



ICRW & NIRANTAR

Men, Masculinities, and Feminism: A literature review exploring theoretical approaches for gender equality with a focus on India



January 2024



Authors:

Nalini V. Khurana
Sapna Kedia
Mohit Dudeja
Biraja Nandan Mishra
Neharika Mahajan
Archana Dwivedi
Ravi Verma

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Pranita Achyut, Hemlata Verma, and Daliya Sebastian for their contributions in ideating and planning this work, and Ritika Gupta for designing the report and developing the illustrations. We are grateful for the continued support of the ALIGN Platform in advancing learnings around men and masculinities.



Contents

01

Introduction

Background and Rationale	2
Purpose and objectives	3
Methodology and structure of the paper	4

02

Men and Masculinities Studies (MMS): Origins and contributions

The emergence of MMS and recognition of men as gendered subjects	5
Masculinity as socially constructed	6
Multiple masculinities, power, and intersecting identities	7
Men's privileges come with costs, and a sense of powerlessness	9

03

MMS and Feminist scholarship: tensions, critiques, and contributions

MMS and feminist scholarship: Asymmetric motivations, goals, and tools	11
Marginalization of feminist theorizing and knowledge within MMS	12
The 'hijacking' of feminism and reinvention of patriarchy	13
Erasure of men's role and agency in deconstructing and reconstructing masculinities	14
Multiple masculinities and men's power	15
MMS, feminism, and the equality project: Bringing men in	16



04

Manifestations of masculinities in India – an entangled web

Masculinity and Colonial Legacies in India	18
Caste and the hierarchy of masculinities	19
The nation, and anxious masculinities	21
Sexual identities and hypermasculine ideals	21
New minimum and competing standards of masculinities	22

05

Gender, Development and Masculinities

Integrating gender in the development discourse	24
Creating space for men's multidimensional realities and vulnerabilities within development	27
Reasserting feminist rationales in the work on men and masculinities	28

06

References	32
------------	----

Introduction

Background and Rationale

Gender-transformative approaches that question and address gender norms, and involve men and boys are key to transforming the power relations between men and women. Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition of male engagement as a key strategy for achieving gender equality. While male engagement programming started as a support to the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and containment of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s, its scope has expanded in recent years to include other domains for women's empowerment and gender equality (e.g., education, health, livelihoods). At the same time, the rationale and approach for engaging men and boys are also evolving. From being solely positioned as perpetrators or obstacles to women's empowerment, men are increasingly seen as partners, stakeholders, and co-beneficiaries. Hence, they must be engaged to support women's empowerment and achieve gender equality and justice for all.

With the development principle of "leaving no one behind," another emerging concern is the intersection

of gender inequality with other forms of marginalization. The recognition of intersecting inequalities has surfaced the need to attend to women/girls and other individuals and groups experiencing multiple forms of marginalization. This includes those marginalized due to their gender identity, race, ethnicity, caste, class, ability, sexual orientation, etc. Thus, while working with men and boys to challenge gender norms, it is important to acknowledge the overlapping identities, contexts and intersectionalities as experienced by men and to remember that not all men share the same experience of power and privilege.

However, the growing body of work on engaging boys and men has yet to adequately define their roles in the transformation of gender relations. Few programs have demonstrated how individual attitudes and behaviour can lead to broader, sustainable shifts in community norms, institutional/structural practices, and policies. Furthermore, efforts to engage men and boys have largely been in isolated pockets within civil society networks and organizations and focused on specific themes e.g., education, sexual and reproductive health, prevention of gender-based violence. There is also a

recognition that men and boys must be engaged without marginalizing women and girls, while at the same time not instrumentalizing men and boys solely as a pathway towards narrowly defined women's empowerment goals. Organizations, alliances, and networks on men and gender equality need to base their work firmly within feminist analysis. This work needs to be contextualized, where men and boys' and masculinities are approached from an intersectional lens, which acknowledges both their power and privilege and also their experiences of powerlessness and marginalization.

Keeping the above in mind, it is crucial to develop a feminist framework that can be used for research and programming on men and masculinities. With support from ALIGN at the Overseas Development Institute, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Nirantar: A Centre for Gender and Education are working together to undertake an extensive literature review which will draw learnings from existing research, theorization, and other scholarly work spanning the areas of masculinities, male engagement, feminist approaches, and identify key takeaways to anchor the framework. The learnings from the literature review will inform the next phase of work, with a focus on India.

Purpose and objectives

As stated above, ICRW and Nirantar are working together to develop a feminist framework for working on masculinities within the context of India. The purpose of the framework is to guide and encourage programs, policies, and discourses on engaging men and boys on masculinities towards gender equality, to adopt an intersectional and transformative approach rooted in feminist thought and praxis. Intersectionality has often been referred as a framework for understanding/locating masculinities (as well other gendered and sexual subjecthoods), but this review has been developed keeping in mind that intersectionality is not referred to as a mere additive or in an ahistoric manner. The approach is to locate the specificities of masculinities, such that intersectionality lends itself to understand men and masculinities, along with being a tool to work or intervene on them. This is to say that intersectionality is the very nature of lived realities, where siloed conceptualizations of men and masculinities lead to an incomplete/lopsided understanding (which may also lead to siloed interventions and efforts).

As a first step towards developing this framework, ICRW and Nirantar are undertaking a literature review with the

following dual objectives:

- To review and explore different conceptual, theoretical, developmental approaches, standpoints, and initiatives that have sought to understand and engage with men and masculinities in the pursuit of gender equality
- To critically examine opportunities, limitations, complexities, and gaps of various perspectives and approaches to work with men and masculinities, to ground the next generation of work firmly within feminist approaches and praxis.

This literature review and exploration includes (but is not limited to) reading of feminist theory and action, masculinity studies and programming, queer theory, race studies, etc. The review will historicize the emergence of masculinities as a field of study and action while bringing out contemporary aspects of how engagement with masculinities has changed or shifted. This will also throw light on critical aspects of caste, religion, and sexuality, to establish how different modes of inquiry, as well as standpoints, have problematized the very category of 'masculinity' (as well as 'manhood', and the 'male' body), and how various

men experience and perform masculinities differently.

Based on this review, we endeavor to draw out key takeaways, principles, and recommendations, which will inform the framework development in the next phase of work. This will also ensure that the framework remains grounded in feminism, while also recognizing the need to expand feminist thought and action to meaningfully include and incorporate insights and learnings from men and masculinity studies and related fields and disciplines.

Methodology and structure of the paper

The literature review reviews a range of material, primarily academic, peer-reviewed papers and literature (including theoretical and empirical studies), research reports, and other relevant literature from around the world as per the relevance of the material to the stated objectives, with a geographical focus on India and South Asia. The material reviewed includes standalone papers, as well as existing reviews and analyses of men and masculinity studies (MMS) and feminist scholarship. Literature was identified using databases and search portals including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, etc., through the strategic use of keywords such as gender, masculinity, masculinities, men and boys

intersectionality, male engagement, feminism, feminist theory, caste, religion, race, nationalism, class, etc. The reference lists of the selected literature were used to further identify relevant material for review.

The literature review is structured as follows:

First, we trace the evolution of men and masculinities studies (MMS) as a field, exploring its origins and key contributions around the social construction of masculinities, plurality of masculinities, and the interaction of privileges and costs to men arising from patriarchal masculinities.

Second, we explore the relationship between MMS and feminist scholarship, identifying key debates, critiques, and challenges emerging from the literature. This includes the goals and objectives of MMS and feminist scholarship, recognition of feminism's contributions to the study of masculinities, risks arising from the co-optation of feminist work and reinvention of patriarchy, the exploration of men's role and agency in constructing masculinities, the relationship between multiple masculinities and power, and the challenge of 'bringing men in' as participants, partners, and stakeholders within the feminist project.

Third, we move on to exploring the evolution and manifestations of masculinities in the Indian context, spanning historical and modern legacies of colonization, caste hierarchies, religion and nationalism, sexualities, and other recent discourses.

Fourth, we locate men and masculinities within development discourse and practice, tracing the shift in development sector paradigms, and covering the diversity of programmatic rationales and approaches for working with men and boys.

