an MSW from Delhi University, with a specialisation in 'Women's Welfare and Development'.

Abhisikta Dasgupta is a Performance Researcher-Practitioner, with over eight years of experience in Performance, Social Development and Media. She identifies herself as a Queer Non-binary person and has been involved in Feminist Queer movement in India. Currently she finds her one foot in Performance and another in the Development sector. Research is her way of making sense and exploring the interstices of the apparently different worlds she traverses.

She worked with ActionAid Association's Kolkata and Mumbai Regional offices as Project and Programme Officer, respectively. During those five years, she worked with young women and boys on the issues of addressing GBV, SRHR and Unpaid Care Work. Her recent MA dissertation Negotiating Sexual Consent: A Study of Consent Practices in BDSM Scenarios argues that Consent is an Intersubjective Experience. It is also a performative process for it has the potential for disrupting the idea that sexual desire and sexual subjectivity are fixed and immutable. Autoethnography and Performance as Research aided the methodological framework of the research.

The recent Performances that she has been involved in, sparks conversations around women's sexuality (Songs of Whisper; 2021), its expressions (Age, Sex, Location; 2020), consent (Allegedly, 2021), marginalised women's experience of conflict (Dopdi's Song) and citizenship rights (Zanana ka Zamana, 2020). She is currently working on a piece that invites the audience to the mental landscape of a young anxious mind surviving the pandemic.

Objectives and Scope of Study

Overall Objective and Scope (as outlined in the Request for Proposal from Patang)

      a) to assess the organisation's capacity to work with young boys and men on Gender Equality,

      b) to analyse the progress and changes over these three years for future learning and

      c) identifying the gaps to indicate possible way forward.

Specific Objectives

Based on the expectation mentioned in the RFP, and the follow-up Inception meetings, the consultant and the organisation agreed upon the following specific objectives:

1.   Mapping capacity development efforts of the team for boys' engagement and the gains so far in perspective, membership in networks, resource creation etc.
2.   Capture and study the strategies adopted (including stakeholders engagement processes, available spaces within the community etc.) by the project for boys' engagement and how far those strategies were effective
3.   Identifying key attitudinal and normative changes, the intervention has been able to bring among youth, in families, in the community and how

Rationale for the Study

Patang's youth work, over the years, has generated a successful model for Youth Engagement in the region, and much work has also happened on the theme of Gender sensitization education and action

through various programmes over the years. This particular project, however, had a different thematic area on Gender Equity and Sexuality education for adolescents leading to gender norm change in the community, with a specific focus and approach for engaging with young boys. The researchers have tried to bring an **'involved outsider' eye for assessing the team's understanding, capacity and readiness** for this.

'Squirrel' model being Patang's tried and tested model of community-based youth engagement that has been followed in the concerned project as well, the study also explored **how the model specifically suits the thematic and contextual requirements** for a gender equity programme engaging boys in the community.

Other than what has been mentioned in the Objective section, as researchers, our work was also to **study the existing frameworks of Boys' Engagement in the sector** and gauge the extent of alignment with them, as well as the customization and uniqueness of Patang's approach, on the one hand. On the other hand, we were interested in looking into the need for and possibilities of a more **intersectional approach to gender justice**, that might be emerging from the concerned project and localized social context.

Lastly, the assignment also called for not just producing a Learning Report, but also **making the research into a Learning Process** for the organization. In order to do that, the Patang project team was consciously invited to be part of the literature review and reflections process along with the researchers.

Process & Methodology of the study

The study used mixed methods of data collection. Secondary data constituted the study of literature on theoretical perspectives and approaches of working with men and boys, and programming and evaluation documents both at global and national levels. Further, a whole range of Patang's documentation including Patang's programme conceptualisation, implementation and monitoring documentation and reports and change stories were studied.

Given that work with men and boys on gender is a relatively recent and specialised intervention area, and theory and approaches around it are still evolving, the Consultant proposed a few frameworks for assessment and jointly with the Patang team evolved a framework suitable to the context and need. This was done only after a careful study of the pros and cons of each. The Methodological Framework for analysis of national policy involving engagement of men and boys towards achieving gender equality of the MenEngage Alliance, Oxfam's Concept Note on Norm Change, the Compendium of Gender Scales, and the evaluation and assessment frameworks of ICRW and Equal Community Foundation in their work with boys and men were initial frameworks studied.

Primary data included qualitative methods like

5. a full-day participatory (virtual) Workshop involving all YFs from 10 villages for gathering field experiences
6. an online Quiz for YFs to assess their thematic depth and perspectives.
7. 4 Individual in-depth interviews with all programme team members

8. Two rounds of collective team conversations to help build an understanding of their collective approach and perspective, and contradictions and ambiguities, if any.
9. Further, the team was required to fill in some templates on roles and responsibilities, trainings attended, networks engaged with and changes observed in the participants, along with sharing the M&E KAP framework prepared earlier.

While the initial plan was to also include college volunteers and community adolescents in the study, during discussions with the Patang team, it was felt that given the time, logistics and technology constraints as well as covid restrictions on physical gatherings, we should focus the current study on the youth facilitators of the rural initiative, which forms a significant chunk of the programme. Observations and reflections on change in the community adolescents were collected from the youth facilitators filling up a template, and through the storytelling session during the workshop.

Following is the framework for data collection:

Study Objective	Data collection Sources & Methods
1. Mapping capacity development efforts of the team for boys' engagement and the gains so far in perspective, membership in networks, resource creation etc.	Schedule of trainings attended by the team with reflection on content & application
	List of resource persons and topics taken up in sessions
	Interviews with Team members
	Analysis of curriculum content
2. Capture and study the strategies adopted (including stakeholders engagement processes, available spaces within the community etc.) by the project for boys' engagement and how far those strategies were effective	Review of reports and other prog documentation
	Team interviews
	Workshop with youth facilitators
3. Identifying key attitudinal and normative changes, the intervention has been able to bring among youth, in families, in the community and how	Study of monitoring data
	Identification of parameters
	Study of change stories documentation
	Online Workshop with Youth Facilitators

Additionally, we tried to include the Patang team and youth facilitators as was possible not just as respondents, but also as primary drivers of the study, with the entire study process constructed as a learning and capacity building experience for the team in this emerging area of work.

# PART III - SECTION-WISE FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

There was a clear need identified during the study for greater conceptual clarity within the organization and theoretical foundations informing the perspectives and approaches adopted in the programme. Therefore, based on the study objectives, this section details out key concepts and approaches which currently inform the global and national discourse on gender work with boys and men, in a nutshell. Further, it also analyses how the current programme of Patang aligns or differentiates itself from these frameworks. It is hoped that this will help inform further strategy and direction of the programme.

Gender Equity refers to the creation of conditions of fairness that take into consideration the diversity of all people across all genders and identities—not despite their gender, but in response to their gender. This could include affirmative action towards equality.

Gender Equality means that people of all genders enjoy the same status. They share the same opportunities to realize their human rights and the potential to contribute and benefit from all spheres of society (economic, political, social, cultural). [1]

As such, it can be said that Gender Equity leads to Gender Equality.