Lastly, we reiterate the need to bridge key gaps and challenges that are hampering the transformative potential of working on masculinities, and propose a set of key takeaways to ground the next-generation work firmly within feminist theory and praxis.

Men and Masculinities Studies (MMS): Origins and contributions

The emergence of MMS and recognition of men as gendered subjects

The field of men and masculinities studies, hereon referred to as MMS, emerged over time from evolving threads of feminist scholarship which led the way in challenging gender norms, deconstructing the category of 'woman', and deepening understanding and analysis around gender and sexism. This body of work contributed to the growing recognition of men as gendered beings, and subject to gender norms, rather than as 'natural' or 'un-gendered' objects of study (in contrast to women). As some scholars highlight, historically, men have not seen themselves as gendered and thus have largely been understudied and untheorized, since "they have not been seen as needing explanation" (Ramazanoglu, 1992, citing Hearn 1987). As Kimmel (2011), a sociologist central to the development of MMS, puts it: "[W]e continue to act as if gender applied only to women. Surely the time has

come to make gender visible to men. As the Chinese proverb has it, the fish are the last to discover the ocean." (2011, p.7)

The US, UK, and Australia in particular saw the emergence of 'men's studies' courses in academic institutions around the 1970s, with 'masculinities' as a term gaining traction in the 80s and becoming situated as a field within the discipline of sociology (Dowd, 2008). Many within the field focused on primarily the disadvantages faced by men due to their gender role, largely addressing male audiences, while anti-feminist men's movements were also active. MMS as a distinct field has continued to grow and evolve since then, informed by different perspectives derived primarily from sociology, but also across other disciplines including psychology, criminology, anthropology, geography, etc. Queer and racial studies have also played a key role in the development and evolution of MMS, contributing to learnings around the construction and role of masculinity in patriarchy, heterosexism, race and male domination, plurality of masculinities,

the multiple intersections of power, privilege, and harm, etc. Key insights around men and masculinities from the evolving MMS scholarship are discussed below.

Masculinity as socially constructed

Building upon feminist scholarship's established distinction between (socially constructed) gender and (biological) sex, and the recognition of men as gendered, MMS has established that "men are not synonymous with humanity, but have a socially constructed gender with no special claim to physical or mental superiority", and that male-associated or 'masculine' traits related to sexuality, aggression, competitiveness, etc. are not biologically designated, but acquired through social relationships in a complex process of social construction (Ramazanoglu, 1992). Masculinity is not something that men possess or can achieve definitively, but rather, is a set of practices that must be performed towards the elusive goal of establishing one's masculinity. Thus, the process of 'becoming' or 'being' a man is characterized by a continual struggle to perform, and thus prove, one's masculinity. At the same time, social constructionism challenges the notion that masculinity is only possessed or performed by biological males – while

dominantly performed by men, as a set of social practices and expectations masculinity is also performed by women and people with diverse gender identities.

The idea of gender performativity was first put forward by American scholar and philosopher Judith Butler (1990). Subsequently, many in the field of men's studies, including Kimmel have adopted it to contextualize masculinities. The idea brings to attention that the performance of gender is a constant negotiation between individuals, the institutions, systems, and communities they inhabit. While gender norms are an imposition, regulatory frameworks, individuals in their varied contexts negotiate with them, simultaneously abiding by them, subverting them, where these negotiations can also be highly contextual and layered. These negotiations also point towards the complex layered nexus of power, where power is not only limited to larger macro structures, but operates across routine interactions and relationships.

The understanding of masculinity as socially constructed also challenges and builds upon the limitations of sex role theory approaches rooted in social psychology (Pleck, 1981). These approaches have conceptualized masculinity as a stable sex role, acquired as "an inevitable phase of

development from child to adult, from boy to man" (Dowd, 2008) and lacked any theory of power (Ramazanoglu, 1992). In contrast, processes of social construction are highly flexible, fluid, and contextual, due to which masculinity is not a singular or universal stable construct, but a product of social, cultural, historical, economic, beliefs and practices that sustain men's power, and are subject to changing social pressures and experiences. At the same time, there are tensions and debates within social constructionist approaches, particularly between predominant versions that see 'society' as the primary constructing agent, versus those that emphasize men's personal role, responsibility, and experiences in sustaining masculinity (Ramazanoglu, 1992). Kimmel emphasizes the interaction of people and institutions in the construction of gender, suggesting that gender is not performed by individuals in a vacuum, rather, in the context of gendered systems and institutions (Kimmel, 2011, p.137).

Multiple masculinities, power, and intersecting identities

A key contribution and component of MMS has been the recognition of masculinities, plural – the notion that men are not a unified gender category and that multiple masculinities exist.

MMS scholars have been critical of feminists and the writers on masculinity that have presumed the universality of masculinity and have sought to treat men as a 'class', instead emphasizing the social divisions between men along the axes of race, sexual orientation, class, etc. At the same time, some scholars point towards critical linkages between various masculinities, suggesting that a certain degree of universality may be present (Dowd, 2008). While multiple masculinities exist, MMS also emphasizes that they are not equal, and all men are not similarly situated in their experience of gender privilege. Rather, different masculinities are differently positioned in terms of power, and theorizing around the plurality of masculinities must deconstruct men's relationship to power.

The work of R.W. Connell (2005) has been critical in developing greater understanding around hierarchies among men and masculinity/ies. While multiple masculinities exist, there is a set of norms around the preferred, dominant version of masculinity – i.e., 'hegemonic masculinity'. Coined by Connell, the term 'hegemonic masculinity' draws on Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in the context of class relations and is reformulated and applied by Connell to understand gender relations.

Hegemonic masculinity sits at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities and represents dominant gendered practices that “embody the legitimacy of patriarchy and the privileging of white, heterosexual, able-bodied, wealthy, cisgender men” (Brown and Ismael, 2019, p.23, citing Jourian, 2018 and Smirnova, 2018). By extension, hegemonic masculinity exists in a position of power vis-a-vis femininity and subordinated masculinities that do not meet the ideal – particularly in terms of their relation to intersecting hierarchies of race, sexuality, class, disability, and other factors.

The interplay of men’s gender privilege with oppressions arising from other facets of identity are critical in understanding hierarchies among men, as well as recognizing, for example, that the racial oppression of Black men vis-a-vis White men may often trump their gender privilege in relation to White women. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) work on intersectionality (in the context of Black women), as well as the work of other ‘multidimensional’ feminists working on issues of race and sexuality (Brown and Ismael, 2019) has been critical in advancing work on multiple masculinities within MMS. Dowd suggests that minority men may provide examples of resistance to hegemonic masculinity – at the

same time, they may also demonstrate acceptance of gender inequality and male entitlement, due to which “resistance and support of hegemonic masculinity are tied together” (2008, p.225). This is closely linked with Connell’s notion of the ‘patriarchal dividend’ – the advantage that men as a group experience due to the pervasive, taken-for-granted gender unequal order. While very few men meet the hegemonic masculine ideal, Connell’s theorizing understands men as both oppressors and oppressed, emphasizing “the plurality of hierarchized masculinities and the complicity of all men, even those who enjoy a lesser share of the patriarchal dividend, in maintaining regimes of masculine privilege” (Williams, 2013, p.163).

MMS scholarship around subordinated, non-hegemonic masculinities is thus seen as critical for challenging essentialized, universal conceptualizations of manhood and illuminating how gendered power is differentiated, yet maintained among men as part of the prevailing gender regime. Within MMS, masculinities are at least as much about men’s relationships with men, as compared to a narrower view that solely examines inequality between ‘men’ and ‘women’ as cohesive categories. Dowd reflects on the underlying tendency of masculinity to pit men against each

other and measure up in their performance of gender norms, emphasizing the centrality of the rejection of the female/feminine: "If 'not being like women' is the negative definition of masculinity, that avoidance is also strongly linked to not being 'gay.'" (2008, p.222). Homophobia is thus a critical component in the performance of heteronormative masculinity, and further contributes to systemic discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community. As Law (1988) highlights, homophobia reinforces sex norms for both men and women, particularly through regulation of masculinity and reinforcing notions of appropriate manhood, thereby linking sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Exploring the masculinities of gay and minority men may provide insights into developing positive definitions of what it means to be a man, while at the same time acknowledging that gay and minority men can be simultaneously resistant and complicit in sustaining dominant masculinities.

Men's privileges come with costs, and a sense of powerlessness

MMS emphasizes the price that men pay for their gender privilege – often as a critical response to the perception of feminist scholarship's universalization of men's power and invisibilization of men's experiences of

disadvantage and harm arising from prevailing gender norms. There is a wealth of evidence not only from MMS, but various disciplines and fields of education, health, etc. that demonstrates the costs of masculinity. This includes costs to men's physical and mental health, care-seeking behaviours, risk-taking, crime, violence, etc. The negative definition of masculinity described above is linked to men's eschewal of feminine-associated traits such as caring, emotional responsiveness and expression, creating a lack of empathy and resulting in what Dowd (2010) calls an emotionally limited and stunted life for men that impacts every aspect of their well-being. Indeed, men's conformation and complicity with dominant notions of masculinity is complex – as Dowd suggests, "That privilege would be embraced with such a price exposes the strength and attraction of male privilege. The price paid becomes justification and entitlement." (2008, p.230).

At the same time, many men do not feel privileged by the gender system – rather, there is often a sense of victimization and powerlessness. Kimmel (2011) reflects on men's resistance to feminism's claims of men's power, suggesting that while men as a group may be "in power", men as individuals may not always be in power, and may not see themselves

as powerful.

"Like gender, power is not the property of individuals – a possession that one has or does not have – but rather a property of group life, of social life. Power is. It can neither be willed away nor ignored" (Kimmel, 2011, p.119)

Men's sense of powerlessness is closely linked to the challenge of engaging them as full participants in feminism, and in many cases, also contributes to backlash and the rise of "men's rights" discourse and movements. As Kimmel suggests, "men often feel themselves to be equally constrained by a system of stereotypic conventions that leaves them unable to live the lives to which they believe they are entitled" (2011, p.118). Thus, while scholars across MMS and other disciplines recognize the reality of men's power and privilege, it is necessary to engage with men's perceived powerlessness, as "this conviction is real and stands in the way of changing consciousness of men about men, and of women about men so that movement forward toward equality is possible" (Dowd, 2008, p.233).

MMS and Feminist scholarship: tensions, critiques, and contributions

As discussed above, MMS scholarship has much to offer towards feminist theorizing around masculinities – beyond making men visible as gendered subjects, it has enriched understandings of the plurality of masculinities, exposed the ways in which gendered privilege interacts with harms, and explored how relationships between men are critical to understanding male domination over women as well as each other. At the same time, in tandem with the growth of ‘male engagement’ and masculinities-related discourse in the gender and development sector space, there are growing concerns around the need for MMS to “reinvigorate its focus with greater feminist questioning of male power” (Dowd, 2008, p.206). The below sections explore the tensions between MMS and feminist scholarship, highlighting some key feminist critiques of MMS, and draw on the insights of scholars attempting to bridge these gaps towards more cohesive, comprehensive, and critical work on dismantling patriarchal masculinities.

MMS and feminist scholarship: Asymmetric motivations, goals, and tools

The fields of MMS and feminist scholarship are at once overlapping, contradictory, and difficult to compare. This asymmetry stems from the differential position of men as a group vis-a-vis women within the prevailing gender order. Men as a group remain more powerful with access to the systemic benefits and privileges of the patriarchal dividend, as compared to women – thus, it follows that the study of the dominant group cannot be the same as that of the subordinated group (Dowd, 2008). While feminists challenge the devaluation of that which is associated with women and femininity, in contrast, that which is associated with men is not systematically devalued, thus the study of men and masculinities is often seen as lacking a clear goal.

While the fields may converge on certain themes of patriarchal masculinity and domination, MMS and feminist scholarship have followed distinctive paths, with different spheres

of influence and appeal. While feminism as a larger movement has spearheaded the achievement of women's rights in different contexts and impacted many women, the critical study of masculinities has a limited appeal to men. As Ramazanoglu has suggested, "problematizing masculinity is not the basis of a theory and practice which complements or balances feminism, it is the application of feminist theory and practice to the study of men in ways which identify masculinity as a problem for men as well as women" (1992, p.340). MMS has largely focused on the construction of male identity with inadequate attention to dismantling male power and privilege – remaining largely descriptive rather than explicitly analytical or critical (Dowd, 2008). Thus, MMS has been criticized for lacking a clear political direction and for failing to clearly set the agenda for gender transformation and the elimination of male dominance. Feminism, in comparison, is seen to offer a wealth of theoretical perspectives and tools to "address much more strongly inequality, subordination, and how to shift from power-over to power-with" (Dowd, 2008, p.231).

Marginalization of feminist theorizing and knowledge within MMS

Although the field of contemporary MMS found its origins in feminist theorizing, feminists have raised concerns around its neglect of the long history of feminist work on men and masculinities. With feminist theory largely left unexamined, MMS scholars may seem to suggest that feminism has not yet engaged with masculinity, and by extension may imply that MMS as a field leads the intellectual project (Brown and Ismael, 2019). Feminist scholars challenge the reduction of feminist scholarship solely to women's studies and the erasure of the long history and varied approaches towards addressing masculinity, patriarchal power, and the structural transformation of gender (Gardiner, 2005; Ramazanoglu, 1992). Feminist theory often goes completely unacknowledged, and MMS scholars have not clearly sought to "explicitly address as a main theoretical priority how feminist theory is used, cited, and analyzed within masculinity theory" (Robinson, 2003, p.130).

Feminist scholars are also critical of selective, homogenized, and tokenistic references to the body of scholarship which fail to sufficiently engage with the complexities and contradictions of feminism. MMS is often seen to portray

an “essentialist, unified, radical feminism which need not be taken too seriously”, deconstructed to “contradictory, contested, and partial feminisms or generally ‘neutralis[ing] the feminist analysis’” (Ramazanoglu, 1992, p.340). While some contemporary writing on masculinity appears to provide more “thoughtful” engagement with feminist theory (Brown and Ismael, 2019, p.18), the engagement is often limited to a small number of theorists, selective in their emphasis (or lack thereof) on certain issues sympathetic to men’s interests (Brown and Ismael. 2019; Waling, 2018). Thus, although many feminists welcome and critically engage with MMS, they remain attentive to ensure that the lessons learned through the long-drawn process of constructing feminist knowledge and practice are not ignored but rather incorporated into the examination of masculinity (Ramazanoglu, 1992).

The ‘hijacking’ of feminism and reinvention of patriarchy

Linked to the above is the concern that the institutionalization of MMS as a field will displace focus, resources, and efforts away from girls and women, and center men as the central subjects of gender and sexuality-related work. At the early stages, much work within the MMS

field focused on the disadvantages faced by men due to their gender role, and represented a new assertion of subordination by men in the larger context of their gendered power and privilege over women, raising the alarm among feminists who were making hard-fought gains in improving the status of women (Dowd, 2008). Certain scholars and men’s movements have also positioned feminists as antagonists in men’s struggles, challenging the claim of women’s subordination and asserting a state of ‘crisis’ for men and boys (Dowd, 2008). Alongside men’s pro-feminist organizing, there has been a rise in anti-feminist ‘men’s rights’ groups and movements that tend to blame feminism for men’s state of ‘crisis’ and deny the reality of women’s oppression within the prevailing gender regime. At best, they tend to apply a ‘different but equal’ logic to claim that power is equally distributed across the private and public realms, each with their privileges and disadvantages, thus asserting that women cannot claim to be oppressed more than – or oppressed by – men (Bojin, 2013).

These concerns have persisted over time, as feminists have observed and criticized the absence of women from the more mainstream and pro-feminist field of MMS, which they claim has focused more narrowly on relations

among men with limited, unidimensional or essentialist portrayals of women (Waling, 2018; Dowd, 2008). Within an increasingly hostile funding environment for women's rights work, the institutionalization of MMS also represents a threat as men "jump on board" and compete for resources with feminist groups (Waling, 2018; Bojin, 2013). There is also caution against the risk of feminist work getting 'hijacked' to reinforce rather than challenge patriarchy, co-opting the language and arguments of feminists to reassert and reinvent patriarchy (Dowd, 2010). Masculinities may become reconstructed in new forms that serve men's interests, incorporating feminist theory but not feminist politics, and that the resulting 'new man' represents a 'patriarchal mutation' (Ramazanoglu, 1992).