The Socio-Ecological Model is now accepted as a framework for any kind of systemic lasting change, more so in the case of deep-rooted issues like gender, which take generations to transform.
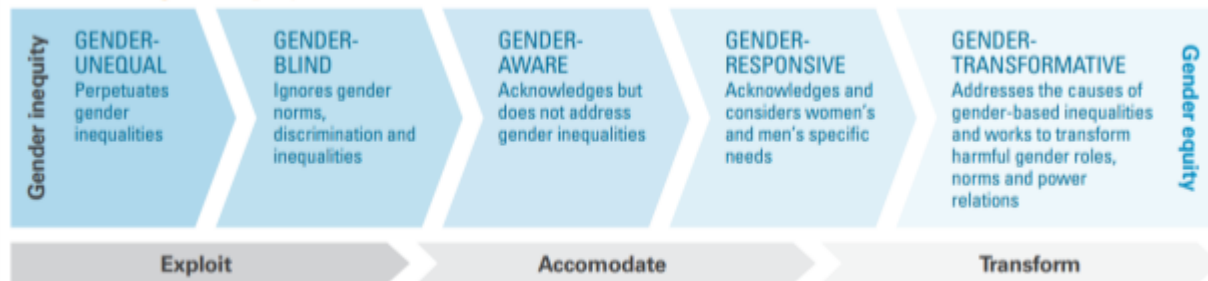
Heise's Ecological Model 2011

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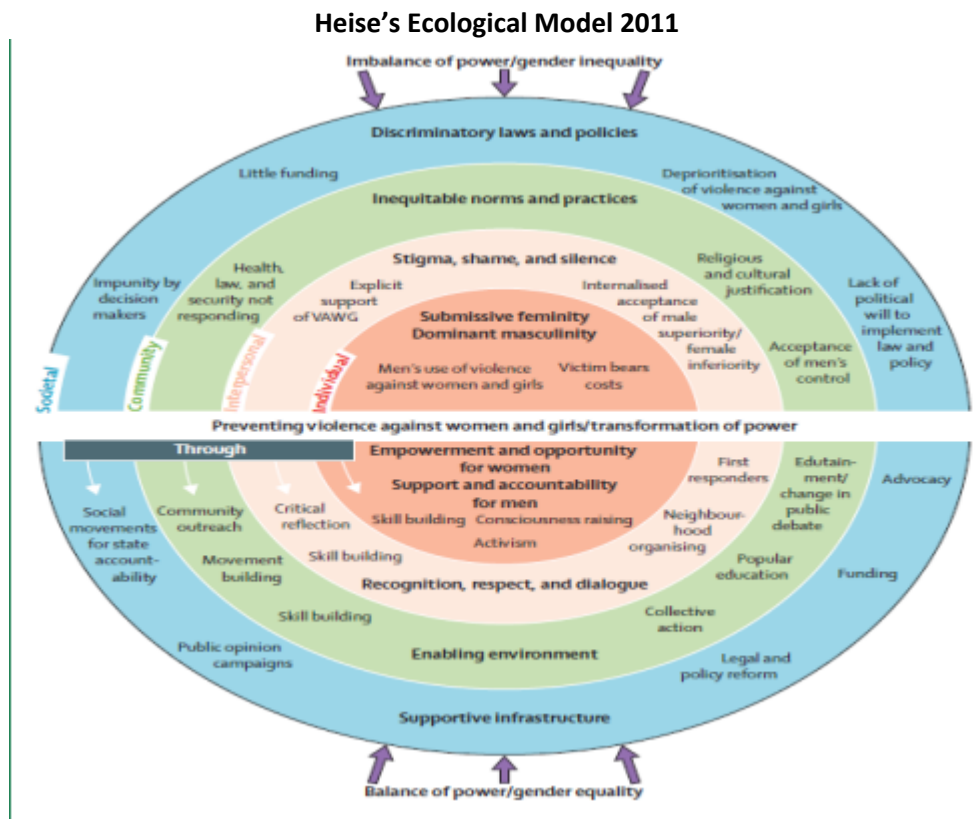
[1] Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays, ICRW - Pg 1 - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15mJBDddEP8x7y847DYaAE4LAJ_3YDz95

Approaches to gender equity in male engagement programming fall along a gender inclusion spectrum, first outlined by former ICRW president, Geeta Rao Gupta, in 2000[2]. ICRW identifies that the spectrum includes gender reinforcing, gender neutral, gender sensitive, gender transformative, and gender empowering programming.

Gender Sensitive and **Gender Transformative** are the most common approaches utilized. Gender sensitive programming takes into account and seeks to address existing gender inequalities, while gender transformative programming aims to transform unequal gender norms and their attendant behaviors and attitudes. Gender norm transformation is largely considered to be the most effective approach to programming. [3]

UNICEF and UNFPA categorise this continuum into four or five categories[4], which Gender Transformative being closest to the goal.

FIGURE 1: *The gender equity continuum*[3]

GENDER-UNEQUAL — Perpetuates gender inequalities
GENDER-BLIND — Ignores gender norms, discrimination and inequalities
GENDER-AWARE — Acknowledges but does not address gender inequalities
GENDER-RESPONSIVE — Acknowledges and considers women's and men's specific needs
GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE — Addresses the causes of gender-based inequalities and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power relations

Gender inequality → Gender equity

Exploit — Accomodate — Transform

(1) GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE PHASE II: A SUMMARY FOR PRACTITIONERS [5]

Exploitative: Projects that exploit gender inequalities and stereotypes in pursuit of other health and demographic outcomes.

Neutral (blind): The project does not attempt to address gender.

Sensitive (accommodating): Projects that accommodate gender differences in pursuit of health and demographic outcomes.

Transformative: Projects that seek to transform gender relations to promote equity as a means to reach health outcomes.

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[2] 2Gupta, G. R. (2000). Gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS: The what, the why, and the how. Canadian HIV/AIDS Law Review, 5(4), 86–93.
[3] Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays, ICRW - Pg 1 - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15mJBDddEP8x7y847DYaAE4LAJ_3YDz95
[4] Engaging Men in Gender Equality and Health: A Global Toolkit for Action – TOOLS - Gender Transformative Programming, Pg 105 - https://unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/tools.pdf
[5] TECHNICAL NOTE ON GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE PHASE II: A SUMMARY FOR PRACTITIONERS, Pg 1- https://www.unicef.org/media/58196/file

A gender-transformative approach therefore attempts to promote gender equality as follows:

1. By fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics.
2. By recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment.
3. By promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate and legitimize gender inequalities.

It is important to note that although the male engagement field initially focused on men as perpetrators of violence and in the spread of HIV/AIDS, more recent efforts have shifted. They instead **engage men as co-beneficiaries of programs as well as agents of change working alongside women to promote gender equality and broader positive social development.** Patang's perspective of boys' engagement is very much in line with this.

Patang's Approach:

Patang's Adolescent Boys and Gender programme (AB&G programme) has the stated goal of *"Empowering young boys to take initiative for an equitable and just society for both boys and girls".* However, for all practical purposes, **the vision of 'equitable and just society' needs to be broken down into specific, actionable and measurable parameters, to understand what we are working towards.**

While this is not explicitly outlined in the documents, from a reading of Patang's reports and from the Team Interview, **the following interpretation of 'just and equitable' is found:**

- Boys and girls get their space to voice their views
- Expectations that are free of gender, For eg., in choice of education
- Take on roles in society and at home, based on their own interests (rather than gender-based role divisions)
- Govt. programmes and schemes provide space to both genders - access to all, esp. SRHR services
- Relationships - both participate equally and define it

This clearly shows the current interpretation is **heavily centred on the individual, interpersonal and (to a lesser extent) on community levels of the Socio-ecological model**, and thereby it is clear that the programme is currently focused more on individual knowledge, attitudes and behavioural change.