Feminist writer Andrea Cornwall points out that engagement with masculinities may not always include an engagement with patriarchy as a structure and ideology. This can lead to a linear engagement with certain kind of men and boys, without an engagement with the values, privilege and premium that masculinity embodies in most societies. Feminist questions also arise in the context of men who write or intervene on

masculinities and the extent to which they reflect upon their own gendered subjectivities – or whether it is only certain 'other' kinds of men and boys who end up becoming the point of intervention and theorization. As a result, Ramazanoglu suggests that the exploration of men's pain requires careful and critical attention "if men are not to emerge both as the dominant gender and as the 'real victims' of masculinity" (1992, p.346).

Erasure of men's role and agency in deconstructing and reconstructing masculinities

Social construction theory has been critical to MMS, enabling a deeper understanding of how masculinities are shaped, performed, and sustained. At the same time, there are debates around the notion of 'society' as the primary constructing agent of masculinity, which tends to underplay the role of men and relieve them of their responsibility in shaping masculinity norms (Ramazanoglu, 1992). Waling (2018) draws on poststructuralist notions of agency and emotional reflexivity to argue for a feminist perspective in masculinities research that considers the varied and complex nature of men's engagement with masculinity. This would pave the way to "move beyond stagnant theorizations of men and masculinity

as being only either victim of or responsible to various models of masculinit(ies) and masculine practices" (Waling, 2018, p.90). As Hearn (2004) suggests, compared to MMS, feminist approaches to men and masculinities are clearer in their recognition of men's complicity and consent in the maintenance of hegemony and patriarchal power relations. In contrast, MMS theorizing may tend to "blame" masculinity as an "all-powerful domineering entity", thereby "rendering men as powerless victims while continuing to benefit from their privileged positions" (Waling, 2018, citing McCarry, 2007, p.410).

This is also closely linked to Waling and others' critique of hegemonic masculinity theory, which may consider power-relations but does not sufficiently engage with the production and negotiation of men's agency within the hierarchy. Rather than an act of simple choice, agency here refers to a complex, relational process shaped by competing constraints and dynamics, a "conditional possibility for negotiating discourse and subjectivity" as individuals interact with their social contexts (Waling, 2018, citing Gill, 2007). The typologization of different masculine types through theoretical models that seek to explain men's

practices and behaviors, results in the "naming" of masculinity as a powerful governing entity and a neglect of men's agency and subjectivity. The resulting disembodiment of men from masculinity and the continued privileging of masculinity as a theoretical framework for gender relations thus overlooks men's agentive and reflexive engagement with masculinity, such that "masculinity is thus still positioned as something that is done to men (Waling, 2018, p.98).

Multiple masculinities and men's power

As discussed above, there are continued debates across MMS and feminist scholarship regarding the extent to which men are able to exercise agency over how they become men. In keeping with the notion of multiple masculinities and intersecting identities, it is also crucial to recognize that different men are differently positioned in their ability to exercise effective agency, which adds a layer of complexity towards understanding the role that different men play in constructing masculinities. At the same time, feminist scholars caution that deconstruction and the recognition of multiple masculinities can "confuse our sense of any systematic power relations" (Ramazanoglu, 1992, p.343). While it is

key to recognize the social divisions between men, Ramazanoglu warns against the risk of “slipping into a version of relativism” which portrays different masculinities as identities that men can adopt or reject, and ultimately disregards the power of men as a gender and the sources and mechanisms of that power (1992, p.343). There is also a risk that a focus on differences among men may reduce the study of masculinity to different sources of power (e.g. race, class), leaving men as a gender unexamined. The positioning of men as both oppressors and oppressed may also inadvertently shift the focus of analysis to the individual rather than larger structures that sustain gender inequity, ultimately deflecting from men’s access to power (Brown and Ismael, 2019; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2012).

In view of the debates and challenges described above, Hearn (2004) proposes a shift in theorizing from the more descriptive ‘men’s studies’ to a ‘critical studies on men’ which explicitly draws from feminist and queer theory and considers power the central issue in theorizing on masculinities. Reflecting on Connell’s interpretation of the Gramscian concept of hegemony, Hearn argues that ‘hegemony’ has been utilized in a restricted way to understand men’s power, with a narrow focus on

masculinity. Rather, Hearn proposes: “[I]t is time to go back from masculinity to men, to examine the hegemony of men and about men. The hegemony of men seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices” (2004, p.59). The concept of hegemony is thus recast to focus not on the construction of masculinity (and all the challenges that it poses), but rather on the construction and sustaining of male power (Dowd, 2008).

MMS, feminism, and the equality project: Bringing men in

Lastly, it is essential to tackle a critical question raised by masculinities and feminist scholarship: what is the role of men in achieving feminist goals and their own equality? bell hooks provides a strong response:

Separatist ideology encourages us to believe that women alone can make feminist revolution – we cannot. Since men are the primary agents maintaining and supporting sexism and sexist oppression, they can only be successfully eradicated if men are compelled to assume responsibility for transforming their consciousness and the consciousness of society as a whole. (hooks, 1984, p.81)

This raises further questions. Can men be feminists? What should be their goals? What incentive do men have to participate in feminism? What incentive do men have to change? These questions give rise to discourse around what men stand to gain from opposing patriarchal masculinity, yet as Ramazanoglu argues, provides “no clear sense of the political direction of men’s resistance to patriarchy” (1992, p.347). As the MMS scholarship exposes, despite the costs of masculinity, men benefit from the patriarchal dividend, have gendered privilege, and calls for men and boys to engage with their privilege, gendered subjecthoods and negotiations. Some scholars argue against the notion of men’s self-interest as a rationale for their engagement with feminism: “Full engagement with the feminist project ... requires them to move beyond self-interest and treat the viewpoints and concerns of women as important in their own right” (Crowe, 2011, p.51). Dowd suggests that “the pull of privilege is too great while the pull of equality is moral and emotional”, and that the most essential change for men is to imagine a “different manhood” (2008, p234). However, change will have to be pushed as it is largely against men’s interests to give up on their power and privilege – at the same time, as Ramazanoglu

highlights, changing men is a much larger project than simply developing new masculine identities – it is about “the structural transformation of gendered power relations” (1992, p.346).

Manifestations of masculinities in India - an entangled web

Though still nascent, research in South Asia has demonstrated how masculinity is interpreted, performed and experienced in daily life and the role it has played in the processes of colonialism, nationalism and globalization and their legacies (Sinha, 1995; O'Hanlon, 1999). This body of research highlights the historical plurality of masculinity, intersectional nature of gender identities and relations, and provides a deep insight into the complexities of doing and redoing masculinity in the region (Chakraborty, 2014).

Masculinity and Colonial Legacies in India

Chandrima Chakraborty's *Masculinity, Asceticism, Hinduism: Past and Present Imaginings of India* highlights that in the tussle for power between the colonizer (British) and colonized (Indians) there lay contrasting claims to masculinities. Michael Roper and John Tosh (1991, p. 1) have stressed that masculinity has been and continues to be defined to a large extent in relation to "the other".

Throughout South Asia, colonials articulated and performed their masculinity by emphasizing their difference from the "emasculated" colonized men and the "civilizing" effect of imperial masculinity. The masculinity of Indian men was closely associated with these notions of effeminacy under British India. This effeminacy was linked to perceptions of Indian men's indolence, corporeal and moral weakness, lack of martial spirit, political immaturity and so on. At the same time, Indian men were also seen as hyper sexual whose sexuality posed a threat to the 'virtuous white woman' thus creating a justification for colonizers to check and discipline other cultures (Dasgupta and Gokulsing, 2013)

In view of these dynamics, Indian men sought to reassert their masculinity, actively appropriating and reconfiguring the masculine norms and practices that were most valued by the colonials in their attempts at remasculinization (Pante, 2014). The interplay between power and structure created hegemonies that transformed

indigenous ideologies of gender and power. Nationalist ideologues such as Bankim, Tagore and Gandhi saw the male Hindu (ascetic), as a powerful symbol of anti-colonialism. This symbolic 'man' redefined masculinity based on indigenous models and superior morality. Bankim merged the traditional Hindu masculine images of Kshatriya (warrior) and Brahmin (priest) as a model to establish martial prowess and warrior ascetics as a core of Hindu masculinity. Mahatma Gandhi under his Swadeshi (self-sufficiency) viewed masculinity as 'embodied' through the lens of self-control, regimentation, discipline, and non-violence (Chakraborty, 2011).

However, asymmetries in socio-economic status produced significant discrepancies in responses to dominant ideologies and institutions of masculinity. Colonizers and native elite men in British India, extended the colonized lens to view men beyond the dominant class as 'effeminate'. Men who did not fall into the elite socio-economic category and acceptable gender binaries, and did not participate or contribute to the freedom struggle in 'acceptable ways' were considered morally weak, subservient and 'failed men'. While examining masculinity in colonial India, it is thus important to consider the expressions of male respectability by not only the colonial and native

elite but also those beyond the dominant class (Hinchy, 2014). This divide between masculinities of the dominant class and those beyond, continues to be starkly visible in contemporary India. Drawing upon R.W. Connell's formulation of hegemonic masculinity as defining ways of 'being a man', South Asian theorists stress that there are multiple hegemonic forms of masculinity at play in the region. Hence, masculinity must be understood not only in relation to women and femininity, but also in relation to men and hierarchies of caste, class, region, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and ability among others. In the sections that follow, we delve deeper into the intersectionalities between caste, religion, sexuality and masculinity.

Caste and the hierarchy of masculinities

The intersection of caste and gender presents many nuances in relation to the manifestation of patriarchy and masculinity in India (Anandhi, Jeyaranjan and Krishnan, 2002). In the feudal agrarian system, Dalits (who were positioned as lower castes within the Indian caste system) worked as agricultural workers in lands owned by upper castes and were paid meagre wages, were subject to discrimination, physical violence, experienced spatial segregation, were considered polluted and could not access temples, wells,

and other public spaces equally. They did not have the right to freely exercise power, employ aggression or dispense justice and were further emasculated due to their inability to protect 'their' women against the sexual domination of upper caste men.

With changes in the economic system and abolition of the feudal agrarian system, the economic situation of Dalits has gradually changed over time. They have moved away from agricultural work. However, this non-agricultural work is sporadic, with harsh working conditions combined with long stretches of unemployment. The unemployed and casually employed dalit youngsters are in the centre of reworking norms of masculinity. They do so by asserting control over public spaces in the village and by public and private display of violence of varying degrees – ranging from petty quarrels to sexual harassment of upper caste women (Anandhi, Jeyaranjan and Krishnan, 2002).

The present-day articulation of masculinity by the dalit youths has resulted in contradictory outcomes. At the level of caste, it challenges the pre-existing power of the upper castes, is a significant form of Dalit assertion and, at the level of gender relations, it reinforces patriarchy.

These changes are not based on different forms of social capital but operate from a desire to express power over others within a context of relative powerlessness (Anandhi, Jeyaranjan and Krishnan, 2002). The new masculinity of the Dalit youths is based on insufficient resources and continuing social marginality. Dalit men may be 'reclaiming' their masculinity, but they are still on the margins with continuous anxiety due to lack of employment, lack of cultural/social capital and loss of dignity.

At the same time, the understanding of masculinity from a lens of caste cannot only be limited to the masculinities of dalit men and boys. It also requires an engagement with the masculinities of savarana and OBC men, which may allow for deeper understanding of caste as a graded system, masculinities, and masculine power. In "Recasting Women", the volume edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid in 1989, attention is drawn to the reform era of the 19th century, which was dominated by upper-caste, upper-class, urban educated men, for whom the reform became a site to reinvent their masculinity (vis-à-vis the masculinity of the colonizer). Essays by Lata Mani and Partha Chatterjee (1989) in the volume point towards the dichotomization of the home and the world during this milieu, where the home symbolized the

feminine, and the world symbolized the masculine. While masculinity became less aggressive, more benevolent, it did not lead to a break down of patriarchal gender relationships, but a reinvention of patriarchy (and caste). The genteel, but patriarchal – Brahmanical masculinity of the 19th century reform movement continue to have its hold, now combined with complex play of neo-liberalism and corporate masculinities. This is, of course establishing a new hegemony, but also rendering invisible the subjecthoods of subaltern men, as well queer and trans people.

Nation, and anxious masculinities

In India, there is a complex entanglement of masculinity, and the nation (Hansen, 1996). As mentioned previously, responding to colonial constructions of Indian men as 'emasculated', the nationalists responded by adopting ideas of hegemonic masculinity – defined by aggression, strength, warriorhood and virility.

This man is not a figure of protest but is 'angry; and will defend the nation against its enemies, notably Muslims and the West. They believe the state/nation is faced with a constant threat of aggressors and thus needs vigilance and protection" (Banerjee,

2005). These represent a model of his represents a model of anxious masculinity where emphasis is on violence, aggression, vengeance, military strength and display of power that needs to be at service of the nation at the right time.

After establishing its hold over the areas of nation-state, religious institutions, military and public spaces, this nationalistic masculinity is gradually invading online spaces, media and lately, personal relationships in India.

Sexual identities and hypermasculine ideals

One key feature of India's colonial and post-colonial modernity is the suppression and marginalisation of gender and sexual identities that did not live up to hypermasculinist ideals (Omissi 1991; Sinha 1997). Discourses on sexuality in South Asia have most often focused on heterosexual men's desires, and experiences and overlook the nuanced and complex forms masculinity and femininity may take and the meanings sexual identities and expressions may have in local contexts (Srivastava, 2004). The desexualization, de-eroticization of the Indian male sexuality can be seen as a reaction to the imaginary essentializing of the hypersexual native male in the colonial era (Srivastava, 2004).

In India, non-binary sexual identities are seen as an import from the West and there is a strive to reinforce an imagined pure Indianness of manhood or womanhood' (Vanita, 2002). Thus, modern homophobia in India intertwined with modern nationalism where masculinity becomes a foundation stone equating it to rationality, chivalry, and moral superiority where sexuality and effeminacy have no place in this new rhetoric (Dasgupta, 2011).

In India, the societal standards of respectability that queer persons are expected to adhere to are aligned with cis heteronormative standards of masculinity. These standards are prerequisites for societal recognition and dignity and act as a tool to police queer identity. Acts such as gender non-conforming dressing and behaviour, sex positivity, non-monogamy, and expressions of sexuality in public spaces are condemned (Prasad, 2020)

Discussions around Article 377 that criminalized same-sex relationships in India, highlighted the way the Indian state systematically excludes individuals for straying from sexuality in public spaces are condemned (Prasad, 2020).

Discussions around Article 377 that criminalized same-sex relationships in India, highlighted the way the Indian state systematically excludes individuals for straying from normativity, the social stigmatization faced by the Indian queer community and the extent of legal victimization faced by queer individuals. Sexual minorities in India are subject to a sexist exclusionary hierarchy, only financial and social standing can provide some semblance of a safe space to LGBTQIA+ individuals, which continues to be marred by stigmatization, discrimination, and alienation.

New minimum and competing standards of masculinities

India's program of economic liberalization in the 1990's and its link to rising living standards has entangled men in ever expanding masculine expectations and commitments. While providing financially for children's education and marriages, domesticating wives, and supporting parents' wellbeing were always normative measures of masculinity, today these expectations are magnified (Vera-Sanso, 2000) In addition to these new minimum standards, masculinities is measured more materially and in comparison to other men's visible success as

and consumers (Osella and Osella, 2006).