While the current focus is logical, given the intervention is in its infancy stage, however, the **conceptualization of gender-transformative approach needs to happen from inception, and even in the engagement at the individual level** (refer Recommendations under this section), by addressing the broader structures of patriarchy within which individuals and relationships operate.[6]

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[6] ICRW_Gender-Equity-and-Male-Engagement_Brief

Also, in order to move towards the 'equitable and just society' envisioned in the programme documents, there is a need to **gradually expand the intervention to other levels as well, in the later phases of the programme.**

While the 'gender synchronous' programme (i.e., **engaging both girls and boys simultaneously /together), is working well and showing results**, the specific need and usefulness of gender-segregated spaces within the programme cannot be overlooked, especially in the early stages of the programme. **Gender-segregated spaces would help uncover and explore deep-rooted complex and contentious issues, which may otherwise not emerge to the surface in mixed spaces.**

While the debates around the various approaches, in India and at the global levels, do not seem to have significantly informed Patang's initial programme design, **the approach followed by Patang can be plotted somewhere in the Gender-Responsive/ Accommodating section, while aspiring to be Transformative.**

This may be appropriate for the time-being, given that Patang is running a mixed gender programme,. However, it is essential for Patang to be especially sensitive to the separate needs and limitations of the engagement strategies for each gender group individually, as well as collectively, and review the same.

Further, while the work is currently mostly at the individual and community levels, as the work moves towards addressing the other levels of the Ecological model, it would be **essential to look at Gender Transformative approaches, which would challenge and change gender norms at institutional and societal levels, after a strong foundation of politically aware gender-sensitive youth is first built.**

From a reading of the Proposal and Annual Report and from the KII, it is clear that further strategies and methodologies for the next phase are also being planned, to accommodate the different needs and interests of young men and women. For eg., **use of sports, esp. for boys (an accommodating approach) is proposed** in the 2^(nd) year's proposal and report, and also for the next phase.

Given this present opportunity, while Patang is engaging boys & girls in sports, it could also do so from a Transformative approach. *They could draw lessons from the **successful use of transformative approaches in programmes like ActionAid's "In the Driver's Seat" (cab-driving training for slum women) and Oxfam India's "Bano Nayi Soch" campaign (sports as a strategy to transform gender norms).***

Recommendations:

1. The programme needs a perspective shift from the current 'youth development with a layering of gender sensitisation education', to a greater focus on 'building reflective (political) youth leadership for gender justice and equity', with a specific focus on the role of boys and young men as 'allies'.

2. This would mean explicitly acknowledging gender norms, discrimination and inequalities, and putting conversations around power and privilege, and ideas of masculinity and femininity at the centre of youth engagement, with a special focus on questioning the status quo, both of male supremacy, and heteronormativity, right from the individual to structural levels.

3. For this, separate male-only and female-only facilitated spaces within the current programme would work well to help uncover and explore deep-rooted complex and contentious issues, which may otherwise not emerge to the surface in mixed spaces. This is especially useful to bring out feelings/emotions in boys that they have been socialized to suppress or negate.

4. The programme, being termed as an "adolescent boys' engagement" programme, requires a clear articulation of how it visualizes the role of boys (as perpetrators/ victims/ protectors / protagonists /co-beneficiaries / partners / allies), specifically, in the path to gender justice and equity, and further, enable, demonstrate and amplify alternate versions of masculinities.

5. The programme in the next phase may adopt a Gender-transformative approach at the individual level, which seeks to:
   - Build political understanding of gender and intersectional identities in order to examine, question, and transform definitions of masculinity and femininity (and trans-ness)
   - Provide individuals with skills, resources and role models to challenge the status quo
   - Address harmful gender norms around masculinity and femininity

6. The programme may also consider the use of sports for girls and boys, as a consciously Transformative strategy. And explore other such strategies, studying the models of ActionAid and Oxfam (cited in the section above.)

7. Ideas of Intersectionality and Interdisciplinary Approach to gendered practices need to be brought in, including a) recognition of diversity in men's experience of power and privilege, b) looking beyond the gender binary and ableness. This would include engagement with caste and class politics, disability, spectrum of gender identities, etc.

8. Expanding the levels of ecological interventions, greater engagement with the community stakeholders like parents, schools, youth groups and community institutions, solidarity networks and media can be taken up in the next phase.

SECTION 2: STRATEGY, CONTENT & METHODOLOGY:

This section studies the key strategies used, along with the content and mode of delivery, to examine their suitability and effectiveness towards the stated goals.

Highlights of Key strategies studied:

Rural & Urban Strategy: Patang's programme has separate urban and rural components with some well-planned interconnections. While the urban programme is designed as a year-long journey (modeled along Patang's ongoing programme for college youth), with some additions of Youth Facilitation Centre and rural linkages, the rural programme has adapted the tried-and-tested successful 'Squirrel model' of Patang, using a step-down model of training peer facilitators for adolescent and youth engagement through ELCs in the rural areas.

Youth Facilitation Centre: This centre was set up with the vision of becoming a key resource centre on gender and SRHR for young people in the eastern part of India. In order to develop more contextualized materials, Patang has not only taken a look at the different TLMs developed by organisations like Nirantar, Jagori etc, it has also tried to develop its own material in Odia.

Youth Facilitators – Squirrel Model: Patang chose to invest in building capacity of local youth from the respective communities to lead projects by themselves. This is based on the organisation's past expertise and success of this model on the issue of child rights.

In this model, young people are mobilized and identified as peer educators and leaders. Patang deployed a thorough workplan to train these young leaders by conducting project design workshops, leadership trainings and exposure visits to other CBO and NGOs that are working on similar issues

This model was carefully chosen by Patang for the following reasons: *(KII, Bijay)*

a) to have youth from the same community leading it, who understand the nuances and relationships in the community,
b) to expand the reach multi-fold to reach many adolescents and youth across the villages, and
c) to sustain the intervention in the long-term through building local youth leadership

While this is a good plan on paper, the actual experience has been mixed, for the following reasons (*KII, Bijay*). It depends heavily on the building of capacities and perspective of the youth facilitators, and their ability to translate it further to others, which would be crucial to the success of the intervention.

Experiential Learning Centre

Since the inception of the project there was a clear preference to work with school drop-outs, and the organization has thoroughly developed creative ways in which young people can engage with the issues instead of only reading or intellectualizing about it.

This is also a platform for Youth Facilitators to mobilize others from the community and engage with them through various activities. Locally, it is also a safe physical space in the community for young people to

carry out different activities with other adolescents and youth, and also reach out to the overall community. Given that any activity of the youth in the public space, especially with both boys and girls, is construed with a judgmental gaze from others, the presence of a physical space within the community helps earn validation from the community about the legitimacy of the work. Patang has earned the acceptance and trust of the community in making such a space available for the youth.

Kishor-Kishori Mela

This activity was first conducted in the third year of the programme and it has brought together various learnings along the way. "Mela" refers to a small fest or fair. The idea of Kishor-Kishori Mela is to combine learning and fun, while also providing a public space for boys and girls to freely mingle. In 2021, it was conducted in 9 villages.

Conducted between March to September in 2021, there are an array of things that these melas have brought together. There are many stalls; some are for information on SRHR, some on accessible schemes and some from other NGOs and groups to talk about their work. People can access it by playing different games that Patang has developed along with the youth facilitators. (More information in the methodology section) It has also become a space for collaboration and networking with other civil society and Govermnet players.

Engagement with local service providers (Asha, Anganwadi), School and Government Offices

In the beginning of the project, the initial engagement started with the objective to hold the service providers accountable for the services there were assigned to fulfil. But during the pandemic, as the annual report 2 and the six months' progress report says, a deeper friendship has been developed with the Asha and Anganwadi workers. Some of the Young leaders volunteered to distribute relief and sanitization material to the community while ASHA and Anganwadi workers worked as frontline workers. There was a regular exchange that took place during the pandemic.

Solidarity Networks

Youth Resource Centre emerged as the primary space for outreach and alliance building with multiple stakeholders. Interactions with local journalists on the role of media in addressing violence again women were held in the Youth Resource centres. Other interactions on women in Politics and cyber crimes against women were held between Academicians and Cyber Crime Branch of Police respectively. In between the phases of lockdowns, a session on management of Mental Health was conducted with a local psychologist.