In today's era of transnational labor migration and globalization there exists competing masculinities (Ford, and Lyons, 2012). Within this it is important to account for localized masculinities while also considering cross-cultural ideas and processes that shape relations of power. There has been increasing scholarly attention to migrant men and masculinities. At the workplace, these men display a professional masculinity of self-discipline, competence and endurance of hardship, off-duty their behavior involves a hypermasculinity that focuses on physical dominance, gallantry and risk-taking heterosexuality. Back home in their local or national communities, they transition into successful marriageable partners, family breadwinners and overseas adventurers, and recover their sense of masculine self-worth.

Indian cities manifest this contradictory mix of entrenched inequalities and the possibility of creative contestations of the same (Lohokare, 2017). Young men in India are grappling with their masculine selves and its interactions with contradictory urban processes of gendered privilege and caste or class-based marginalization, of liberal

aspirations and patriarchal socialization. Added to this in an interesting variant of masculine anxiety, where professionally qualified men's rights activists appropriate the narrative of 'victim' and 'experience' (of oppression) to counter the perceived ills of feminism.

Gender, Development and Masculinities

Integrating gender in the development discourse

The concept of development has always been closely linked with the idea of gendered citizenship (Kabeer, 2003). The experience of development i.e., ways in which men and women have been included in the development process and ways in which development has impacted them is different across genders. Bulk of feminist literature has highlighted that state development policies (ranging from land rights, reproductive health, microfinance models, livelihoods etc.) and their implementation strategies while reiterating women empowerment in their formulations, cater to men and promote tenets of hegemonic masculinity (Agarwal, 1994).

These state development policies solidify the masculine as a superior category (within the binary of masculine and feminine, and as opposition to feminine). For instance, Sayantani Sur (2019), in her essay *Family Planning and the Masculinity of Nirodh Condoms in India*, suggests that “masculinity was no more

articulated only in terms of physical aspects such as strength, fertility, and the flow of body fluids; a new brand of masculinity was endorsed through family planning advertisements, which upheld birth control as an economic necessity and a social obligation”. Nirodh constructed the image of a man who single-handedly took the responsibility of birth control and ensured economic competence and welfare of the nation by using contraceptives.

Critiques of such developmental policies backed by biases and stereotypes argued for pushing the discourse of development from the women in development (WID) paradigm (popularly referred to as ‘add women and stir’), to women and development (WAD) (with women positioned as active agents of developmental change), to finally arrive at gender and development (GAD), where gender is treated as a socially constructed, relational concept integral to understanding and delivering progress towards key developmental outcomes. Masculinities and ‘missing men’ within gender and development (Cornwall, 2000).

The GAD paradigm offered a new approach to including women in the development process. As a critical component of GAD, the gender lens became a 'means by which feminist advocates and practitioners... [sought] to deinstitutionalize male privilege within development policy and planning' (Kabeer, 2003). The GAD framework also allowed for a rational and nuanced approach to engaging with diverse stakeholders in development, including men (Roy and Das, 2014). GAD acknowledged that power relations between sexes need to be changed, and for this purpose engaging with masculinities is crucial. Sylvia Chant, among other researchers, argues that to achieve long term sustainable and equitable development, a structural shift in male-female power relations is necessary and that can only be attained if gender interventions are transformative. She suggests that since men and boys are in several ways, gatekeepers for existing gender norms and inequality, they should be targeted and included in efforts to promote gender equality (Chant and Guttman 2000).

Historically, most programmatic work on masculinities by civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly in India, fall under the wider rubric of programming on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR),

gender-based violence (GBV), early and child marriages, safe sex and contraception use. This work is driven by a certain set of predetermined goals and objectives from prevention of violence against women, to enabling women's access to SRHR, to the most recent shift of engaging with patriarchy as a system that perpetuates a certain set of roles, norms, and expectations from different genders.

One of the main characteristics of the use of the category "masculine" in GAD is the association that is often made between men, masculinity, and power (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994). This often extends to the assumption that all men have power and, as a corollary, that all those in power are men (Cornwall 1997). Both as irresponsible individualists and perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, images of men accentuate the exact opposite of the cooperative, community-oriented and caring woman. In this discourse, "men" become "the problem", although solutions to resolve "gender-related problems" rarely involve them directly. Andrea Cornwall suggests that the underlying gaze, even though not intentionally, equates men and masculinity and views men and boys as perpetrators of violence or potential perpetrators. And hence in these programmes the key site for change is the behaviour and attitude of men and

boys which is not adequate to encapsulate the nuances of masculinity especially given that these programmes are short-term. When the category "men" is evoked in GAD, masculinities that do not associate with oppressive power have not been represented. According to Andrea Cornwall, this constitutes a kind of 'subtractive analysis'. This approach keeps the "men" category intact.

Male privilege is not a unifying category equally distributed to the advantage of each individual standing at a cross-section where multiple identities interact with each other. While programs recognize this, there are limited spaces and tools within these programs to engage with men from low-income and minority groups and their unique experiences and vulnerabilities. Often discussions and tools around these intersectionalities in men's lives are incorporated as an additive, without thorough engagement and targeted strategies. Hence these programs tend to exclude the experiences of men and boys with differential class and caste location and gender expressions. The selective representation of men in GAD has consequences that go well beyond missing men as the objects of development assistance. It also leaves men stripped of social legitimacy to use their agency as men to turn their

sense of outrage against inequity or injustice into opportunities to advocate for change.

A review (World Health Organization, 2007) of various programmes and studies that have engaged with men and boys across the world reveals that most of them explicitly or implicitly apply a social constructionist approach, where they believe that masculinity is socially constructed and is based on men's relationships with their ecosystem. Even though they generally consider the power dimensions and social realities faced by men and boys who participate in the interventions, often the approach to understanding masculinity and femininity takes the route of comparison. These comparisons often result in a polarizing and simplistic debate around the hierarchy of suffering.

Nonetheless, these programs have successfully established the rationale of working with men and boys and have created a space within their interventions to involve men in conversations that are crucial to achieving gender justice, the challenge remains to scale these programs, document learnings, and create awareness about effective strategies among the government, donors, CSOs, academia, and community at large.

Creating space for men's multidimensional realities and vulnerabilities within development

The scholars who critiqued GAD proposed that development should be based on an understanding that masculinity and gender norms are socially constructed. It is crucial to look into the costs of masculine norms and their impact as a whole, on men and boys, on women and girls, on families, communities, institutions and public policies. These gender norms vary across historical and local contexts and interact with other factors, such as poverty and globalization. They are created, reinforced, and reconstructed by families, communities, and social institutions (Connell 1987, Kimmel 2011). Individuals learn (Barker et al. 2011) and internalize these gender norms but can also question and reject them.

The critique also urged that developmental programs must focus on men's gender as an aspect of their identity, and combine it with an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1994) that allows articulating multidimensional vulnerabilities faced by men due to their caste, class, sexuality, and location, among others, in society. Gender programming needs to move beyond the binaries of men and women as well as from the

binary of empowered women and oppressed women in the community and become a center for accommodating the nuances of masculinities and different subjectivities, including those of people who display non-conformist behavior or defy the status quo. This also requires us to look into the lived experiences of queer and trans people, intersex bodies and persons with disabilities, in relation to masculinity, its different performances and negotiations with its norms.

Driven by the above-mentioned criticisms, programs have adapted their strategies of engaging with cisgender men – from viewing them within the narrow binary of perpetrators and protectors, to seeing them as partners in achieving equality and justice, to the most recent shift in the understanding of cisgender men themselves as subjects of intervention and potential beneficiaries. Among the approaches to involving men in development are two very different extremes: one, in which questions of power and inequality are central to GAD; the other, in which it is emphasized that men, too, suffer, albeit in different ways perhaps, from gender divisions, and that men's narrower interests provide the best basis upon which to involve men in GAD. Increasingly, scholars advocate for the adoption of the first approach.

Reasserting feminist rationales in the work on men and masculinities

Within this context, it is important to reflect on what ideal, feminist, effective programming with men and boys entails, and how it can be operationalized. Through contextualized gender transformative interventions, programs can create the conditions required for participants to recognize, reflect, and challenge the impacts of patriarchy and intersecting systems of oppression. This literature review proposes a set of six key takeaways that can guide the conceptualization and designing of interventions to engage men and boys, so that they are grounded within feminist perspective and principles.

They are as follows:

1

Men and boy are gendered beings, subject to gender norms and gendered power relations. Their masculinities are a socio-cultural construct, which are imbibed from the contexts they belong to. At the same time, they are not just recipients of this construction, but also perform their masculinities. Therefore, men and boys are gendered beings and have gendered subjecthood.

2

Masculinities do not exist in a monolith; they are plural, where they intersect with the power relations of caste, class, sexuality, race, and nationalism. They can vary according to histories, societies, are fluid and flexible, where different men and boys are positioned differently, in relation to each other and in hierarchies. Therefore, not all men enjoy the same kind of power and not all men are powerless either.

3

Despite the multiplicity of masculinity, certain hegemonic ideas of masculinity have a strong hold, socially, politically, culturally, and economically. The hegemonic masculinity is also key to upholding unequal power relations of heteropatriarchy, Brahmanism, racism and nationalism. Homophobia, queerphobia, transphobia sexism, misogyny, virulent nationalism, anti-migrant sentimentality etc. are often expressions of hegemonic masculinities.

4

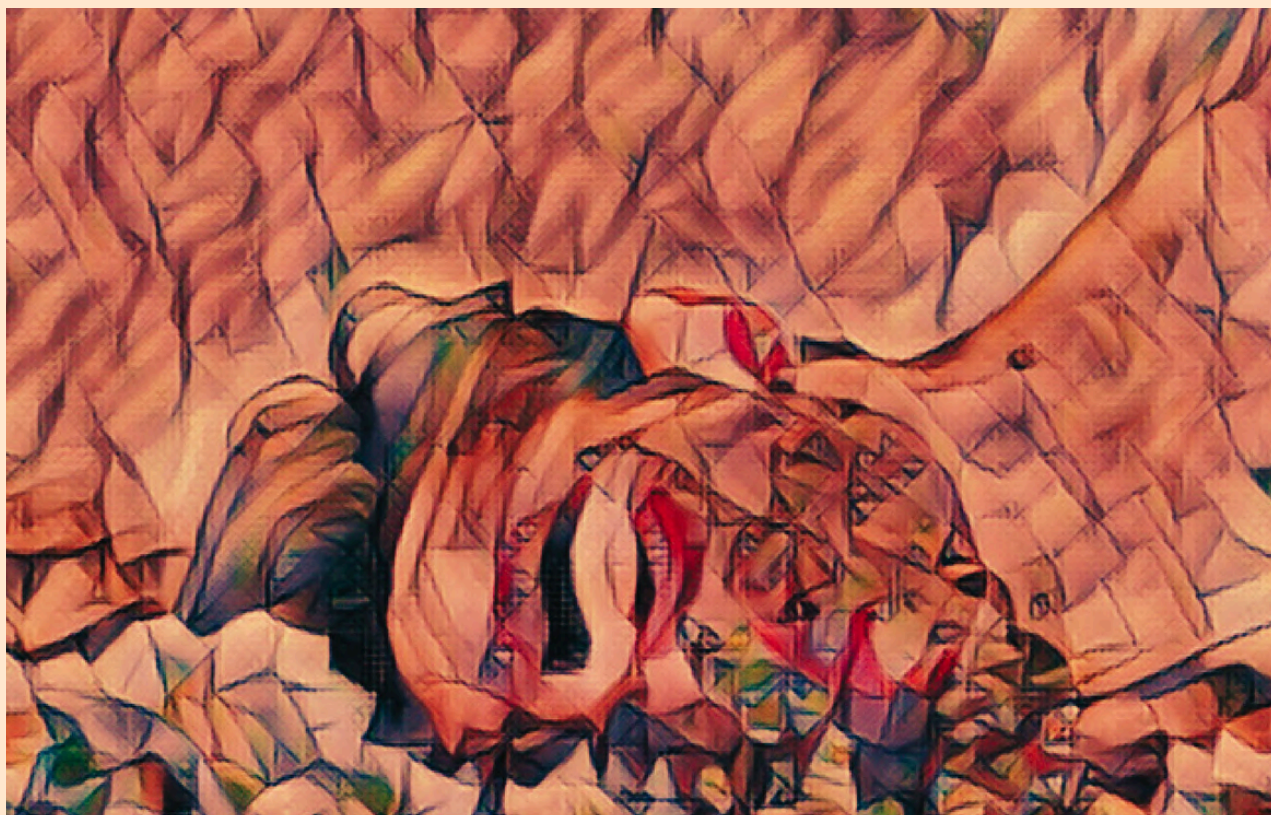
While conformation to such hegemonic ideas of masculinities brings substantial privilege, rewards, and power, it also means that individual men who conform to this hegemony find it very difficult to break away from its fold. The closer they are to the power, its rewards, and privileges, the more difficult it is to subvert it. Conformation to such values, ideas, and norms can lead to socio-emotional dehumanization of such men, with huge costs on their health, well-being, and relationships.

5

Hegemonic masculinity is not an external, domineering entity to which all men are bound as helpless victims, rather, it is important to recognize men's agentive and reflexive engagement and participation in the construction of masculinities, through the different ways they embody and perform it, while also socializing other men and boys to the same. Simultaneously, subordinate, or marginalized men may not necessarily always resist this hegemony; they can at once be both resistant and complicit towards it, to negotiate power for themselves.

6

While men as a group hold gendered power, individual men tend to see themselves as powerless, and as equal victims of patriarchal masculinity. This conviction must be taken seriously and examined as it stands in the way of changing consciousness of men about women and vice versa. This also calls for explicit recognition, acknowledgement, and engagement with insights and learnings that have emerged from feminist scholarship's long and complex engagement with gender performativity, patriarchy, men and masculinities.



While these questions provide a useful entry point for centering feminist perspectives, more work needs to be done to conceptualize interventions with men and boys and to develop contextualized, gender-transformative approaches to engage with them. There is no consensus on gender-transformative programming for engaging men as various programs may qualitatively differ in their goals and objectives. Seeking to change the structures and cultural practices that shape and determine gender norms and inequality requires not only engaging with masculinity beyond the existing stereotypes but also moving beyond reaching specific groups of men and boys. It is essential to understand how the stereotypical expectations of masculinity emerge and are reproduced over time, how ideals of masculinity impact and manipulate individual behavior in day-to-day interactions, and how masculinities are implicated in the production of gender relations and personhood. Therefore, it is even more critical that development programmes continuously reflect and assess which groups of men and boys are they engaging with, and do not inadvertently end up replacing one form of hegemonic masculinity with another. The intentionality of development programs cannot be to 'produce' 'better' men and boys, but to facilitate them to engage with their own gendered subjecthood and realities; not only to become 'better' sons, brothers, husbands, partners, friends to the women around them etc., but to also become cognizant of their interactions, relationships with other men and boys (including trans, queer, and disabled people), to both understand the gendered nature of these interactions and tap into their transformative potential.

The process of involving men in GAD work is likely to be slow and despite the strong rationale for engaging men, more than they have been in GAD work, caution must be exercised. It is a difficult balance between dismantling fixed categories of gender on one hand and acknowledging and managing the perceived and real threat of 'men taking over' on the other. The key to involving men in development work requires a nuanced approach to understanding gender as relational based on reassertion of feminist rationales and approaches.

As a way forward, ICRW and Nirantar intend to combine the insights from this literature review with insights from various south-Asian programs that engage with men and boys on masculinities. The intention is to build a robust, actionable toolkit that can guide the next generation work on masculinities from a feminist lens.