Kishore Kishori Mela also served as a space for the same. SAKHI-Ministry of Women and Child development, Gramya Vikash Sangathan (Supported by OSACS), Childline Sambalpur, Ashayen, Bhubaneswar and Community Health Centre, Themra had put up stalls on the issues of Domestic Violence, HIV and AIDS, Child Protection, Substance Abuse and Anaemia respectively.

Patang has also been part of Project Raise, a national platform for Civil Society Organisations, funding organisations, intermediaries and government institution that are committed to engage with Boys on the issues of Gender. They have engaged in partnership Campaigns like the Rakshabandhan campaign.

Insights and Learnings from study of Secondary Literature and Patang's programme:

A Clearer Lens: Earlier, the focus of gender work involved sensitising boys and girls, but invariably had girls and women as the primary beneficiaries of gender equality. Boys' engagement objective and strategy was not fully clear even though Patang had it in mind. "There was clear progress in making space and opening up opportunities for girls. But how much space do you give for boys? – was a constant question. Now, boys' separate needs are being addressed here." *(Bijay, KII)* However, each level of clarity comes with its own set of questions and Patang needs to be ready to deal with them.

Successful Strategies: The Experiential Learning Centre has emerged as a good platform for Young Facilitators to mobilize others from the community and engage with them through various activities, while also serving as a safe physical space in the community for young people (boys and girls) to meet. It has earned validation from the community about the legitimacy of the work.

The YF trainings by Patang, have been of high quality and rich learning for the YFs, and especially the mixed gender residential camps in the training and project design phase, were identified as a turning point for most YFs. *(YF Workshop - SaapSeedi ka Khel: Supports and challenges – Annexure VI)*

The Kishore-Kishori Mela, started in the third year of the programme, combines learning and fun through info and game stalls – which has been a big success and replicated in other locations and programmes! *(KII, Bijay)* Besides being a public space for boys and girls to freely mingle, it provides Patang am opportunity for partnerships and alliances with local and external resource persons and groups. This has facilitated awareness and engagement of community people and provided an opportunity for urban-rural youth exposure and collaboration, which has been utilised well.

Expanded Stakeholder Engagement: Going beyond the direct engagement with young people alone, the community-based intervention now also engages with ASHA, Anganwadis, other NGOs and networks as well. Additionally, parents' engagement in the adolescents' lives is being looked at. However, a clearer strategy is required for this engagement, with clear goals and roles. What we understood from the annual reports and respective project proposals, is that it became easier to reach out to multiple stakeholders through campaigns. Posters and Grassroots comics were used to reach out to fathers in the young boys' families. It seems to have bridged the gap of emotional distance many father and son face in a typical patriarchal family. As *Amina (KII)* said, *"Ab jaake itna to pata chala hai ki baap se utna darne ki koi baat nahi hai." [Now people have come to understand that there is no need to be terrified of one's father.]* The pandemic situation also necessitated reaching out to tuition and coaching centres instead of schools. More people became aware of the work.

Modified curriculum: While curriculum design and delivery has been a strength of Patang, new content has been added through this programme. From the earlier gender work where violence was often talked
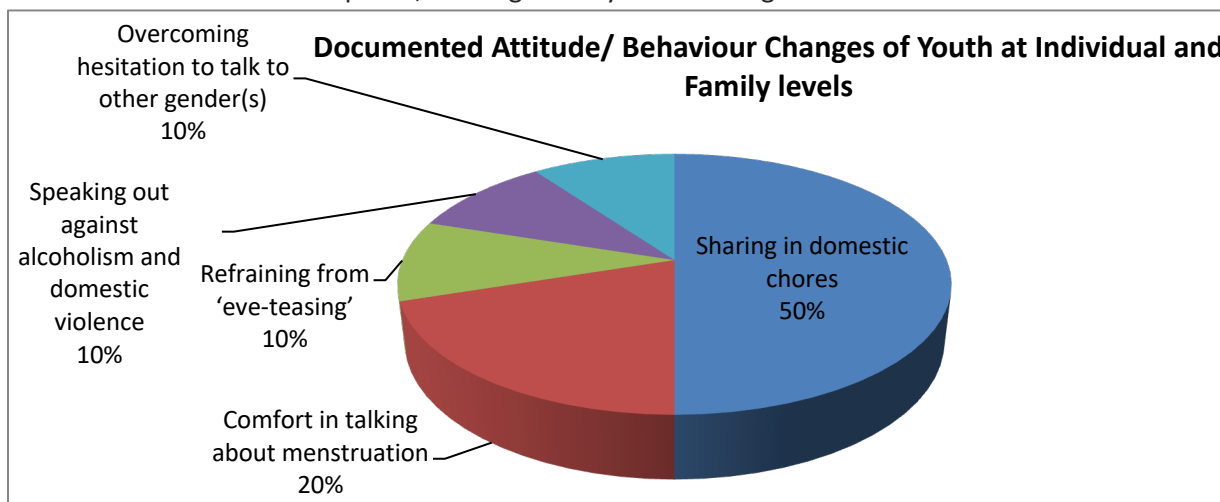
about only in the context of VAW, now there is a conscious recognition of violence against boys. Domestic violence happens with boys too. How do boys respond to domestic violence? Difference between boys' and girls' socialization. Ideas of toxic and other masculinities. How its manifestation effects/affects not only girls' but also boys' wellbeing. – These are some questions and topics finding attention now. This is a much-needed and organic move forward. However, the Consultants see a need to structure and sequence this learning in a systematic way, while also paying attention to some foundational conceptual learning.

Sports as new engagement strategy: Patang first decided to include sports as part of this programme because it was becoming a little hard to get boys on board and keep them engaged. There were a few dropouts. So, they reflected and brought in this strategy. Patang engaged with the work of Magic Bus but found that it was centred more on lifeskills rather than gender. Therefore, Patang had to find their own unique ways to capture the interest and attention of adolescents. Further, there needs to be enhanced focus on creative activity and sports as a strategy to enrol more young people into the programme and also as a tool for finding resolution of the concerned issues.

KEY CHANGES AND SHIFTS AS OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

Challenging Norms at Individual/ Family level: A lot of work has happened and significant successes achieved at the individual attitude-behaviour levels. The trend of change through the study of limited documentation of change stories is presented in the chart below. There has been a clear change in thinking, attitude and behaviour towards gender roles, stereotypes and openness towards sex education due to the last 3 years' work.

Some case examples from change stories studied include - i) Acknowledging 'Gharelu Kichar Kichar' as a matter of concern and not 'insignificant' or 'normal' part of family life, ii) Change stories on "Kitchen ka patpat" and mother saying Subrat has changed, iii) Young man from college deciding to continue to pursue his interest in painting along with part time paid work. *(Source: YF change stories documentation by Patang)* However, there was limited evidence of change at other levels, which needs to be focused on in the next phase, for long term systemic change.

Documented Attitude/ Behaviour Changes of Youth at Individual and Family levels

- Overcoming hesitation to talk to other gender(s) 10%
- Speaking out against alcoholism and domestic violence 10%
- Refraining from 'eve-teasing' 10%
- Comfort in talking about menstruation 20%
- Sharing in domestic chores 50%

Source: YF change stories documentation by Patang

Youth Facilitators' - Changes in myself after being part of the programme

Dil:

Period ke dauran pavandhi, bhaiyya se baat nahi, kitchen aur puja ghar me ghusna nahi. Period bilkul achchha nahi laga. Normal lagta hai ab. Issme kuchh Galat nahi hai.

Villagers kept saying where are you going? what good is it? Don't do this and that! Both parents and villagers behaved similarly. Now I feel confident enough to respond to that and stand my ground.

pehle meko jyada gusaa ajata tha toh ab me usko control kar leta hun

future me me mere andar jo badlab aya hai usko gaon me sabhi logo ke man me au Kam me change karna chahatahun

Did not have much information about Periods, so i used to feel scared. Jis cheez ki baare me pata na ho usse darr lagta hai. Comfort and ease hai ab periods ke baare me ghar me baar kar pati hun.

Kaam:
Ghar me sirf ladkiyaan ki kaam karengi. Main ab ghar me maa ko khana banane me help karta hun.

Padhai ke saath kuchh kaam ka exposure se, sirf apna pocket money kamna hi nahi bal ki mummy papa ke problem ko behtar samajh paya. Better responsibility le pata hun khud ka aur parents/family ka. Choice+Responsibility.

In a situation where women are told dasvi tak padh li... bohot hai. Poolja negotiating with parent... ar running in the morning.

Skill:
Leadership me confidence nahi tha. Ab asaani se participate kar pate hai. Facilitation aur Leadership skill badha hai.

We realised involving parents will inspire better participation from the kids. We strategised accordingly.
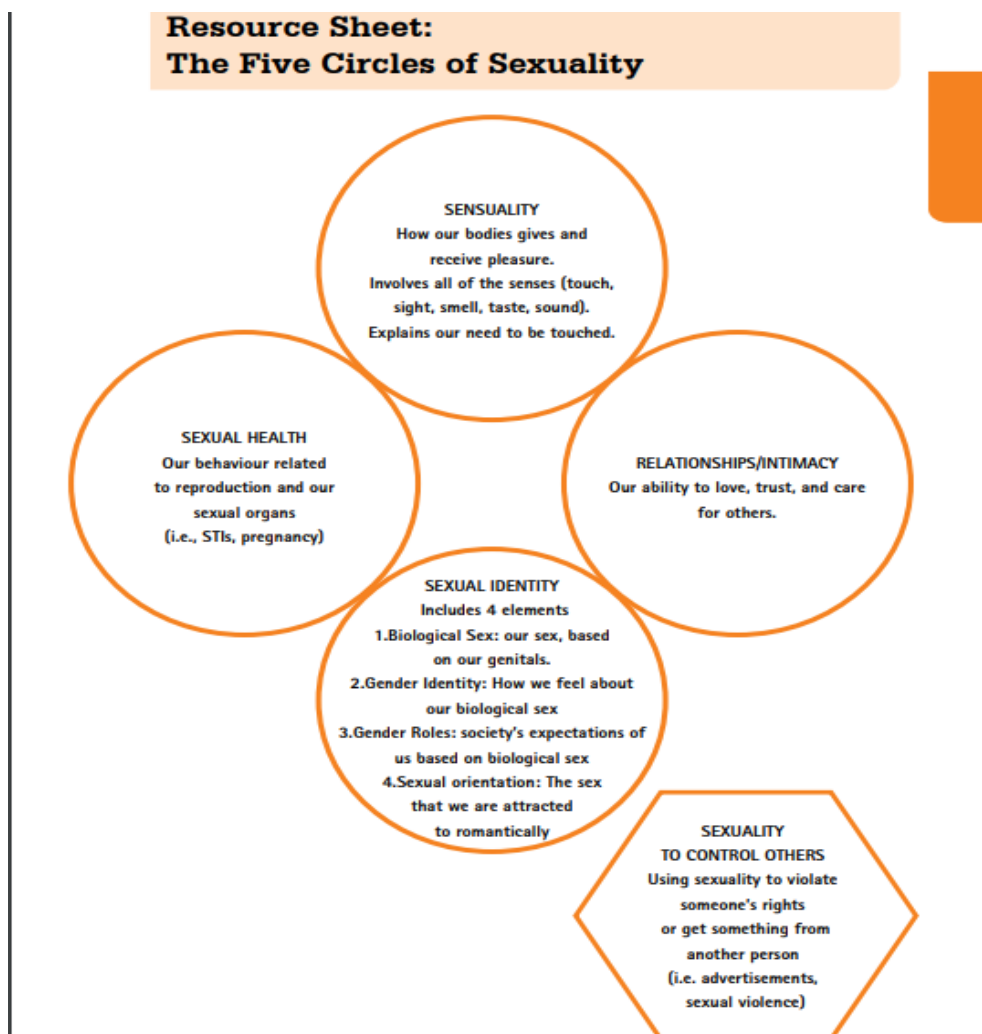
Comic making and theatre training, Performing infront of our and other villagers. How to raise an issue using thetre as a tool.

Logon ke saame achchhe se baat kar paati hun.

Source: YF Workshop - Head, Heart, Hands, Feet exercise

Need for building Political Understanding and Systemic engagement for Norm Change: Beyond increasing young men's knowledge of gender equity and creating more gender-equitable attitudes among young men, to transform behavior, programs need to increase reflective activities where they question and discuss gender norms and ultimately decide for themselves how to practice new behavior.[7] Having established a foundation of information and awareness of gender equity, Patang is now well-placed to take it towards a deeper self-exploration of one's identity vis-à-vis societal gender norms. Refer to **attached Resource Sheet on The Five Circles of Sexuality of UNFPA.**

Perspective and Skills of Patang Team and Youth Facilitators: Skillful facilitation of such exploration would be critical here, as it is entering a space of vulnerability and conflict. The Patang Team would need to do an instrospection and realistic assessment if the youth facilitators (peer educators) would be sufficiently equipped to do this. Alternatively, this needs to be taken up directly by the team, after building their own capacities and going through a similar exploration themselves. Further, this is best done in same-sex groups to provide a space of safety, openness and non-judgmentality.

Resource Sheet:
The Five Circles of Sexuality

SENSUALITY
How our bodies gives and receive pleasure.
Involves all of the senses (touch, sight, smell, taste, sound).
Explains our need to be touched.

SEXUAL HEALTH
Our behaviour related to reproduction and our sexual organs
(i.e., STIs, pregnancy)

RELATIONSHIPS/INTIMACY
Our ability to love, trust, and care for others.

SEXUAL IDENTITY
Includes 4 elements
1. Biological Sex: our sex, based on our genitals.
2. Gender Identity: How we feel about our biological sex
3. Gender Roles: society's expectations of us based on biological sex
4. Sexual orientation: The sex that we are attracted to romantically

SEXUALITY TO CONTROL OTHERS
Using sexuality to violate someone's rights or get something from another person
(i.e. advertisements, sexual violence)

https://unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/tools.pdf Pg 125

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[7] ICRW_Gender-Equity-and-Male-Engagement_Brief

Recommendations:

Strategy:

1. Beyond individual knowledge and attitude change, the prog needs to increase reflective activities where they question gender norms and practice new behaviour
   - Having established a foundation of information and awareness of gender equity, Patang is now well-placed to take it towards a deeper self-exploration of one's identity vis-à-vis societal gender norms.
   - Include discussions on patriarchy, power and privilege, masculinities and femininities, concepts of safety, strength, choice, etc.
   - Also include discussions on intersectionality, heteronormativity, varied gender identities and diverse sexual orientations
2. Need to open up spaces of vulnerability and conflict through skilled facilitation of reflection and sharing – addas/chaupals / men's and women's circles
   - The idea is to air out deep-rooted assumptions and prejudices, suppressed feelings and experiences in a non-judgmental supportive space.
   - Such spaces best facilitated directly by team, or after building perspective and skills of youth facilitators to handle intimate sharing spaces (will take time)
   - Best done in same-sex groups to provide a space of safety, openness and non-judgementality, and brought to mixed groups, as reqd.
3. Patang's Sexuality and SRHR approach is not based on any of the standard models of SRHR programming. It is a unique model that is evolving according to the needs of the community. However, the programme could benefit from having a more organized and inclusive curriculum / content as detailed below.

Content:

1. With change in thinking, attitude and behaviour towards gender roles & stereotypes, there is now more openness towards sex and sexuality education.
   - SRHR content for youth facilitators can be expanded to include: Sensuality, Relationships/Intimacy, Sexual Health, Sexual Identity, Sexuality to control others (Refer attached Resource Sheet -5 circles of Sexuality, UNFPA)
   - These may first be taken up in focussed training for team members and youth facilitators, and followed up in weekly/ monthly addas in the community, rather than as workshops/ trainings for community youth.
2. The programme currently seems to have a 'Safeguarding' approach towards youth SRHR. But this has the risk of giving the impression that anything sexual is a bad thing. Young people who explore early on may feel sinful, even abnormal. It might help to take a pleasure-positive approach. Agents of Ishq, YP Foundation, Sneha from Mumbai have done considerable work on this.
3. This will also open conversations on consent, choice, making it more meaningful and not just a protective measure from violation. Beyond the SRH information approach currently being followed (menstruation, body parts, nutrition, safe sex etc.), there is a need to push the boundaries of comfort to also start talking about Taboos: Sex Work, Pleasure and sexual and non-sexual experimentation, age vs agency, Teenage Pregnancy, Intercaste and Interfaith Marriage, Non-hetero sexualities, etc.

Methodology:

1. Creative methodologies are being very well used by Patang – theatre, comics, melas, games. The Kishore-Kishori Mela is a big success which has not only attracted young people, but also got the buy in of community members and created opportunities for partnership. This must be continued and expanded.

2. Add activities to encourage youth of all genders to access public spaces.
   - Community mapping followed by creative safety audits (in urban - night walk, girls on bikes, Chai addas etc.), flash mob and other artistic interventions.
   - Further these may be coordinated across locations in the form of campaign activities on various themes as outlined above.
   - Spectacular Performative actions (Eg., The huge "Save our Constitution" banner during CAA protests, big rangoli, collaborative quilt-making etc.) or something of scale that is a simple and appealing visual aid, simple enough to register in seconds, can be considered. Refer – Blank Noise for ideas

3. Other methodologies could include:
   - Critiquing or using popular media and culture – Eg., Film Appreciation Module of BNS, Dictionary of re-worked gender-sensitive gaali and gaane (Breakthrough) , Ad Analysis (Gender Talkies) etc.
   - Interviews and Intergenerational Story-telling of positive gender equations in family relationships would be a good way to highlight and reinforce healthy relationships, while also building cultural appreciation and support.
   - Similarly, role-model interactions and highlighting positive stories in campaigns would be effective to reinforce positive masculinity and empowerment of women.

Being a new and emerging area of work, this section studies the efforts taken to build monitoring and valuation indicators and systems and the common gaps and challenges thereof. Fuerther, it looks at how Patang is uniquely placed to contribute to this field.

Individual-level gender norm change is related to how men and women relate and make decisions within their relationships. These changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviours at an individual level are easy to measure through pre-post assessments and case illustrations.

However, programs often do not measure outcomes for girls/women and so are unable to determine connections between changes in attitudes, behaviors, and norms and whether male engagement efforts actually lead to changes in the lives of both men and women.[8]

Where outcomes for women have been evaluated, the focus has largely been on women's health-related outcomes and reductions in violence, leaving other dimensions of empowerment largely untested.[9]

Patang is in a uniquely advantageous position here, because the feedback and data is collected from all genders in mixed programming.

However, The Baseline Report *(Project Outcome Report Year 1)* and the draft Impact Indicators, both do not measure gender-segregated data. Even if the programme is mixed gender programming, **it is all the more essential to measure the outcomes in a gender-segregated manner, so as to be able to measure and demonstrate the shifts in power between genders.** Having unsegregated data which does not show shifts in KAP of each of the genders individually, and collectively, cannot contribute to the gender equity and gender justice outcomes, which is the vision of the programme.

Further, programming that works with individuals and/or couples/families should look beyond changes within an individual's attitudes and behavior and also **seek to measure changes in how couples/families interact by looking both at relational changes as well as similarities/differences in data reported by each member of a couple/family. Since it is a community-based intervention, this again places Patang in an advantageous position.** For eg., measure the attitude change reported by boys, and the benefits experienced by girls (feeling safer, more respected etc) as a result of change in boys as perceived by girls. Similarly, the boys talking about sharing in the household chores, corroborated with the sister's or mother's experience in reduction of chores.

Further, for a "gender equitable and just world", it requires measurement of outcomes beyond individual, interpersonal and community levels, to also look at changes in norms at institutional, societal and policy

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[8] Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays, ICRW - Pg 2 - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15mJBDddEP8x7y847DYaAE4LAJ_3YDz95

[9] icrw-maleengagementbrief-webready-v5-150dpi.pdf - https://www.cartierphilanthropy.org/uploads/media/5acb7ba53fb8f/icrw-maleengagementbrief-webready-v5-150dpi.pdf - Pg 8

levels. While it may be early to identify such change, it is always useful to outline such parameters, so that they can be monitored for trend changes on an ongoing basis.

The M&E documents provided by Patang consisted primarily of **attendance sheets for each young leader** very systematically captured, along with details of sessions and trainings attended. There was also a **draft KAP framework** prepared, but which had not yet been put into operation. The attendance data clearly shows the level of sustained participation and interest of young leaders, but no reliable correlation could be drawn about their growth and development as gender champions. While some **change stories of Youth Facilitators and College Volunteers** were documented by the team, there is **no systematic documentation of changes in the community adolescents** that is available at present. Further, there were **no specific parameters identified as indicators of progress and change**. This is a significant gap that needs to be addressed on priority, as the ultimate goal of the programme is to bring change at the community level.

Recognising that this is an opportunity area already identified by Patang, the Consultants provided some guidelines to develop formats for the same. Further, for the purpose of the immediate study, templates were provided for the YFs to document their observations and reflections on changes observed in the adolescents and at the community levels. However, due to paucity of time and distance, only a few observations could come in, which were also very generic. They were insufficient to draw any impressions or conclusions about the progress and effectiveness of the programme at the community level.

However, another effort was made in the study to facilitate reflective documentation of change stories at the YF workshop through a story-writing session. However, what was reported in the annual reports and during the interaction with YFs were very similar, which probably shows that the growth and learning of the adolescents is closely following that of the YFs. The pros and cons of this are discussed in the following Team Capacity and Learning section.

However, from the documented Change stories and inputs from the YF workshops, it can be said that **young boys and girls coming together in the same social space** and the **acceptance from the community** are significant barriers that have been crossed for now. Further, **informational level gaps and taboos (menstruation, nutrition, HIV/AIDS etc.) have been addressed very well** *(KII, Sasmita)* and **parents' support and involvement** has been ensured in a systematic manner. Stories of mothers wanting to join the sessions and **support received from ASHA and Anganwadis** are good indicators of Community engagement. *(Source: YF Workshop - SaapSeedi ka Khel: Supports and challenges– Annexure VI)*

It is possible that three years may be too short to expect more collective assertion on rights, especially with Covid disrupting the original plans. However, the **Covid crisis was also handled very well by Patang**, and infact, the initiative of the YFs to address the situation through relief work, door-to-door awareness on sanitation, social distancing and vaccination, with the support of Patang, has played a major role in helping build trust and buy-in of the community. *(Source: YF Workshop - SaapSeedi ka Khel: Supports and challenges – Annexure VI)*

Now, given this solid base, what would be the next level change expectations that the team would set will reveal the team capacity and confidence in the programme strategies and approach. Based on the

excellent inputs received during the brief visioning exercise at the YF workshop *(See Vision Board of YF –*
Annexure VI), the suggestion would be to involve the young boys and girls in the visioning and indicators
setting exercise for the next phase of the programme.

Key Observations and Analysis:

- There is need for clarity and consensus first within the team on defining the "equitable and just"
  in the programme goal, in practical, demonstrable and measurable terms. This then needs to be
  translated on the ground by orienting and building consensus with the youth facilitators and
  young people. There is a yearly project assessment, and baseline report, but none of them, nor
  the KAP contain gender-segregated data, which would make movement towards equity and
  justice difficult to measure.
- As it is a step-down intervention, the programme needs a results framework with indicators for
  every level – for the team, the youth facilitators, youth volunteers / community youth
  participants. The existing draft framework of K-A-P for each level is a good move, but first the
  indicators should be agreed on for the next phase, before assigning targets.
- Patang has made good efforts to document change stories from boys / young men as well (earlier
  gender equity outcomes mostly centredaround girls/women.) However, the Prog needs to
  measure outcomes for girls/women separately in order to determine connections between
  changes in attitudes, behaviors, and norms and whether male engagement efforts actually lead
  to changes in the lives of both men and women. Patang is in a uniquely advantageous position
  here, because the feedback and data is collected from all genders in mixed programming.
  However, gender-segregated data is required.
- The programme currently is heavily centred on the individual, interpersonal and (to a lesser
  extent) community levels of the Socio-ecological model. There are many excellent examples of
  attitude change from the community youth and youth volunteers. However, currently, most are
  at the individual and family levels. The team needs a trained eye to look out for and identify
  possible changes at other levels.

Recommendations:

1. It is important to define the "equitable and just" in the programme goal, in practical, demonstrable and measurable terms.
2. Changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviours at an individual level are easy to measure through pre-post assessments and case illustrations.
3. Further, individual attitude/behavioural change in relational settings needs to be linked to / cross-validated with desired impact in family/couple settings. Since it is a community-based intervention, this again places Patang in an advantageous position.
4. While it may be early to identify norm changes at societal and institutional levels, it is always useful to outline such parameters, so that they can be monitored for trend changes on an ongoing basis.
5. Working with a mixed group seems to have worked well so far. However, in order to understand and map the changes in boys' KAP, monitoring needs to be done accordingly. Monitoring data, outcome and impact indicators need to be gender-segregated, in order to assess shifts in power.
6. Patang might consider creative approaches to come up with workshop ideas for accumulation of information from boys from time to time. Traditional quantitative and qualitative may not bring out reliable information in this particular scenario. Similarly, interactions with girls in the group need to be a part of evaluating KAP change within the group.
7. It is recommended to involve the Youth Facilitators (and if possible, a sample of community adolescent boys and girls) in the visioning and indicators setting exercise for the next phase of the programme.

SECTION 4: TEAM CAPACITY AND PERSPECTIVE:

This section is based on a combination of observations and data from review of programme reports, interactions with the Youth Facilitators trained by the Patang Team and KIIs with all members of the Patang Programme team, studied against the programme outcomes and future requirements of the programme.

Any organisation working in the complex areas of Gender and Sexuality, and more so in the cutting edge field of male engagement, needs to have their politics and perspective clear and be open to continuous learning and self-reflection. Patang, as an organization, has an ongoing emphasis on building a learning culture, which was clearly evident in the conversations with the Team. However, it was also found that the Team certainly needs external support to identify the learning gaps within the team and to challenge themselves beyond their comfort zone.

Some key observations are listed below:

In every year's proposal and consecutive annual reports, the organisation has identified specific areas for training and capacity building. While the evolving and innovative ways of engaging with boys for gender work adds to the discourse of this emerging field, it has been reflected by the staff and found during the study, that they **need rigorous conceptual training as well as perspective building** on the various approaches.

As mentioned in an earlier section, there is a need to expand the curriculum content to include building political understanding of gender and sexuality and taking stances on contentious issues. For enabling this, the team, first, requires handholding for **revisiting and upgrading the SRHR content, in a non-workshop format,** and preferably in the use of sports for lifeskills and SRHR and use of methodologies rooted in popular culture for changing norms.

It is good that the trainings of YFs closely follows the team trainings, which reduces hierarchy in youth programming, and also ensures the step-down model works well. However, the different capacities and exposure levels of the team members and Yfs need to be realistically considered, else the outcomes may not match expectations. The need is felt to **have a review**, along with honest reflection, **on which processes are best done by the team directly and which may be done by YFs**, according to the capacity and need.

An informal assessment of the team members' perspective, awareness and critical reflection through the KIIs, compared along with the data coming from the Youth Facilitators and adolescents raises **questions on the suitability and effectiveness of the Squirrel step-down model for building leadership for gender equity** among adolescent youth in the community. This is because a Step-down model is based on the premise that the higher steps have progressively greater levels of awareness and skills which are passed on to the level below. This does not seem to be the case currently. While the Team is well versed and confident with the content they are currently executing, the burning question is are they equipped to deepen or widen the content to the next levels, beyond their comfort zones.

The Quiz done with the Youth Facilitators as part of this study shows that **the team members and Youth Facilitators seem to be at a similar/close levels of awareness and critical understanding**, which shows the effectiveness of the trainings conducted by the Patang Team and quick learning of the YFs. However, at the same time, it also shows that the Team's own learning is not keeping pace / stagnating - which is not good for a step-down programme. *(Quiz at YF workshop – annexure IV)*

Similarly, the Change Stories of community adolescent boys and girls gathered from the YF Workshop are almost identical to the Change Stories of the Youth Facilitators documented by the Patang Team. This shows that the **Youth Facilitators need to accelerate their learning** or they will soon become irrelevant as the community youth are equipped to lead the change by themselves.

Further, the team's awareness and stances on current affairs needs to be further explored. There is remarkable diversity within the team, however, they did not seem to have many divergent views and there was hardly any mention of conflicts or confusions, even on contentious issues. The lone interesting example was when one of the new team members wanted to normalize the use of words related to sexuality and body parts to remove the taboo, while the senior team advised against it, keeping community sensibilities in mind. This was resolved by the new member accepting the experienced advice. *(KII, Byomkesh)* The different approaches here were resolved easily, but also raises the question of whether the organization is ready to push the boundries – for themselves, as well as for the community? The noticeable lack of challenge within the team may point to the lack of depth in understanding and reflection, and the team also needs to be vigilant **not to get into an "agree-culture" of comfort and convenience**, which is not good for a learning organisation.

Intersectionality and diversity of social and cultural contexts are other opportunity areas for the team. Given the number of castes and tribes across the villages, the programme seems to be blind to the diversity and the role of culture in sharing gender norms. The need for going beyond comfort zones, analysing the layered perspectives to traditions and customs in each culture and the **need for self-critical inquiry** are coming out very strongly. This also points to the capacity and openness of the team to do so.

Some **training needs identified by the team** are – **on a) adolescent reproductive health, b) legal awareness, c) policies and schemes. *(Bijay, KII).*** But these are still in line with the "informational" approach to gender and SRHR and not for building political understanding, critical inquiry and self-reflection. A breath of fresh air came during the interview with Amina, where she shared her dilemmas of how to engage with boys without addressing them solely as victims of patriarchy. *"Ladko ko lagta hai hum bhi victim hai. Unko lagta hai ki hamare liye koi kyun nahi hai. Bohot jaldi mahoul badalne lagta hai. Aur phir ussko manage karte hai."* What she concluded from such reflection is that the political principles can be inculcated with training but the primary need is that of space to voice boys' concerns. *(Amina, KII)* The Consultants note this as an important inflection point which will determine the approach to working with boys. However, the question is, **how are such questions addressed and accommodated in the team?**

Amina further shared how she felt challenged by a question posed by the boys she is working with. In her own words, *"'Who is a desirable man?' ladke puchhte hai. Kabhi kabhi main blank ho jaati hun. Bhumi se puchhti hun. Main sensitively jawab deti hun. Par deal kaise karna hai… whatsapp me bohot discussion*

hota hai. We need to have a strategy of dealing with this along with building our capacities." (Amina, KII). The question made her reflect that women actively perpetuate a specific notion of masculinity by their patriarchal definitions of 'desirable men', thereby making it a vicious cycle difficult to break. **The capacity and readiness of the team to facilitate such difficult explorations and unlearning processes** comes into question.

A final point echoed by all the team members was that the organization has not ventured into the areas of non-binary genders and diverse sexual orientations and admit that they do not have the knowledge, comfort or capacity currently to take it up, both within the team and in the community. However, there is a clear acknowledgement that despite the lack of capacity in the organization, a safe and welcoming space needs to be created for all and that there is a need to build team capacity for the same.

Recommendations:

- It has been reflected by the staff and further confirmed during the study, that they need rigorous conceptual training on the approaches and perspectives to gender work, and specifically men engagement.
- It is important for the team to be aware of the debates and dilemmas, contradictions and consensus within the male engagement space – as much has already been discussed in this emerging field, and Patang's work could be enriched and strengthened by it. A compendium of readings and resources may be put together, along with an intensive internal training for the Team on perspective-building.
- Patang may also consider sending their staff/YFs to the yearly Gender and Sexuality Academies conducted by organisations like CREA, Nirantar, Sappho For Equality etc.
- Further exposure to organisations that work with more marginalisedcommunities like sex workers, LGBTAIQ* and disabled people can aid further in building conceptual clarity and intersectional politics.
- It is also recommended to have a current affairs board / team learning circles, to be fully looped into the multiple perspectives of recent developments and ongoing controversies – Triple Talaq ban, Love Jihad, banning of films/web series for their 'offensive' content, protests against 'progressive' ads – these help understand the intersectionalities between gender, religion, caste, nationalism etc. , and will also help address these issues in conversations with youth.
- They could even hold debates for the rest of the organisation on issues of relevance.
- It is recommended to get exposure to the work of MASWA (Mumbai), Rahul Roy's book on Masculinity, MenEngage Network, BNS's Samanata Saathi training programme, along with ICRW and ECF's work on working with boys and men.
- An internal process for collectively working out a robust M&E system with indicators (taking inputs of adolescent boys & girls) is also suggested.
- Capacity building training of staff on Psychosocial Counselling can be put to use gradually. Good places to begin are: Anjali a mental health rights organisation in Kolkata has Janamanas, a community mental health programme. (https://www.anjalimhro.org) & Mariwala Health Initiative's QACP: queer affirmative counselling practices and peer counselling programmes (https://mhi.org.in/qacp/)
- Training in using digital platforms and social media to amplify change is recommended, especially in the current times.
- Understanding of Laws and safeguards related to online safety, data and privacy are required.

PART IV - OVERALL REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Insights and Recommendations from the study of Boys Engagement programme:

- The programme is a great opportunity for Patang to consolidate and deepen their gender work of the past decade.
- The mixed gender programming adopted by Patang presents a unique opportunity to create an innovative model of community-based young men engagement for gender equity for both men and women.
- However, the right mix of gender-segregated and gender-mixed programming needs to be adopted, else there is the risk of the programme remaining at a superficial / comfortable level.
- Further, the movement from individual to community to institutional and structural levels, needs to be planned and plotted carefully, so as to take it towards norm change.
- The programming content and methodology could have a mix of theoretical/conceptual grounding, along with redefining popular culture for norm change.
- There is a need to expand the discourse beyond positive masculinities to include intersectionality and multiple gender and sexual identities.
- The training / course content needs to go deeper into sexuality and SRHR issues, while not ignoring the politics central to gender and sexuality.
- Gender being a complex and contentious issue, a rethink and review of the step-down Squirrel model is recommended, with clear roles to be delineated for processes to be led by the team, and those to be led by the YFs.
- Both the team and the YFs need to undergo rigorous conceptual and issue-based training, with additional training in facilitating sharing circles on sensitive issues.
- Further, indicators need to be evolved, data collected and monitored separately for young men and young women, to truly assess the power shifts and normative changes over the course of the programme.
- Patang, with its vast experience on youth development through creative programming is very well-suited to design and demonstrate an innovative and sustainable mixed gender programme to change male attitudes and patriarchal norms to empower young women and establish an equitable and just world for all.

Closing Reflections and Next Steps:

From reviewing the proposal and reports and the interviews with staff, the consultants felt an inherent sense of push and pull between three action points. These three-points are i) the project's proposed activities, ii) Patang's own capacities, comfort and previous success in working with the Squirrel Model, and lastly, iii) intermittent attempts to keep up with the emerging discourse of Men Engagement strategies for Gender-related work. We recommend that all three be accommodated in the project's design for the next phase. Drawing from the evidence generated from the research, the consultants recommend the following strategies for doing the same:

(Discourse)

- Patang has done excellent work in preparing the ground for training men to develop informed and critical allyship. Nevertheless, a gender-transformative approach cannot possibly remain comfortable within the boundaries of normatively safe aspirations. Therefore, along with deepening the work, it is imperative to have exposure to the breath of non-normative lived experiences and othjer intersectionalities. Exposure can happen in several ways, once the readiness has been built. Public Service Broadcasting (PSBT) films, Interactive sessions with Young Queer Organising, Attending Gender and Sexuality Academies are a few. The consultants are happy to put together a list of sources and opportunities and recommend that Patang utilise such opportunities.

(Content)

- Several suggestions have been provided throughout the report on aspects to be included for deepening the discourse. There are several excellent resources already available in the public domain. A strong recommendation is to undertake a research and collation of such resources in the form of a curriculum that may be transacted in a flexible manner – as a workshop, as a course, as standalone sessions, in informal discussions 'circles' or as self-facilitated exercises (watching movies, readings, games etc.) The Consultants are happy to connect the Team to such resources or avenues for learning, and further even to help in this process of identification and collation of suitable resources for Team learning, that can then be contextualized for the youth.

(Campaign)

- The Covid-19 pandemic has created additional hurdles for the execution of the project. It hampered reaching out to schools and colleges and the respective teachers. Patang can use the Pandemic experience as an opportunity to revamp their strategies to meet the project's goals. Sports, Mela and Theatre emerged as robust campaign strategies for SRHR related youth work throughout the project despite the pandemic. A combination of the three can be used for reaching out to the overall community on a broader scale. Project Design workshops are already happening. Drawing from their pandemic experience, investing resources in a strategic campaign design would be prudent. As observed during the interaction with young leaders, some are gifted and even skilled in creative activities. This process could enhance their skills and, at the same time, attain their goals.

(Research)

- The process of this particular research study has been a way of referring to the emerging models of Men engagement and finding how Patang's work fit into those models. While one should continue that vital task, Patang should also critically contribute new knowledge and experience to the discourse. We came across pieces of literature on different country experiences of men engagement. Publishing similar content could be one way of contributing to the discourse.

Another way, probably a bit ambitious at this stage, could be to study the culturally contextual norms first, analyse the power dynamics in those norms and address them eventually. Most of the population in the project area belongs to SC and ST communities. The cultural practices of these communities are structurally invisibilised by standard colloquial narratives. Therefore to arrive at an effective strategy, it is first required that the young members extensively study those practices. Facilitated Intergenerational Communication can aid that process.

The consultants offer to train the young members of the community in Qualitative Research Methods in Autoethnographic Practices and Decolonised approaches. On the one hand, this gives the youngsters research skills that are currently accessible to only an elite society. On the other hand, the knowledge generated by young people research endeavours stays within the community and does not get used out of context.

In conclusion, we believe the programme is headed in the right direction with regard to efforts and intent. However, there is need to pause, reflect and take stock before deciding the next steps ahead towards realizing the vision of a gender equitable society. We hope this learning report contributes positively to this objective.

ANNEXURES

Attached as a separate PDF