References

- Anandhi, S, J. Jeyaranjan, & Rajan Krishnan. (2002). Work, Caste and Competing Masculinities: Notes from a Tamil Village. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(43), 4397–4406. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412773>
- Anand, D. (2007). Anxious sexualities: Masculinity, nationalism and violence. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9(2), 257–269. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856x.2007.00282.x>
- Agarwal, B. (1994). Gender and command over property: A critical gap in economic analysis and policy in South Asia. *World Development*, 22(10). Institute of Economic Growth. Delhi. India
- Arya, S. (2020) 'Dalit or Brahmanical Patriarchy? Rethinking Indian Feminism'. *Global Journal on Social Exclusion*.
- Banerjee, S. (2003). Gender and nationalism: The masculinization of Hinduism and female political participation in India. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(2), 167–179. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-5395\(03\)00019-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-5395(03)00019-0)
- Banerjee, S. (2005). *Make me a man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India*. State Univ of New York Press.
- Barker, G., Contreras, J., Heilman, B., Singh, A., Verma, R., & Nascimento, M. (2011). *Evolving Men Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. International Center for Research on Women & Instituto Promundo. Washington DC and Rio de Janeiro
- Bojin, K. (2013). Feminist solidarity: no boys allowed? Views of pro-feminist men on collaboration and alliance-building with women's movements. *Gender & Development*, 21(2), 363–379.
- Brown, A. & Ismael, K. (2019). *Feminist Theorizing of Men and Masculinity: Applying Feminist Perspectives to Advance College Men and Masculinities Praxis*. *Thresholds*, 42(1), 17–35.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- Carrigan, T., Connell, B., & Lee, J. (1985). Toward a new sociology of masculinity. *Theory and Society*, 14(5), 551–604. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00160017>
- Chakraborty, C. (2011). *Masculinity, asceticism, hinduism: Past and present Imaginings of India*. Permanent Black.

Chakraborty, C. (2014). Mapping South Asian masculinities: Men and Political Crises. *South Asian History and Culture*, 5(4), 411–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2014.936211>

Chant, S., & Gutmann, M. (2000). *Mainstreaming Men into Gender and Development: Debates, reflections, and experiences* (1st ed.). Oxfam GB.

Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Stanford University Press.

Cornwall, A. (1997). Men, Masculinity and "Gender in Development." *Gender and Development*, 5(2), 8–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030434>

Cornwall, A. (2002) Missing Men? Reflections on Men, Masculinities and Gender in GAD. *IDS Bulletin*, 31 (2)

Cornwall, A., Kariotis, F. G., & Lindisfarne, N. (Eds.). (2016). *Masculinities under Neoliberalism*. Zed Books.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. In S. A. Mann & A. S. Patterson (Eds.), *Reading feminist theory* (pp. 264–273). New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Crenshaw, K (1994). "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." In M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk, Eds. *The Public Nature of Private Violence*. New York, Routledge.

Crowe, J. (2011). Men and feminism: some challenges and a partial response. *Social Alternatives*, 30, 49–53.

Dasgupta, R.K. (2011). Queer Sexuality: A Cultural Narrative of India's Historical Archive. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 3(4), 651–670.

Dasgupta, R.K. & Gokulsing, K.M. (2013). Introduction: Perceptions of masculinity and challenges to the Indian male. In R. Dasgupta & K.M. Gokulsing (Eds.), *Masculinity and its challenges in India: Essays on changing perceptions* (pp. 5–26). Jefferson, NC: Jefferson Publishers.

Diefendorf, S., & Bridges, T. (2020). On the enduring relationship between masculinity and homophobia. *Sexualities*, 23(7), 1264–1284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460719876843>

Dowd, N. E. (2008). Masculinities and Feminist Legal Theory. *Wisconsin Journal of Law, Gender & Society*, 201–248.

Dowd, N. E. (2010). Asking the Man Question: Masculinities Analysis and Feminist Theory. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, 33, 415–430. WHO. (2007). Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: evidence from programme interventions. Geneva

Ford, M., Lyons, L. (2012). Introduction: Men and Masculinities in Southeast Asia. In Michele Ford and Lenore Lyons (Eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Southeast Asia*, (pp. 1–19). London and New York: Routledge.

Gardiner, J. K. (2005). Men, masculinities, and feminist theory. In M. S. Kimmel, J. Hearn, & R. W. Connell (Eds.), *Handbook of studies on men and masculinities* (pp. 35–50). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

f *Women's Studies*, 14, 69–80.

Gill, R. (2007). Critical respect: The dilemmas of “choice” and agency for women’s studies. *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 14, 69–80.

Hansen, T. B. (1996). Recuperating masculinity. *Critique of Anthropology*, 16(2), 137–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275x9601600203>

Haywood, C. & Mac an Ghaill, M. (2012). ‘What’s next for masculinity?’ Reflective directions for theory and research on masculinity and education. *Gender and Education*, 24(6), 577– 592.

Hearn, J. (2004). From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men. *Feminist Theory*, 5, 49–72.

Hinchy, J. (2017). The eunuch archive: Colonial Records of non-normative gender and sexuality in India. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 58(2), 127–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2017.1279555>

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1st ed.). South End Press.

Ikeya, C. (2014). Masculinities in Asia: A review essay. *Asian Studies Review*, 38(2), 243–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2014.898243>

Kabeer, N. (2003). Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals. Commonwealth Secretariat

Kimmel, M. (2011). *The Gendered Society* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Law, S. A. (1988). Homosexuality and the Social Meaning of Gender. *Wisconsin Law Review*, 2, 187–235.

Lingard, B. (1999). Contemporary Masculinity Politics. In B. Lingard & P. Douglas (Eds.), *Men Engaging Feminisms: Pro-feminism, Backlashes and Schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lohokare, M. (2017, May 15). Guest-editorial: Masculinities in Urban India: Of contradictions, dilemmas and uncertainties. *Café Dissensus*. Retrieved from <https://cafedissensus.com/2017/05/15/guest-editorial-masculinities-in-urban-india-of-contradictions-dilemmas-and-uncertainties/>

McCarry, M. (2007). Masculinity studies and male violence: Critique or collusion? *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30, 404–415.

Osella, C., & Osella, F. (2006). *Men and Masculinities in South India*. Anthem Press.

Pleck, J. H. (1981). *The myth of masculinity*. The MIT Press.

Prasad, V. (2020, September 29). The respectable Indian queer unmasked. *The Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/7/19424/The-Respectable-Indian-Queer-Unmasked?infinitescroll=1>

Ramazanoglu, C. (1992). What can you do with a man? *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15(3), 339–350.

Robinson, V. (2003). Radical revisionings?: The theorizing of masculinity and (radical) feminist theory. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(2), 129–137.

Roper, M., & Tosh, J. (Eds.). (1991). *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.

Roy, A, Das, A (2014) Are masculinities changing? Ethnographic exploration of a gender intervention with men in rural Maharashtra. *IDS Bulletin*, 45 (1)

Sangari, Kumkum; Vaid, Sudesh (eds.) (1990). *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.

Sen, S. (2018). Indian Masculinity: An Important Intervention in Gender and Masculinity Studies. *Anthropological Quarterly* 91(3), 1105–1118. doi:10.1353/anq.2018.0051.

Srivastava, S. (Ed.) (2004). *Sexual sites, seminal attitudes: Sexualities, masculinities and culture in South Asia*. (Vols. 1–4). SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9788132103844>

Srivastava, S. (2015). Modi-Masculinity: Media, Manhood, and “Traditions” in a Time of Consumerism. *Television & New Media*, 16(4), 331–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476415575498>

Sur, S. (2020). *Family Planning and the Masculinity of Nirodh Condoms in India*. Cambridge University Press.

Tripathy, J. (2010). How Gendered Is Gender and Development? *Culture, Masculinity, and Gender Difference. Development in Practice*, 20(1), 113–121. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27752191>

Upreti, K. (2022, January 5). Dilemmas under patriarchy: Stifling men & the struggles of living a feminist life. *Feminism In India*. Retrieved from <https://feminisminindia.com/2022/01/05/toxic-masculinity-patriarchy-men/>

Vanita, R and Kidwai S, (2000), *Same Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, New Delhi: Macmillan

Vera-Sanso, P. (2000a) ‘Masculinity, Male Domestic Authority and Female Labour Participation in South India’. *European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 12, No. 2.

Waling A. (2019). Rethinking Masculinity Studies: Feminism, Masculinity, and Post structural Accounts of Agency and Emotional Reflexivity. *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 27(1), 89–107.

Williams, J. (2013). Thinking through the ‘boy crisis’: From multiple masculinities to intersectionality. In M. A. Fineman & M. Thomson (Eds.), *Exploring masculinities: Feminist legal theory reflections* (pp. 163–176). Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate.