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PILOTING L3M FOR CHILD MARRIAGE: EXPERIENCE IN MONITORING RESULTS IN EQUITY SYSTEMS (MoRES) IN BANGLADESH



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ACRONYMS

BRIS	Birth Registration Information System
CBCPC	Community-based Child Protection Committee
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CM	Child Marriage
CPN	Child Protection Network
DSS	Department of Social Services
HFG	Health Finance and Governance Project
HH	Household
IPT	Interactive Popular Theatre
L2	Level 2
L3M	Level 3 Monitoring Approach
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity Systems
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
P	Participant number
SURCH	Local consulting firm in Bangladesh

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Child marriage is a symptom of poverty and gender inequalities. Girls who marry early are more likely to die from maternal health-related causes; are less likely to stay in school; and are more likely to participate in a vicious cycle to reinforce intergenerational poverty. In Bangladesh, early marriage remains a significant challenge. Despite the adoption of an Act on Minimum Age of Marriage, which specifies a minimum legal marriage age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys, around three-fourths of girls are married before they reach their 18th birthday; and more than 55 percent become mothers before they are 19¹. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006, at least 33 percent of adolescent girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 15. Of the women aged 15-19 at the time of the survey, 42 percent were already married. Though early marriage is declining in Bangladesh, these reductions are most noticeable among the wealthy, while the decline in early marriage happens at a slower pace among the poor.²

In 2012, USAID-Bangladesh approached UNICEF to explore possible areas of cooperation around delaying child marriage. UNICEF has more than 10 years of experience working with adolescents and communities to delay child marriage and has documented experiences testing key strategies and interventions. Through a range of interventions including conditional cash transfers (CCT) and stipends to adolescents, UNICEF's Child Protection Program aims to keep children in school, delay the age of marriage for adolescent girls, and shift social norms around acceptance of child marriage.

In order to accelerate the decline of early marriage in Bangladesh, UNICEF partnered with Health Finance and Governance (HFG), USAID's flagship health systems strengthening project, and other key stakeholders, (including the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW)'s Department of Social Services (DSS), local NGOs and Child Protection Networks) **to design and implement a monitoring framework for assessing implementation of tracer interventions to delay child marriage and measuring social norms.**

The principal objectives of this joint activity were to:

- Design, pilot and evaluate a rigorous approach to monitor the effectiveness of two UNICEF Child Protection tracer program interventions (conditional cash transfers and adolescent stipends) to address major bottlenecks to delaying child marriage, with a particular focus on informing progress for change in social norms around child marriage; and
- Present the data collected from the two sites in order to improve UNICEF program implementation, and refine and strengthen the monitoring approach itself.

¹ Gazi, Rukhsana et al. 2013. "Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Findings from a National Survey 2013" Plan International Bangladesh: Dhaka.

² Gazi (2013). Additionally, the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2007 reported that there has been a slow but steady increase over the past 25 years in the age at which Bangladeshi women first marry – from 14 years for women in their late forties to 16.4 years for those in their early twenties.



This activity builds on the existing UNICEF-wide monitoring framework – Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES). It was jointly implemented by a team from UNICEF-Bangladesh’s Child Protection Programs and from USAID’s Health Finance and Governance Project (herein after referred to as “the team”), with input from the other stakeholders mentioned and USAID/Dhaka.

UNICEF programs in Bangladesh

UNICEF implements a package of interventions aimed at promoting child protection and delaying child marriage, including adolescent clubs, life skills training, adolescent stipends, community-based child protection activities, child development training, conditional cash transfers, capacity building for social workers, and policy advocacy. UNICEF activities target the most remote and vulnerable populations, aiming to bring child protection services and resources to hardest to reach populations in Bangladesh.

L3M Pilot methodology

Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) is UNICEF’s global monitoring framework that was recently introduced in Bangladesh and other countries. MoRES proposes a hierarchy of information to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of UNICEF programs. Level 1 corresponds to a situational analysis, which intends to identify the major bottlenecks and barriers to the achievement of UNICEF goals. Level 2 creates a routine approach for monitoring implementation of UNICEF programs. Level 3—which is the subject of this report—monitors the extent to which UNICEF programs contribute to reductions in the barriers and bottlenecks identified in Level 1. Finally, Level 4 monitoring measures the impact of UNICEF programs on the broader goals.

The level 3 monitoring approach (L3M) pilot for child marriage described in this report focuses on examining how two of UNICEF’s Child Protection activities – adolescent stipends and conditional cash transfers - contribute to reductions in three priority bottlenecks: social norms, financial access, and legislation/policy. The pilot contributes the methodology and content required for UNICEF to conduct regular, routine monitoring of its Child Protection Program, as part of an office-wide L3M exercise at UNICEF-Bangladesh.

The pilot consisted of the following **components**, which were implemented in June 2013 in seven purposefully selected communities in Khulna and Sylhet:

- Interviews and focus group discussions
 - Interviews with adolescent girls and parents/caregivers (male and female) who were either program recipients or eligible to be, and key stakeholders, such as the local Kazi or Purohit³, elected officials, and religious leaders.
 - Focus group discussions with parents/caregivers (male and female) who were either program recipients or eligible to be, and Community-Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPC).⁴

³ Kazi/Purohit are local officials that register marriages for Muslim and Hindu communities, respectively.

⁴ CBCPCs facilitate community meetings with parents, influential leaders, adolescent representatives; are the main vehicle for promoting a protective environment for children; provide training on child development; take preventive measures against early marriage, child labour, juvenile delinquency and violence against children; and identify and report cases of abuse and exploitation.

- Household questionnaire
 - Questions about household characteristics, stipend and conditional cash transfer program activities to adolescent girls and parents/caregivers (male and female) who were either program recipients or eligible to be.
 - Social norms questions focused on child marriage administered to both adolescent girls and parents/caregivers (male and female) who were either program recipients or eligible to be.

The **sampling** for this exercise was based on the household listing which UNICEF carried out in all seven communities and specific criteria for targeted respondents. The **sample size** for the qualitative data collection included 7 in-depth interviews, 3 focus group discussions, and 20 household questionnaires per site. The exception was the site where both of the tracer interventions were implemented – there the sample was larger – 12 in-depth interviews, 3 focus group discussions, and 40 household questionnaires.

The household questionnaire **analyzed** jointly by USAID’s HFG project and SURCH, a local consulting firm. USAID’s HFG project focused on the analysis of social norms questions, while SURCH produced tables summarizing quantitative household data to assess the effectiveness of CCT and stipend interventions. The social norms questions were analyzed to produce information about the networks of individuals that influence decisions around child marriage, as well as quantitative estimates of social norms indicators. The qualitative data was analyzed according to the framework approach, in order to provide a detailed understanding of community perceptions on social norms around child marriage and how UNICEF programs overcome the bottlenecks of interest. Future iterations of the monitoring exercise will enable UNICEF to understand and measure progress of community members towards abandoning harmful social norms around child marriage and whether the program is effective in replacing them with positive social norms that reflect an increased demand for child’s rights.

Data in both Khulna and Sylhet was collected in 2.5 days each. In Khulna, 60 household questionnaires (40 adolescent girls and 20 parents/caregivers) were completed. Among these, 40 adolescent girls and 40 parents answered to social norms questions. In addition, 22 in-depth interviews and 9 focus group discussions were conducted. In Sylhet, 80 household questionnaires (60 adolescent girls and 20 parents/caregivers) were completed. Among these, 40 adolescent girls and 40 parents/caregivers answered to social norms. In addition, 31 in-depth interviews and 12 focus group discussion were conducted.

Reflections on L3M Pilot methodology

Strengths

There are several strengths related to the methodology guiding the L3M pilot in Bangladesh. First, as a monitoring methodology, it is comprised of both complementary quantitative and qualitative approaches—i.e., quantitative data is matched by qualitative data that can contribute to understanding of why and how changes are taking place. Additionally, the L3M pilot is the first time that the L3M methodology has been applied to activities around child marriage. The Bangladesh experience, thus, could serve as a useful approach for UNICEF programs in other countries where child marriage is an issue. The L3M pilot is focused on measuring changes in social norms toward child marriage in the context of a multifaceted UNICEF program, which uses incentives—including conditional cash transfers—to change social norms. Measuring changes in social norms is a new and innovative activity that can potentially hold important lessons for UNICEF programs in Bangladesh and elsewhere. As such, the methodology for detecting and measuring, as well as providing lessons about what works in changing social norms, may be useful more broadly to a range of interventions aimed at changing behavior and

norms. The results from the L3M pilot will contribute to our understanding of intra-family decision-making and dynamics around social behaviors, such as child marriage, and the status of the girl child in Bangladesh.

Challenges

Nevertheless, some challenges arose as part of the L3M piloting process. Before the data collection started, the time allotted for in-country finalization of tools, pre-testing, data collection training, and field work was inadequate. During the field work, errors in the household listing upon which sampling was based complicated data collection by creating confusion among data collectors who started to interview ineligible respondents. Furthermore, the capacity of data collectors to conduct qualitative interviews and focus group discussions was limited and exacerbated by the fact that insufficient training time was available. Further, insufficient women data collectors were available to ensure adequate power dynamics when interviewing adolescent girls and women.

The fieldwork was also challenged by the fact that the social norms questions, as well as some of the interview questions, proved to be too complex and difficult to translate from English to Bangla and caused confusion and redundancy. Due to lack of time, a strategy to test the instruments and tailor the survey to the audience – who, being mostly illiterate, may have better understood concepts if illustrated through stories and examples – could not be developed. Some of the data collectors attempted this; however, it was done ad hoc.

The analysis of the qualitative data was complicated by the fact that transcripts were not available for all recorded interviews and hand-written summary notes taken by untrained data collectors were not sufficiently detailed. For the analysis of the social norms data, the sample size was not sufficient for drawing community-level conclusions. The validity of the findings was compromised due to the aforementioned data quality issues.

Recommendations

The L3M framework for measuring social norms, and methodology developed, tested and refined through this pilot, is meant to be repeated periodically, both to measure social norm change over time and to gather evidence about the effectiveness of program implementation. In this context, future iterations of the L3M methodology should consider the following recommendations.

Ensuring data collectors are fully prepared for L3M exercises

- Hiring data collectors that have qualitative experience, and then allowing for at least 4 total days of training. The first two days of training would be on comprehension of the context and content of the tools. This training would be supplemented with one day of field practice, during which data collectors would go to an area outside the one targeted by the L3M exercise to practice using the tools in the field. The last day would be focused on analysis, training on data entry, note-taking and transcription.
- During data collection, debriefings at the end of the day would help to synthesize the experience of the data collectors, provide them with feedback, and identify and correct issues encountered during the course of data collection.
- Improved supervision of the household listing/mapping in order to minimize the errors that were found in the results of the listing.

Improving data collection to ensure data quality and analysis capacity

- Choosing fewer communities, with a focus on communities that are either positive or negative outliers, and going back regularly in order to monitor change in social norms. Because L3M is not impact research, the L3M approach does not require randomization or including enough respondents to achieve generalizability. Since the exercise must be repeated in the same communities over time in order to detect changes in social norms, selecting fewer communities may make the exercise more logistically feasible. Choosing positive and negative outliers enables the program to learn about barriers and enablers of change.
- Sampling based on smaller units of analysis for the social norms questions – the adolescent, mothers and fathers, and ensuring that the sample size is calculated to allow the detection of differences among the various units of analysis at the community level.
- Simplifying qualitative data collection tools by focusing on fewer questions, but going more in-depth through probing. Interview skills should also be taken into consideration when recruiting data collectors, as one training session may not be sufficient to build the necessary skills. Adequate time to refine translation, to analyze pre-test findings, and revise the tools will be needed.
- Reviewing L2 monitoring tools and L3 household questionnaire to ensure complementarity and minimize overlap.
- Identifying terms that have varying cultural definitions (poverty, etc.), establishing operational definitions and reaching consensus among the data collectors during the training on their translation; making sure these are translated in the same way among the translators as well.
- Refine social norms questions and ensure that data collectors are qualified to present them to respondents; reduce redundancies in the social network questions where subtle differences in questions did not provide additional data.
- Administering the household survey in all communities, but choosing a select few communities in which to delve deeper into program implementation and social norms change.
- Ensuring supervision of data collection and processing (i.e. translation, transcription) to improve data quality; and sufficient capacity to transcribe interviews and focus group discussions.
- Ensuring that the capacity to analyze the data – and the timeframe for analysis – is considered when designing the next iterations of L3M.

Striking a better balance between government ownership and capacity development, and minimizing bias in data collection

- Relying on government representatives to conduct interviews helped to build their capacity in data collection and their knowledge of the program. However, their powerful and influential role in communities may have diminished the likelihood of informants being open and honest about their experiences. Program stakeholders, including government officials, also have a personal and professional stake in the program, which may bias their findings about program implementation. The value of lessons learned from the monitoring exercise is at risk of being diminished if informants feel at any point that they cannot be honest about their experiences to data collectors with significant positions in the community.

- UNICEF could consider hiring an external organization with capabilities in both qualitative and quantitative data collection to jointly conduct the L3M exercise along with government representatives; another option could be “visiting” data collectors – government representatives who implement UNICEF programs and have capabilities in both qualitative and quantitative data collection, but would conduct L3M in a zone outside of their implementation area.
- UNICEF could also consider building government buy-in for the activity in ways other than conducting interviews, including Level 2 monitoring, and working with the government to plan and prepare the exercise, develop the tools, and review results.

Maintaining ethical considerations and informed consent

- Ensure that sufficient female data collectors are hired and available for data collection involving minor girls and female care-takers.
- Minimize the time required from respondents (i.e., ensuring minimal errors in the household listing, reducing or eliminating overlap between respondents for the household questionnaire and respondents for interviews and focus group discussions).
- Consider how to compensate the community for their time by giving back, for example, by hosting the Interactive Popular Theatre (IPT), which was organized before recruiting participants for FGDs in Sylhet, considering in-kind or financial contributions, or planning feedback and dissemination of L3M findings to the community.

Findings from data analysis

In both Khulna and Sylhet, respondents confirmed the presence of child marriage in the community. Based on respondents’ estimates, child marriage continues to happen more frequently in Khulna than in Sylhet. Nevertheless, respondents proposed that child marriage rates had decreased significantly compared to five years prior.

The factors underlying child marriage were similar in Khulna and Sylhet. Poverty and financial reasons – such as cost of dowry – were the most frequently mentioned reasons why child marriage occurs. Protecting the family’s honor by assuring the girl’s virginity was another important reason. Religious beliefs linked to both Islam and Hinduism, as well as superstitions, represented another major driver of child marriage in the communities included in this study.

The range of individuals involved in the marriage process was similar between the two regions. The most influential individual was the father or male caregiver. The mother also played a major role, particularly in determining readiness for marriage. The network analysis findings were surprising as they revealed that in some areas there were many individuals who played a role in the decision-making process around marriage. These findings provide UNICEF with leads for improved targeting of communities through their interventions.

Awareness of policies and regulations around child marriage, as well as the disadvantages of child marriage, were surprisingly high across all of the sites included in this pilot. Nevertheless, implementation of laws was perceived as incomplete – with the government lacking capacity to enforce laws and the community having the freedom to disobey. In addition, caregivers’ awareness of the Community-Based Child Protection Committees was very low, perhaps because it is a new component of the UNICEF program. More community outreach is necessary to raise awareness of UNICEF and government child protection programs and resources.



The social norms analysis hinted at the influence of social norms on child marriage in both Khulna and Sylhet. This first attempt to design an approach to validate quantitative measurement of social norms should be refined and adjusted based on the lessons learned from the implementation of the current design. The questions were complex and challenging to translate and communicate to pose to the respondents; and should be revised in light of the pilot lessons learnt and experience.

Conclusions

Findings from the L3M pilot confirmed that child marriage remains an important issue in Khulna and Sylhet communities. UNICEF's package of interventions aims to remove barriers to reducing child marriage, including financial barriers, and to improve knowledge and enforcement of laws and empower adolescents. There is anecdotal evidence from the L3M exercise that the CCT and stipend interventions is contributing to reducing these barriers, but further iterations of the exercise will be necessary to understand if the program is associated with a change in social norms around child marriage. The L3M process provides an important opportunity to monitor progress of UNICEF activities towards reducing child marriage and the L3M methodology can be further refined based on the findings of the pilot described in this report.

I. INTRODUCTION

Child marriage is a symptom of poverty and gender inequalities. Girls who marry early are more likely to die from maternal health-related causes; are less likely to stay in school; and are more likely to participate in a vicious cycle to reinforce intergenerational poverty. In Bangladesh, early marriage remains a significant challenge; UNICEF's Child Protection Program, through a range of interventions including conditional cash transfers (CCT) and stipends to adolescents, aims to keep children in school, delay the age of marriage for adolescent girls, and shift social norms around acceptance of child marriage.

There is a dearth of evidence on what strategies are most effective for delaying child marriage, and on what drives social norm change in such interventions. Moreover, measuring social norm change remains a largely untested area; few programs have tested social norms measurement as part of their overall M&E approach. Yet understanding what drives social norm change around child marriage and how to measure it is critical to the success of programs and would aid countries to replicate successful interventions.

In 2012, USAID-Bangladesh approached UNICEF to explore possible areas of cooperation around delaying child marriage. UNICEF has more than 10 years of experience working with adolescents and communities to delay child marriage and has documented experiences testing key strategies and interventions. Through a range of interventions including conditional cash transfers (CCT) and stipends to adolescents, UNICEF's Child Protection Program aims to keep children in school, delay the age of marriage for adolescent girls, and shift social norms around acceptance of child marriage.

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The principal objectives of this joint activity were to:

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- Present the data collected from the two sites in order to improve UNICEF program implementation, and refine and strengthen the monitoring approach itself.

This activity builds on the existing UNICEF-wide monitoring framework – Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES). It was jointly implemented by a team from UNICEF-Bangladesh's Child Protection Programs and from USAID's Health Finance and Governance Project (herein after referred to as "the team"), with input from the other stakeholders mentioned and USAID/Dhaka.



During the course of several months in 2013, the team co-facilitated a national stakeholder workshop in March 2013; jointly designed the MoRES Level 3 monitoring approach (L3M) approach for the two tracer interventions; piloted the L3M approach in Sylhet and Khulna in June 2013; and analyzed the data collected, producing preliminary findings on social norms around child marriage in Bangladesh and reflections on the L3M process.

This report begins by introducing child marriage and summarizing UNICEF's strategy and interventions aimed at delaying child marriage in Bangladesh. It then provides an in-depth description of the methodology used to pilot the L3M monitoring approach, as well as reflections on the challenges encountered and considerations for future implementations of L3M tools and approaches.

The final section of the report presents the findings from the analysis of the data collected.

2. CHILD MARRIAGE IN BANGLADESH

Child deprivation and vulnerability is a serious concern in Bangladesh. One third of Bangladeshi households are poor; over one quarter of those households is extremely poor. Poverty has a profound impact on the lives of the country's 61 million children. Twenty-six million children live below the national poverty line, typically deprived of four out of seven of the following basic services: water, sanitation, nutrition, education, health, information and shelter.⁵

Social norms and economic realities mean that child labor and early marriage are widely accepted and common in Bangladesh—in fact, Bangladesh has the 3rd highest incidence of child marriage globally after Niger and Chad. Despite the adoption of the 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act and the 1984 Ordinance on minimum age of marriage, which specifies a minimum legal marriage age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys, these laws and their implementation are outdated. Around three-fourths⁶ of girls are married before they reach their 18th birthday; and more than 55 percent become mothers before they are 19.^{7,8} According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006, at least 33 percent of adolescent girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 15.⁹ Of the women aged 15-19 at the time of the survey, 42 percent were already married. Moreover, while education is free and compulsory up to grade eight in Bangladesh, it is estimated that more than one million children have never been to school.¹⁰

Child marriage is driven by and reinforces poverty. There is a positive correlation between where a child is born (urban/rural) and the likelihood of child marriage, with the rate of child marriage among all women aged 20–24 years 54 percent in urban areas, compared with 71 percent in rural areas. Education is also strongly associated with child marriage: 86 percent of women with no education were married before 18 years of age, compared to 26 percent of women who had completed secondary or higher education¹¹.

Early marriage limits girls' opportunities for social interaction and self-assertion, curtails personal freedom, and denies psychosocial and emotional well-being, adequate reproductive health and educational opportunity.¹²

⁵ Child Poverty and Disparities in Bangladesh, 2008

⁶ A perspective on gender equality in Bangladesh: From young girl to adolescent: What is lost in Transition? Analysis based on selected results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009, UNICEF http://www.UNICEF.org/bangladesh/A_perspective_on_Gender_Inequalities_in_Bangladesh_UNICEF_Report_Oct_2011_Final_Rev.pdf

⁷ MICS (2006) http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/knowledgecentre_6278.htm and SOWC (2008)

⁸ 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act; 1984 Ordinance, sets the minimum marriage age.

⁹ MICS (2006) http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/knowledgecentre_6278.htm

¹⁰ Child Labour in Bangladesh, UNICEF (http://www.UNICEF.org/bangladesh/Child_labour.pdf)

¹¹ Gazi et al (2013)

¹² Malhotra, A., A. Warner, et al. (2011). Solutions to End Child Marriage - what the evidence shows. Washington, DC, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

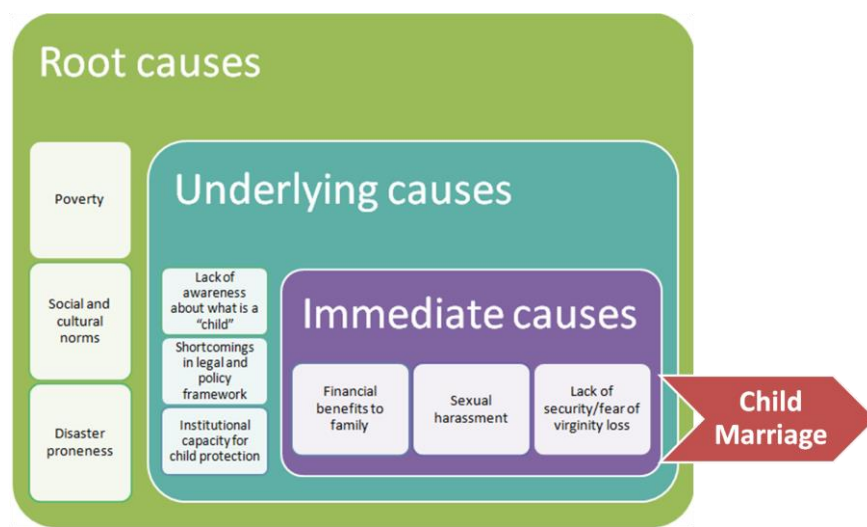
2.1 Drivers of child marriage and theory of change

While the practice of child marriage has decreased in Bangladesh over the last 30 years, it remains common in rural areas and urban slums, especially among the poor. Many families consider girls ready for marriage at the onset of menstruation.

Figure 1 summarizes the main drivers of child marriage in Bangladesh. There are several immediate or proximate causes of child marriage. Early marriage of daughters is often financially beneficial for their families: boys are seen as worth investing in, while girls are seen as a financial burden. Boys are seen as the future heads of households and the principal source of household income. In contrast, girls typically leave their parents' home to live with their husband's families, and are therefore seen as making little financial contribution to the household. Also, the sooner the girls get married, the fewer school fees and food costs their families would incur. Although dowry for marriage is illegal, the practice remains widespread. The younger a girl is when she is married, the smaller the dowry payment her family will make to the groom's family. Early marriage is also thought to mitigate the risk of girls' losing their virginity prior to marriage, and to halt the frequency of teasing and sexual harassment, both of which can diminish family honor, bring shame to the girl, and diminish the likelihood of the girl marrying later.^{13,14}

The underlying drivers of early marriage include: lack of knowledge and awareness among communities of the definition of childhood and child development, which is often complicated by a lack of acceptance of the legal age of adulthood and recognition of the status and rights of the child and the implications for care-givers; shortcomings in the legal and policy framework for child protection, including weak implementation and non-enforcement of policies around child marriage and birth registration; and the lack of institutional capacity for child protection, with key actors such as police officers and Kazi (marriage registrars) lacking capacity, and potentially also willingness, to enforce the laws.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of causes of child marriage in Bangladesh



¹³ Annual Sector Performance Report 2012

¹⁴ National Education (Post Primary) Survey Report, BANBEIS 2009

3. UNICEF INTERVENTIONS TO DELAY CHILD MARRIAGE

Though social norms around child marriage are deeply embedded in Bangladesh's culture, Bangladesh has shown the capacity, over time, to implement a national social norm change program and achieve significant results. For example, the national commitment to family planning (i.e., smaller healthier families) introduced four decades ago with government leadership and significant human and financial resource investment demonstrated significant gains: the 2011 National Demographic Health Survey notes a reduction in the national fertility rate from 6.3 in 1975 to 2.3 in 2011.¹⁵

UNICEF's Child Protection program is guided by global evidence and the local context to tackle the root causes of child marriage and accelerate the evolution of social norms around child marriage. UNICEF's package of interventions aims to enhance the protective environment for children and adolescents, particularly girls, by strengthening laws, policies, and services; raising awareness and knowledge among parents and communities on child development; and sparking shifts in the norms around child marriage and child labor.

The UNICEF Child Protection Strategy (2008) identifies four critical dimensions to accomplishing these goals:

- **Empowerment of adolescent girls and boys:** To enable adolescents, especially girls, to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives including those involving education, livelihood, and age of marriage. As income generation is a critical determinant of girls' empowerment, adolescent girls are also encouraged to move towards sustainable livelihoods.
- **Community mobilization and engagement:** Formal and informal interaction and dialogue among adolescents, parents and community members is the foundation for a supportive communication network. Such a network can help to ensure that adolescents' ideas are heard, as well as to provide a platform for community support to adolescent development. Additionally, community mobilization can shine a light on harmful ideas and practices and provide opportunities for discussion and debate, which in turn, can lead to the shifting of personal attitudes of a critical mass that lead to social norm change.
- **Promotion of alternatives:** Early marriage/child marriage are justified by parents as a way to protect their daughters from sexual abuse or loss of honor due to sexual relations outside marriage, and to ensure their capacity to pay the dowry that increases with the age of their daughter. Promotion of alternatives can include vocational training for adolescents, life skills education for both boys and girls, and poverty alleviation programs such as individual stipends or conditional cash transfer programs.

¹⁵ Haub, C. (2012). "Bangladesh 2011 Demographic and Health Survey Shows Continued Fertility Decline and High Use of Family Planning." Behind the numbers: the PRB blog on population, health, and the environment. Retrieved August, 2013, from <http://prblog.org/index.php/2012/04/24/bangladesh-2011-demographic-health-survey/>.

- **Policy development:** The Bangladesh Child Policy was developed through a participatory process and is the first step in recognizing both the definition of a child (as an individual from 0 to 18 years old) and an adolescent (as an individual from 14-18). Enforcement of the Child Policy and law, including the Marriage Restraint Act, will represent the government's commitment to ending child marriage and to stronger governance and accountability.¹⁶

UNICEF seeks to support the Government of Bangladesh to generate demand for children's rights and encourage the abandonment of harmful practices such as child labor and early marriage. The idea is to catalyze positive social change regarding childhood rather than focusing on awareness raising campaigns for each child protection issue separately.

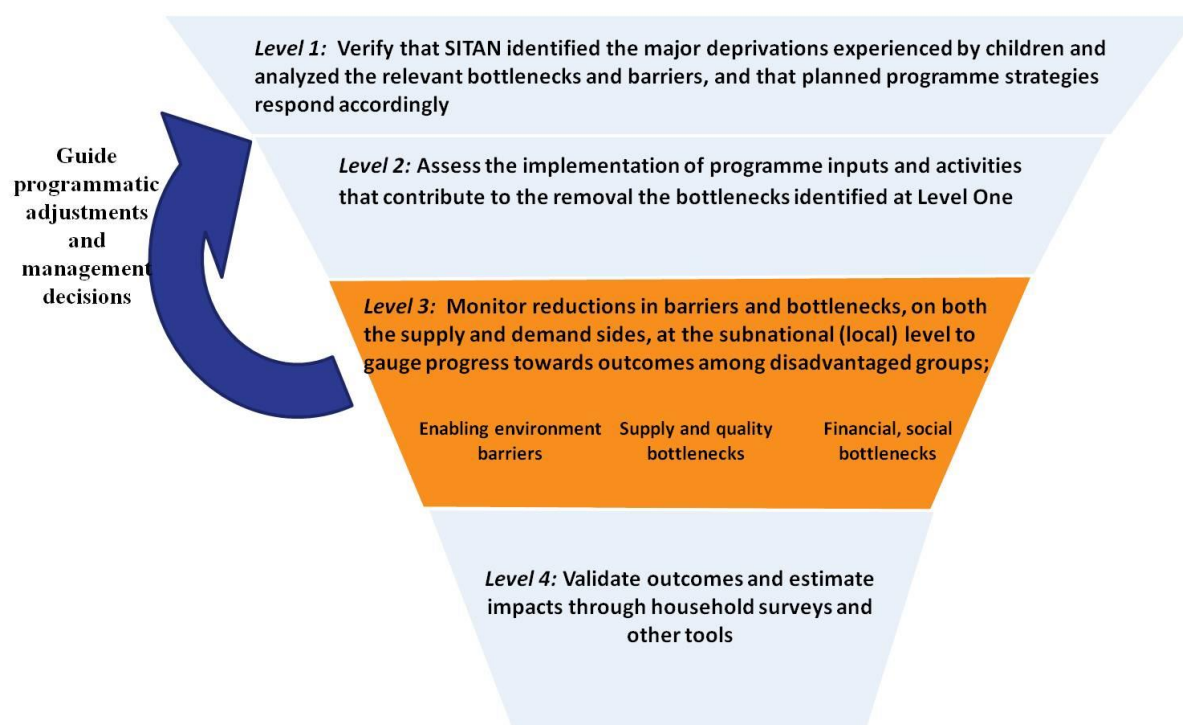
¹⁶ The Child Marriage Restraint Act (amended) states that females should be over 18 and males over 21 in order to be married. Articles for punishment are incorporated in the law including fines and imprisonment for any person who performs, conducts or directs any child marriage – this includes the Kazi (the person who registers Muslim marriages or divorces) and parents.

4. METHODOLOGY: DESIGNING MORES FOR CHILD MARRIAGE

4.1 Introduction to MoRES

Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) is UNICEF’s global monitoring framework, which was introduced in Bangladesh in 2012. MoRES proposes a hierarchy of information to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of UNICEF programs (see Figure 2). Level 1 corresponds to a situational analysis, wherein major bottlenecks and barriers to the achievement of UNICEF goals are identified, and a strategy for tackling them defined. Level 2 creates a routine approach for monitoring implementation of UNICEF programs. Level 3—which is the subject of this report—monitors the extent to which UNICEF programs contribute to reductions in the barriers and bottlenecks identified in level 1, and includes adjustments to the program design if necessary. Finally, Level 4 monitoring estimates the impact of UNICEF programs on the broader goals.

Figure 2: MoRES Framework



UNICEF’s Child Protection Unit has conducted numerous situational analyses to contribute knowledge to L1 learning, including the National Workshop for the Adolescent Cluster, which is described below. In addition, UNICEF is strengthening L2 monitoring to assess the implementation of program inputs and activities. The remainder of this report focuses on the pilot of L3 monitoring for two tracer interventions aimed to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh.

4.2 Adolescent Cluster National Workshop

As part of the initiation of L3 monitoring for child marriage, UNICEF and HFG collaborated to develop and refine an approach for L3 monitoring; test the approach and make recommendations for how it can be strengthened; and analyze the findings, both in terms of implementation of the two tracer interventions and what the monitoring exercise revealed about social norms around child marriage in the program sites. During the first HFG mission to Bangladesh in March 2013, the team worked together to facilitate a national workshop to select key bottlenecks to examine through the L3 monitoring exercise, and then developed a plan for designing an M&E process to track progress in overcoming these bottlenecks. UNICEF's L3M framework identifies ten bottlenecks to reducing child deprivation (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Bottlenecks to reducing child deprivation

Bottlenecks		
	Determinants	Description
Enabling Environment	Social Norms	Widely followed social rules of behaviour
	Legislation/Policy	Adequacy of laws and policies
	Budget/expenditure	Allocation & disbursement of required resources
	Management /Coordination	Roles and Accountability/ Coordination/ Partnership
Supply	Availability of essential commodities/inputs	Essential commodities/ inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice
	Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information	Physical access (services, facilities/information)
Demand	Financial access	Direct and indirect costs for services/ practices
	Social and cultural practices and beliefs	Individual/ community beliefs, awareness, behaviors, practices, attitudes
	Timing and Continuity of use	Completion/ continuity in service, practice
Qty	Quality of care	Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)

In order to narrow the L3 monitoring process to cover only the most important bottlenecks, the team solicited feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including UNICEF program managers; representatives from NGOs such as BRAC, Save the Children, and World Vision; Ministry of Woman and Children Affairs, Ministry of Health officials; government social workers and social service officers. Through a participatory, interactive two-day workshop, in which participants ranked bottlenecks and debated their relative importance as determinants of child marriage, four key bottlenecks were selected:

- **Social Norms:** Widely followed social rules of behavior.

Bottleneck: Acceptance of child marriage because of the need to preserve virginity/dignity of girl before marriage, as “virgin brides” are more marriageable; need to pay dowry and ensure marriage of daughter (the longer you wait to marry a daughter, the fewer the opportunities to ensure marriage to a good husband); religious beliefs about women’s roles in society, girls’ transition to womanhood, and readiness for marriage.

- **Legislation/Policy:** Adequacy of laws and policies; compliance and enforcement of existing laws.

Bottleneck: Law on child marriage is known but not adequately implemented or enforced. Even if registration of marriage with the official Kazi is mandatory, people may proceed with religious marriage. Kazi does not ask for proof of age; parents have fake birth certificate and Kazi does not use the online Birth Registration Information System (BRIS) to verify birth certificates. Dowry is prohibited by law, but this law is not enforced. Furthermore, the institutional structures are lacking for oversight and policy implementation. For example, a department of children – which would be the equivalent of the department of women under MoWCA – does not exist to monitor implementation of child policy.

- **Financial Access:** Degree to which child marriage and child labor are driven by financial considerations.

Bottleneck: Girls getting married or dropping out of school for financial reasons; boys dropping out of school/working for financial reasons.

- **Management and Coordination:** Roles and accountability / coordination / partnership among stakeholders involved in the UNICEF program.

Bottleneck: Communities need child protection networks consisting of various stakeholders— Child Protection Network (CPN); Community-based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC), social workers, Kazi, police, elected officials, religious leaders, and other influential individuals—who feel empowered to act on child protection issues, have knowledge, understand their role, and work together to solve problems. Lack of such a coordinated network has a negative impact on program goals.

Following the workshop, the team further narrowed the above list to focus on social norms, financial access, and legislation/policy, since these are at the heart of the UNICEF cluster of interventions. Based on this, the team developed a research protocol to guide the monitoring activity, which specified the methodology for L3 monitoring, including the sample of informants, and deliverables, timetable and project management.

4.3 The L3 Monitoring pilot

The L3M pilot for child marriage contributes the methodology and content required for UNICEF to conduct regular, routine monitoring of its Child Protection Program, as part of an office-wide L3M exercise at UNICEF-Bangladesh. The team also jointly revised a routine monitoring tool to be used by UNICEF’s NGO and government partners for the collection and reporting of program data on a monthly or quarterly basis (L2). As this tool has not yet been implemented, and is not discussed further here.

As summarized in Section 3, UNICEF's Child Protection program provides a multidimensional package of complementary interventions that together aim to delay child marriage, reduce child labor and change social norms around the rights and wellbeing of children. For the purpose of the L3M pilot, UNICEF selected of those interventions to serve as tracers¹⁷: conditional cash transfers (CCTs) to households that abide by certain conditions, and stipends to adolescent girls who comply with program criteria.

The L3 monitoring approach is a data collection exercise that builds on previous UNICEF monitoring efforts and aims to monitor the intermediate results of activities at the level of implementation in the community, as compared to the Upazila (or district) level to ensure that UNICEF programs are making progress in reducing the bottlenecks preventing attainment of Child Protection objectives. In line with UNICEF's equity objectives, L3M aims to gage not only the effect of interventions at increasing access to services, but also whether these interventions are stimulating equitable access, regardless of client geographical location, gender, or socio-economic status. MoRES for child marriage focuses on the most remote and vulnerable populations, consistent with UNICEF Child Protection objectives to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation and violence against children at risk or in need of protection. L3M employs rigorous qualitative data collection methods, including in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and focus group discussions and to provide quantitative measurement of social norms around child marriage, from the perspective of both adolescent girls and parents. The activity also provides quantitative measurement of the coverage of the two tracer interventions.

4.3.1 Site selection

Table I summarizes the site characteristics. Khulna and Sylhet divisions were purposefully selected according to the following criteria:

- Rates of child marriage, selecting areas with both high and low child marriage rates
- Equity criteria, such as
 - Community vulnerability or disaster-proneness
 - Remoteness
 - Access to services
- Child marriage determinants
 - Religion
 - Poverty levels
- Program characteristics
 - Ensuring that both rural and urban sites were included in the monitoring exercise
 - Areas at differing stages of implementation

¹⁷ Two tracer interventions were selected by UNICEF as important interventions of their child protection work. These are not intended to be representative of all that UNICEF is engaged in.

Khulna was selected because it has high rates of child marriage and UNICEF has implemented the adolescent stipend and the conditional cash transfer program there for some time. Sylhet was selected because it has low rates of child marriage (although the areas in which the government and NGOs work with UNICEF have higher rates of child marriage than the average for the region¹⁸ and only recently began to implement the tracer interventions (for example, in some areas stipends were given since December 2012, CCT's were only given in April 2013, just a couple of months before the L3M exercise).

In both sites, religion is believed to play a role in child marriage practices. Therefore, both Muslim, Hindu and mixed communities were selected.

- In Khulna, three sites were selected: Nalian and Sreenagar (in Dacope), and Rajanpur (in Shoronkola). The adolescent stipend is being implemented in two of these sites (Nalian and Sreenagar). Both are disaster prone, at risk for flooding from cyclones, and represent a majority Hindu and Muslim community, respectively. The conditional cash transfer is being implemented in Rajanpur, Shoronkola. This site is also disaster prone and represents a mixed religion community. All sites in Khulna are very remote and have low in- and out-migration. The communities derive their incomes from the fishing and shrimp industry.
- In Sylhet, four sites were selected: the Lakkatura Tea Estate in Sadar Upazila, the slum areas in Kajirbazar, Gotatikor within the Sylhet City Corporation, the Babular Joom in Jafiong, Goainghat Upazilla (stone crushing area), and the Dungaria village in South Sunamgonj in the hoar (wetlands particularly vulnerable to flooding) area. These sites were selected based on the profile of the community. There are many tea gardens in Sylhet, each with unique characteristics compared to other communities: residents have access to health and schooling; communities are closed (little to no in- and out- migration) and characterized by high child labor; high levels of control by tea garden managers, both in public and private aspects of life in the tea gardens. Urban slums and stone crushing areas are both characterized by minimal access to services and high in- and out-migration. The stone crushing area, in particular, has very low access to services and high rates of child labor, and probably child marriage as well, based on available anecdotal evidence. The hoar area is situated in the Bangladeshi wetlands. Because they are surrounded by water most of the year, hoar areas are isolated from services and hard to reach.

Table 1: Summary characteristics of selected sites

Location	General charac.	Total HH	Pop.	UNICEF Interventions
Khulna – Highest rate of child marriage				
Sreenagar, Kamarkhola Union, Dacope Upazila	Hindu; Cyclone risk	378	1,506	CFS, CBCPC, Stipend
Nalian, Sutarkhali Union, Dacope Upazila	Muslim; Cyclone risk	1,641	6,653	CFS, CBCPC, Stipend
Dhansagar, Dhansagar Union, Shoraonkho Upazila	Mixed religions, Cyclone risk	732	2,924	CCT



Location	General charac.	Total HH	Pop.	UNICEF Interventions
Sylhet – lowest rate of child marriage				
Lakkatura Tea Estate, Sadar Upazila	Tea garden	1,149	5,630	(31 Stipends (received in Dec 2012))
Slum areas in Kajirbazar, Gotatikor, Sylhet City Corporation	Urban slum	280	1,152	9 Stipends (received in Dec 2012) and CCT (received in April 2013)
Babular Joom, Bollaghat, East Jaflong Union, Goainghat Upazila	Dwelling of laborers in stone crushing areas	290	2,250	No interventions
Dungaria village, Jaykalas Union, South Sunamgonj Upazila	Hoar area	969	5,457	Stipends

Acronyms: HH (Households); CBCPC (Community-based Child Protection Committee); CCT (Conditional cash transfer program); CFS (Child-friendly Space)

4.3.2 Data collection components

Data collection for the L3M pilot included: a household questionnaire and a qualitative data collection component. The following section describes these in greater detail.

4.3.2.1 Quantitative data collection – Household questionnaire

The household questionnaire was designed by UNICEF, with input from the HFG project team, to conform to the Tanahashi model for service delivery, which measures service availability, accessibility, utilization, adequate coverage, and effective coverage¹⁹. In addition to the questions necessary to develop the Tanahashi indicators, the household questionnaire also included quantitative social norms questions, developed by the team based on methods suggested by Mackie and colleagues²⁰. The social norms questions produce two types of data: reference networks and social norms indicators.

In stipend areas, the respondents for the household questionnaire were adolescent girls between the age of 14 and 18, who were either stipend recipients or eligible to receive the stipend. In CCT areas, the respondents for the household questionnaire were parents in households that either received a CCT or were eligible to do so. The respondents for the social norms questions were the same as the ones for the household questionnaire. In stipend areas, one of the adolescent girls' parents was asked to answer social norms questions as well. Respondents for the household questionnaire were randomly selected from the list of eligible respondents identified through the household listing. There were two versions of the household questionnaire: one for parents and one for adolescent girls. Both questionnaires included introductory questions that attempt to define the reference network for child marriage (i.e., the individuals who are influential in the decision-making process around child marriage). The questionnaires then include several statements about potential behaviors, which respondents were asked to rank on a scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The questionnaires end with several questions about the respondents' perspectives on the universality of child marriage-related behaviors in their community (i.e., prevalence of child marriage, existence of negative consequences) and rank them on a scale from zero to one hundred percent.

¹⁹ Tanahashi T: Health service coverage and its evaluation. Bull World Health Organ 1978, 56:295-303.

²⁰ Mackie G, Moneti F, Denny E, Shakya H: What are social norms? How are they measured? Working paper. UNICEF/UCSD Center on Global Justice; 2012.

Sampling

For the MoRES/ L3M pilot, a random sample of villages in a union was not possible. Rather, we used the UNICEF Dhaka general methodology for sampling, which involves selecting a geographic area/ catchment with a clear boundary—a tea garden, a slum where the CCT and/ or stipend are implemented or about to start—and then conducting a household listing (mapping exercise), which produces the list from which household questionnaire, in-depth interview (IDI), and focus group discussion (FGD) respondents are selected. The household listing includes screening questions to confirm eligibility for UNICEF’s activities.

From each of the sites, the team aimed to include 20 households that met the criteria below, randomly selected to respond to questionnaires. In anticipation of errors in the mapping exercise, as well as the possibility of respondents not being able to participate, around 25-30 households were actually identified from the listing for each of the two tracer interventions. Additionally, because of challenges in compiling the 20 households, selection criteria was adjusted. Questionnaires were answered by the head of household, usually the parent or caregiver. All the households selected met the criteria in the listing tool. In addition, the first part of the questionnaire (household member information) contained further questions to confirm eligibility.

- **CCT tracer questionnaire**, if the household has a child aged 6-14
- **Stipend or CCT tracer questionnaire**, if the household has a girl aged 14-18

The sampling for the social norms questions was conducted through a separate methodology. Because of concerns about time constraints if all household questionnaire respondents would also answer the social norms questions, the team decided to administer the social norms questionnaire to a sub-sample of those selected for the larger questionnaire. The sampling approach for this was not random, and is most similar to a convenience sample. Generally, about half of the households selected for either CCT or stipend or both also responded to the social norm questions. The head of household, who answered one of the questionnaires above, also answered the social norms questions designed for parents/caregivers. Where applicable, one adolescent girl per household answered social norms questions designed for adolescents. It was estimated that of the 20 households selected per site, about 10 would have an adolescent who would be requested to complete the social norms questions. More details about the final sample for the social norms questionnaire can be found in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

The household questionnaire was finalized through team discussions and pre-testing of the instruments in a small sample of households in a Khulna slum.

None of the respondents refused to participate in the household questionnaire. It is unclear whether privacy was maintained during the course of the questionnaire. Typically, other villagers and relatives gathered outside the room or even inside the room when the surveyors conducted site visits. Although the research team tried to explain the importance of privacy and urged other individuals to allow for that, this was not always possible. However, the research team ensured that even if other people were around, that the respondent was providing answers away from them, so that the confidentiality of answers was maintained. The site supervisor and UNICEF Dhaka-based child protection staff were available to do spot checks and supervise.

4.3.2.2 Qualitative component

Qualitative research focuses on describing context and perspective, answering questions about “why” and “how” things are being implemented, as well as about how stakeholders understand and are responding to the programs implemented by UNICEF. Qualitative research is useful for shedding light on how programs actually work and for providing a detailed, in-depth understanding of why programs may not work as expected. Qualitative research methods, specifically FGDs and IDIs, are useful for exploring complex questions about norms and perceptions, and to help unpack the many layers of implementation and complex behavior changes at work in a program aimed at triggering complex social changes. Data collected during periodic qualitative studies/operational research is an important complement to data collected in routine program reporting.

Methodology and data collection instruments

The qualitative component of the L3M pilot included a series of IDIs and FGDs, with actors that are thought to be involved in or to influence the decisions made around child marriage. IDIs were conducted with: adolescent girls, parents, local religious leaders, the local Kazi or marriage registrar, and a local elected official – of which we identified the Union Purishad Chairman (i.e. Union Council Chairperson) to be the most influential. Focus group discussions were held with mothers, fathers, and members of community-based child protection committees, whose collective norms UNICEF believes influence the decision to marry girls before the age of 18.

The design of the IDI and FGD guides was guided by the bottlenecks identified through the National Workshop described above. Once the first draft was developed, the guides were finalized through discussions with UNICEF’s child protection specialist, Bangla translators, and pre-testing of the instruments in a small sample of households in a Khulna city slum.

Sampling for qualitative data collection

Qualitative sampling is not intended to produce a representative sample. Sampling is typically done using specific criteria. The number of interviews depends on reaching a saturation point– i.e., wherein the information collected is seen as sufficient to answer program questions and no new answers to questions or themes emerge from new interviews. When a project is faced with time constraints, 15-30 interviews are recommended as a starting point per group of interest or geographical zone, depending on the criteria relevant to an activity.²¹ Similar rule of thumb estimates for the numbers of FGDs are not available although the saturation principle also applies for FGDs.

In our exercise, the unit of analysis was the zone, Khulna and Sylhet, although significant interest lies in examining the individual communities within these zones. A larger sample at the community level could not be accomplished due to time constraints related to the duration of the field work. Household members that met the criteria were purposefully selected from the household mapping list. Selection bias among participants was minimized by selecting a similar number of program participants and of eligible individuals who are not program participants.

Sampling criteria:

All IDI participants must reside in Khulna and Sylhet where UNICEF is implementing (or will soon implement) adolescent the stipend and/or CCT. In addition, participants must fall into the following groups:

²¹ Baker, S. E. and R. Edwards (2012). How many qualitative interviews are enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research. National Center for Research Methods review paper. Southhampton, UK, National Center for Research Methods.

1. Male and female parents/caretakers: All parents/caretakers in each site must have children who received the adolescent stipend or belong to a household that received at least one CCT installment.
2. Adolescent girls: Stipend recipients and eligible non-recipients.
3. Stakeholders playing a role in the child protection system, and/or the CBCPC, and/or are influential in the community. In a site, these will typically include:
 - a. Social worker who works as part of the CCT program – only in CCT sites
 - b. Kazi (Muslim)/Purohit (Hindu)
 - c. Elected official (Union Purishad Chairperson or representative)
 - d. Religious leader/Religious person

The IDIs took place in a private location – either the respondents’ home or the stakeholders’ office/home. Our intention was to interview adolescent girls separately from their parents, however, in small households where there were often neighbors and relatives coming and going, parents were sometimes present in the interviews.²² None of the fathers, mothers, or adolescents refused to participate. There is one account of a Kazi refusing to participate in Khulna²³.

Three FGDs took place in each village (a total of 9 FGDs in Khulna and 12 FGDs in Sylhet). FGD participants were selected based on the following criteria:

4. **Mother’s/Female caretaker’s group:** Mothers/caretakers of both recipients and non-recipient adolescents or CCT families.
 - In Khulna: Participants were identified by UNICEF’s local NGO partner from the household listing and also based on their knowledge of who was currently involved in the UNICEF interventions.
 - In Sylhet: Participants were identified after an Interactive Popular Theatre arranged by UNICEF in each site.
5. **Father’s/Male caretaker’s group:** Fathers/caretakers of both recipients and non-recipient adolescents or CCT families.
 - In Khulna: Participants were identified by the local NGO partner.
 - In Sylhet: Participants were identified after an Interactive Popular Theatre arranged by UNICEF in each site.
6. **CBCPC group:** Must be members of the CBCPC of the village which was selected for data collection.

²² In these situations, the UNICEF team would politely ask the parents for privacy and/or start informal discussions with the parents/relatives in a separate section of the room or the house.

²³ In one of the sites, the Kazi heard about the data collection effort and, when approached by telephone, denied to participate in the interview. Another Kazi was approached, who agreed to participate as long as the interviews was not being digitally recorded.

When a UNICEF Child Friendly Space²⁴ was available, FGD participants were requested to meet there for the discussion. When a Child Friendly Space was not available, the FGD took place in a private space: for example, in the Sylhet slum area, a mothers' group met in a mothers' home for the FGD; in the Sylhet tea garden, FGDs met in courtyards that were empty and away from the busy part of the area.

The final sample for data collection in the two sites is summarized in the Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Summary of data collection in Sylhet

Site name	Data collection type	Data collection details
STIPEND Lakkatura Tea Estate, Sadar Upazila	20 HH Surveys	10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms adolescents (completed by adolescent girls 14-18) 10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms parents (Stipend survey completed by adolescent girls 14-18; parents social norms completed by mother or father or caregiver of adolescent girl)
	7 IDI	1 religious leader 1 kazi/purohit 1 Union Purishad Member – Chairperson or representative 2 adolescent girls <u>stipend recipients</u> 2 adolescent girls non-recipients
	3 FGD	CBCPC Mothers (mix CCT & non-CCT) Fathers (mix CCT & non-CCT)
STIPEND+CCT Slum areas in Kajirbazar, Gotatikor, Sylhet City Corporation	40 HH surveys	10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms adolescents (completed by adolescent girls 14-18) 10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms parents (Stipend survey completed by adolescent girls 14-18; parents social norms completed by mother or father or caregiver of adolescent girl) 20 CCT HH Survey + social norms parents
	12 IDIs	1 religious leader 1 kazi/purohit 1 Union Purishad Member – Chairperson or representative 2 adolescent girls <u>stipend recipients</u> 2 adolescent girls non-recipients 2 fathers (CCT recipients) 2 mothers (CCT recipients) 1 Social Worker (CCT program)
	3 FGDs	CBCPC Mothers (mix CCT & non-CCT) Fathers (mix CCT & non-CCT)

²⁴ Child Friendly Spaces are the UNICEF outreach service for children at risk. The objectives of outreach activities are to identify children in need of special protection, to build relationships and to encourage them to access basics services in health, education and life-skills and personal safety. Social workers are responsible for identifying the most vulnerable children in the community, assessing them and, through case management, recommend an individual care plan, which includes case referrals, provision of services and follow up. Thus 'child friendly spaces' are set up to strengthening informal education outlets and to meet the holistic/psychosocial needs (health, emotional, recreational etc.), of children living in the urban slums or in the disaster prone areas in the rural settings.

Site name	Data collection type	Data collection details
NO INTERVENTION Babular Joom, Bollaghat, East Jaflong Union, Goainghat Upazila; Sangram punji Area (Dwelling of laborers in stone crushing areas)	20 Social norms surveys in 10 households	10 Social Norms Adolescents (completed by adolescent girls 14-18) 10 Social Norms Forms Parents (completed by mother/father/caregiver of adolescent girl) *** <u>Parents and adolescent girls should belong to the same household, according to listing</u>
	5 IDIs	1 religious leader 1 kazi/purohit 1 Union Purishad Member – Chairperson or representative 2 adolescent girls (non-recipients)
	3 FGDs	CBCPC Mothers (mix CCT & non-CCT) Fathers (mix CCT & non-CCT)
STIPEND Dungaria village, Jaykalas Union, South Sunamganj Upazila (Hoar area)	20 Household Surveys	10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms adolescents (completed by adolescent girls 14-18) 10 Stipend HH surveys + social norms parents (Stipend survey completed by adolescent girls 14-18; parents social norms completed by mother/father/caregiver of adolescent girl)
	7 IDI	1 religious leader 1 kazi/purohit 1 Union Purishad Member – Chairperson or representative 2 adolescent girls <u>stipend recipients</u> 2 adolescent girls non-recipients
	3 FGD	CBCPC Mothers (mix CCT & non-CCT) Fathers (mix CCT & non-CCT)

Table 3: Summary of data collection in Khulna

Site name	Data collection type	Data collection details
Sreenagar, Kamarkhola Union, Dacope Upazila	20 HH surveys:	20 Stipend HH survey + 20 social norms adolescents (completed by adolescent girl 14-18) 10 social norms parents
	7 IDIs:	1 religious leader 1 kazi/Purohit 1 Union Purishad Member 4 adolescent girls (2 with stipend; 2 without stipend)
	3 FGDs:	CBCPC Mothers Fathers
Nalian, Sutarkhali Union, Dacope Upazila	20 HH surveys:	20 Stipend HH survey + 20 social norms adolescents (completed by adolescent girl 14-18) 10 social norms parents
	7 IDIs:	1 religious leader 1 kazi/Purohit 1 Union Purishad Member 4 adolescent girls (2 with stipend; 2 without stipend)

Site name	Data collection type	Data collection details
	3 FGDs:	CBCPC Mothers Fathers
Rajapur, Dhansagar Union, Shoraonkho Upazila	20 HH surveys:	20 CCT HH Survey + 20 social norms parents
	8 IDIs (no IDI adolescents):	2 fathers (CCT recipients) 2 mothers (CCT recipients) 1 Social Worker (CCT program) 1 religious leader 1 kazi/Purohit 1 Union Purishad Member
	3 FGDs:	CBCPC Mothers Fathers

4.3.2.3 Quantitative and qualitative data entry

The household questionnaires were entered into Microsoft Excel input masks in the field by the data collectors. Data collectors were able to accomplish this in the evenings, after data collection was completed. In some cases, data entry continued after data collection finished, but this did not cause a significant delay in the sharing of raw data with SURCH. Data collectors typed up the notes they took during interviews and FGDs during the day. These notes were translated from Bangla to English and the FGDs were transcribed and translated into English simultaneously.

4.3.2.4 Quantitative and qualitative data analysis

Household questionnaire – Tanahashi indicators: The data necessary to develop the Tanahashi model was analyzed by the team, led by the Bangladeshi firm SURCH.

Household questionnaire – Social norms reference network data: The household questionnaire collects egocentric data for adolescent girls and parents in Khulna and Sylhet. This data was analyzed with STATA v.11 statistical software in order to identify key individuals in the decision-making process for child marriage. Firstly, the frequency of the connections proposed by respondents was analyzed in order to identify which were most frequently mentioned and hence most likely influential. The second step in the analysis visualized parents' and adolescents' networks in order to identify overlap between the two. Because the sample size for respondent groups were small at the community level (e.g., sometimes networks were based on only one respondent), the report presents the network data aggregated at the zone level in the main body of the report. Community level analyses are displayed in Annex 1.

Household questionnaire – Social norms data: Social norms data was analyzed according to the methods proposed by Mackie and colleagues.²⁵ Each level of the scale received a score (e.g. Strongly agree received a score of 5; Strongly disagree received a score of 1). The respondents' answers were aggregated both at the community (e.g. slum, hoar, etc.) and the zone level (e.g. Khulna and Sylhet). The final step in the analysis involved taking the mean of the responses. Empirical and normative figures were calculated for the self, others (1st order) and others (2nd order). While these calculations cannot tell us

²⁵ Mackie G, Moneti F, Denny E, Shakya H: What are social norms? How are they measured? In Book *What are social norms? How are they measured?* (Editor eds.). City: UNICEF/UCSD Center on Global Justice; 2012.

anything about the magnitude of the norms, they can confirm and indicate the presence of norms around child marriage. In future iterations of the L3M exercise, UNICEF will be able demonstrate whether norms are changing over time. The social norms data was triangulated with the findings from the qualitative data analysis. Because the sample size for respondent groups were small at the community level, the report presents the social norm data aggregated at the division level in the main body of the report. Community level analyses are displayed in Annex 2.

Qualitative data analysis: Data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed according to the framework approach for qualitative data analysis.^{26,27} This approach has five main steps:

- Familiarization – in which the analysts become familiar with the raw data and list key ideas and recurrent themes
- Identifying a thematic framework – identifying the issues and concepts through which the data can be examined. This step draws from the activity’s objectives (i.e. bottleneck analysis) as well as from emergent themes
- Indexing – or coding. This was done in Atlas.ti
- Charting – rearranging the data according to the thematic framework, in this case into matrixes which correspond to the three key bottlenecks
- Mapping and interpretation – finding associations and drawing conclusions based on the data charted in the previous step. This step will allow us to draw comparisons between the two zones and identify common and/or divergent themes across the communities that we included in this pilot

4.3.2.5 Summary of data collection

Data collection in both Khulna and Sylhet was completed in two and half days each.

In Khulna, data collection was spread around three sites. A total of 60 household questionnaires were completed, 20 per site. Of these, 40 were completed by adolescent girls in two sites where UNICEF is implementing the adolescent stipend activity. Twenty household questionnaires were completed by parents/caregivers in households that were eligible or had received CCTs from UNICEF. Among the 60 household questionnaires, 40 adolescent girls and 40 parents/caregivers also answered social norms questions around child marriage. In addition to the household questionnaire, 22 in-depth interviews and 9 focus group discussions were completed.

In Sylhet, data collection was spread around four sites, of which one had no UNICEF interventions and one had both adolescent stipends and conditional cash transfers. Data collection was adjusted based on where the interventions were active (i.e., in the area where there was no intervention, data collection did not focus on question about UNICEF programs; instead, it focused on collecting social norms data). A total of 60 household questionnaires were completed by adolescent girls in areas where UNICEF is implementing the stipend. In addition, 20 household questionnaires were completed by parents/caregivers in the areas where the conditional cash transfer program is implemented. Among these, 40 adolescent girls and 40 parents/caregivers answered social norms questions around child marriage. In addition, 31 in-depth interviews and 12 focus group discussion were completed.

²⁶ Pope, C., S. Ziebland, et al. (2000). "Qualitative research in health care. Analysing qualitative data." *BMJ* 320(7227): 114-116.

²⁷ Ritchie, J. and J. Lewis (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London, UK, Sage Publications.

5. REFLECTIONS ON THE L3 MONITORING METHODOLOGY

5.1 Lessons learned through the implementation of L3 Monitoring approach/methodology

Tackling the root causes of child marriage is at the forefront of UNICEF's work in Bangladesh, and the L3M methodology contributes to these goals in several ways. First, it is a rapid monitoring methodology, which is comprised of complementary quantitative and qualitative approaches—i.e., quantitative data is matched by qualitative data that can contribute to understanding of why and how changes are taking place.

Second, this pilot represents the first time that the L3M methodology has been applied to activities around child marriage. The Bangladesh experience, thus, can serve as a useful approach for UNICEF programs in other countries where child marriage is an issue.

Finally, measuring changes in social norms is a new and innovative activity that can potentially hold important lessons for UNICEF programs in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Social norms are known to be a key driver of child marriage, but quantitative measurement of social norm change around child marriage remains a largely untested area; and very few programs measure social norms as part of their overall M&E approach. Yet understanding what drives social norm change, and how to measure it, is critical to the success of programs and would aid countries to replicate successful interventions.

With this in mind, the design and implementation of the L3M monitoring framework for assessing the effectiveness of interventions to delay child marriage and to measure social norms is a new and innovative activity that benefits Bangladesh. By developing a method for measuring changes in social norms, and conducting the first round of monitoring, this activity enabled refinement of the method to ensure successful replication by UNICEF, enabling UNICEF and government partners to measure social norm change over time.

Moreover, social norms are relevant to many other areas and sectors, from family planning and childbirth, to hand washing and health worker performance. Development of a system for measuring social norm change can benefit other interventions.

5.1.1 Data collection timeframe and terrain

A principal challenge of the L3 monitoring pilot was the short time frame of the activity—the entire exercise was conducted over 15 days (including travel between Khulna - Dhaka - Sylhet) —which did not allow for sufficient pre-testing of the instruments; training of data collectors; or regular debriefings in the field, all of which are essential for quality data collection. Only one day was allocated for training in each of the zones.

In Khulna, the first data collection site, the team lacked sufficient time to review the data collection and training materials; and to pre-test the tools, analyze findings and make adjustments, prior to the training.

Due to the distance between the village sites and Khulna city – where the training took place, the data collectors arrived late for the training and had to leave by mid-afternoon to be able return to their sites before dark. Due to this and also the large amount of materials that needed to be covered during the training, there was no time for role play or practice for the data collectors. This gap was also important from the data collector’s perspective. Informal discussions with them during data collection in Khulna revealed that the main challenge they mentioned was insufficient training time.

In Sylhet, training began on time, as data collectors arrived from their sites the night before, however, because of the overall short timeframe of the pilot, it was not possible to add a second day of training. In Sylhet, almost half of the training was spent doing practice and role play. Nevertheless, because of the complexity of the tools and the lack of familiarity with qualitative interviewing among data collectors, more time for training would have been beneficial.

The lack of regular debriefings was challenging in Khulna, and though debriefings were more frequent in Sylhet, this issue was also identified as an area to improve there. Regular debriefings would have allowed an opportunity for the data collection teams to discuss challenges and find solutions with their peers and site supervisors, and communicating this information to the UNICEF team would have allowed for a broader assessment of challenges and informed possible changes in the direction of the data collection exercise. A final debriefing with the entire data collection team would have provided an opportunity for the data collectors to summarize their experience, what worked well, where they need more support, and what could be improved next time.

In addition, the terrain was difficult, particularly in Khulna, where sites where data was collected were remote (e.g., three hours away by poor roads; or in a combination of car and speed boat) and the rain slowed down data collection. In Sylhet, the Sunamgonj site was also remote, but the UNICEF office was able to approve a team of data collectors to remain there for the entire period of the data collection, simplifying travel. In addition to allowing for better training and testing, more time would have allowed the team to better cope with the challenges posed by the terrain.

5.1.2 Errors in household listing

In both sites, the household listings conducted prior to data collection had frequent errors, primarily because the listing teams either did not or were not able to verify adolescents’ age through birth certificates or birth registration. For example, in one of the Khulna sites, the first three households identified from the mapping as eligible for the household questionnaire did not actually have an adolescent girl between the age of 14 and 18 years old. This issue may have been exacerbated in communities, especially in Sylhet²⁸, comprised primarily of migrant workers, some of whom left their households even in the two weeks that lapsed between the household listing and data collection.

In addition, it was difficult for the listing teams to verify certain criteria that make families and adolescents eligible for CCTs and stipends e.g., whether or not families are under the poverty line, definition of child labor, etc. It was also a challenge to compile sufficient number (at least 20) of sampling households eligible for CCTs and stipends from the listing for household survey in most of the sites. Selection criteria had to be re-adjusted.

Ineligible households had to be replaced, which, especially in areas with difficult terrain, meant that valuable data collection time was lost.

²⁸ Specifically in the Sylhet city slum and in the Jaflong stone crushing area.

5.1.3 Capacity of data collectors

The data collectors were selected because they had previous data collection experience and familiarity with the local context (and dialect, in the case of Sylhet). However, very few of the data collectors had previous experience with *qualitative* data collection and facilitation of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which require probing skills / knowing what questions to ask to elicit responses, which is particularly important for sensitive and nuanced questions about social norms. The relatively low skill level of data collectors, and lack of time to properly train them, affected the quality of the qualitative data. Where data collectors did not probe sufficiently, the interview notes read like surveys, with very brief answers and many potential follow-up questions unasked.

5.1.4 Complexity of the interview guides, measuring social norms, and translating questions

The content of the data collection tools was at times difficult and cumbersome for both data collectors and respondents.

IDI and FGD Guides

Data collectors using the IDI and FGD guides did not consistently pursue the probes detailed in the interview guides, either because they were not considered relevant or because they were deemed too repetitive. For example, in the translated notes, respondents often mention the age of marriage and the age difference between husbands and wives several times. Other examples include the series of questions about the marriage process, and another series asking about advantages and disadvantages of child marriage. Questions that had subtle difference in English may not have translated well in Bangla, as questions that had slightly different meaning in English proved to be quite similar in Bangla.

Although the tools were designed to cater to specific respondents as much as possible (there were separate interview guides for each group of stakeholders), some discretion was left to the interviewer. For example, there was only one interview guide for adolescents. However, two types of adolescents were interviewed – stipend recipients and non-recipients. Often, the non-recipients were still asked questions about the stipend, therefore increasing the burden on the respondent without actually gaining meaningful information for the L3M pilot. More capacity building of data collectors, strengthening their ability to discern which questions are appropriate for respondents, could solve this problem. Alternatively, separate interview guides may be helpful.

Many of the questions in the interview guides mirrored the elements asked in the household questionnaire. For example, questions in both tools asked about the stipend, whether it was received, how it was used. Since interviews were not transcribed and hand-written notes did not prove a quality substitute, UNICEF could consider using only the household questionnaire to ask details about the stipend program – and to focus the in-depth interview on adolescents' perceptions of the stipend program and how the stipend program supports them in overcoming bottlenecks. Removing the descriptive questions from the interview guides would also shorten and simplify it.

Social norms questionnaire

The social norms questions proved complex, both for data collectors and respondents. The content of the social norms questions was complicated and data collectors were not familiar with methods and approaches to measuring social norms. Also, data collectors were not used to asking questions in the

Likert-type²⁹ format that the social norms questions were in. From the respondents' perspective, the answers were often given in narrative form, and the data collector had to interpret whether the respondent "Strongly" or "Somewhat" agreed. More training for data collectors, along with field practice of the social norms could solve this issue.

The analysis of social norms data revealed that some questions that were looking for subtleties were not very effective as the subtle meaning in difference was often lost in translation. For example, this applies to the questions asking whether respondents think others "would" or "should" marry their daughters early. In this case, the wording that is easiest to understand in Bangla should be used, and it should be used consistently between the parents and adolescent questionnaires.

Similar issues arose when analyzing the network questions. The individuals that respondents listed as important differed when distinguishing between any decision and a marriage related decision (whether to marry as an adolescent girl or to marry one's daughter). However, there was often no difference between those most influential and those listed as most important. Similarly, there was often no difference between those listed as most influential and those listed as most trusted. As these additional questions did not provide additional information, they could be omitted from the next iteration of the L3M tools.

Additionally, for the network questions, relationships were not always clear, for example, in many cases, respondents noted: 'uncle' without specification (whether it is maternal or paternal), or 'grandfather/grandmother' without mentioning 'maternal' or 'paternal', etc. It would have been better to write relation of any kind in every case in a clearer way.

Finally, the social norms questions were administered to adolescent girls and parents. UNICEF should consider also administering this to adolescent boys. The findings that grooms and their families do not play a role in the marriage and marriage decision processes was surprising and should be explored further. Capturing the groom's and groom's family's perspective on social norms around child marriage could be a first step in this exploration.

Household questionnaire

The household questionnaire was analyzed by an external consultancy firm, SURCH, whose tasks included: transferring the data from questionnaires to tables, generating data sets, and generating tables summarizing the information.

In some cases mistakes were found in the data collected. For example, there were mistakes related to the marital status of household members, e.g. the age of the household member is 5 years but the marital status marked was "currently married." Or though there is an instruction that age should be written in complete year, in some cases it was found as written in both year and month (e.g., 1 year 3 months). These mistakes were corrected and edited according to logic.

Information about the religious status of households was collected in some cases and not collected in some other cases. The date was entered in different ways, which created difficulties. It would have been better to enter the date in every case in a uniform format.

In some cases HH member number of the child was entered in Stipend module incorrectly; i.e. HH member No. of the child in the Stipend module does not match with that in the household particulars part. So, these have been corrected.

²⁹ Likert-type questions ask respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with a statement, on a 5 point agree/disagree scale with a middle option.

Criteria for canvassing specific modules, i.e. “**Is there a girl aged between 14 and 18?**” and “**Is there a child aged between 6 and 14?**” in the household particulars part are not filled in properly.

All the above corrections were made to make the data in Excel transferable to SPSS without which data transfer could not be done properly and data in SPSS could not be used accurately.

5.1.5 Qualitative data quality

Given the effort is required to conduct L3 monitoring, data quality must be ensured. During the field work, data collectors were supervised by a team leader in each site and a UNICEF-Dhaka point person, in each site, when possible. The team leader was selected by the Zone officers in Khulna, who also rotated among the sites to ensure that data was collected according to plan. Challenges in supervision of data collection occurred because the UNICEF team was not large enough to monitor all sites. Furthermore, not everyone on the UNICEF team spoke Bangla, making it difficult to understand how interviews were going, for example (Bangla-speaking UNICEF colleagues also helped with translation, however, it was not possible to translate non-stop and supervise the data collection themselves).

After data collection was complete, unfortunately, it was not possible to transcribe every interview, yet the English notes that were used for the qualitative data analysis did not provide much in-depth information. Some interview notes seemed very similar (e.g. Adolescents in Hoar, and Fathers of CCT recipient in Slum), which calls for further examination of the recordings to ensure the interviews happened and that they were translated correctly.

Furthermore, the notes and transcripts from adult respondents, such as religious leaders and elected officials are usually much longer and more detailed than those for parents and adolescents. This may hint at difficulties of working with very young (adolescents) and illiterate populations (parents). The adolescent interviews may also be shorter because girls may have felt uncomfortable talking to male interviewers (which was often the case during the L3M pilot). An excerpt from an IDI is found below:

Slum IDI - adolescent stipend recipient

- "6. No.
7. Parents, neighbors, friends
 - a) Parents
 - b) No, without the parents opinion girl cannot take decision.
8. parents take decision by consulting with the neighbors and relative after the girl is 18 years old and if they find o boy age 21."

The notes are not very detailed. Also, more information would have been useful. For example, in question 7a, it would have been ideal if the interviewer clarified which of the parents is most influential in making the marriage decision - or if they are equally influential, that should have been noted. In 7b - the interviewer should have asked *why* the parents think that the girl cannot take decision.

Nevertheless, improvements in quality of data between Khulna and Sylhet are evident, showing the benefit of the additional training given in Sylhet. For example, in Sylhet, FGD note-takers were more careful about noting down participant characteristics, which made the transcription easier. In Khulna, it is not possible to discern different individuals or their gender (in the case of CBCPC FGD) from the transcripts.

In general, however, the major weakness in data quality – for both interviews and FGDs – is that interviewers did not probe sufficiently. Below is an example from a FGD transcript in Sylhet Slum:

P33 - Slum Fathers group Focus group discussion

"Question: I I. Have some IPT or folk songs been presented in your community?

One voice: yes

Another voice: yes, yes, it is there

- a. Can you tell us about any discussions that happened in the community in response to those?

One voice: yes, there were drama's few days back

- i. (Do you think these have affected public opinion regarding child marriage?)

One voice: yes, if affected

Another voice: yes, it helped

Another voice: (I have to leave, I have some work to do)

- ii. If yes, how? "

Question "ii" was not asked. If the data collectors had more qualitative interview training and practice, they would have been better equipped to ask probing questions, including the many that could not be provided on the interview guides, which were already long.

One of the best transcripts available was the Mother's FGD in the Sylhet Slum. In this instance, the UNICEF consultant tasked with transcribing was also the person who took the notes. An excerpt of this transcript is found below. This transcript also provides an example of a missed opportunity to gather more details. Additional potential probes are detailed below.

"P5: when the girl physically looks much grown up than her age, people will make lot of comments on her and if you don't arrange marriage, they will also make bad comments on you that you are reluctant on arranging marriage for her; lot of people will make comment but if the parents are aware and alert no harm can be made for a girl; the time has changed

P6: yes, people will say, 'arrange, arrange marriage'

P5: they will say, 'the girl becomes intelligent also, arrange marriage'"

Additional probes that would have been helpful: who are these people that "will make comment" - neighbors, relatives, the marriage media who is self-interested in arranging marriages?

The challenges in the qualitative data collection call into question the credibility (do the findings represent the "truth"?) and the dependability of the findings (are the findings consistent and can they be repeated?) – two important elements of trustworthiness of qualitative research. Future iterations of the L3M qualitative component should consider how to simplify the interview guides – perhaps by focusing on and honing into fewer topics, to gather information that cannot be obtained through other means, such as the household questionnaire. Furthermore, better data quality checks – starting with ensuring adequate capacity for data collectors – would be necessary.

5.1.6 Sampling and social norms analysis

The analysis revealed some challenges with the overall study design. For example, when analyzing the social norms questionnaire, it quickly became apparent that differences between the networks of individuals influencing decision-making reported by parents were distinct enough to be analyzed separately. Additionally, the analysis revealed different patterns between the networks of individuals influencing decision-making within each zone, by community. However, when disaggregating the data in such way, it also became apparent that the sampling frame for the social norms questions – which was based on adolescents and parents as the units of analysis – did not produce a sufficient sample for the disaggregated analysis. For example, in a couple of instances the network and social norms analysis was based on only a single respondent (see Annexes 1 and 2). The current study design used convenience sampling for the social norms questions, with adolescents and parents as the unit of analysis. Future iterations of the social norms sampling could consider a more systematic approach to sampling. For example, the sample could be calculated using conventional sample size calculators, and ensure that the resulting sample is powered to detect differences between the various groups of analysis, which should include adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers separately.

Due to sampling issues related to the social norms questionnaire and the difficulties in generalizing the findings to the community of interest, the interpretation of the disaggregated data is unclear. The design of future L3M exercises needs to consider what level of analysis is most useful for program purposes and design the study and sample to validly respond to these.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING FUTURE ITERATIONS OF L3 MONITORING FOR CHILD MARRIAGE

6.1 Ensuring data collectors are fully prepared for L3M exercises

Two of the most important challenges faced in the L3M pilot were insufficient time for training and supervision of household mapping. Future iterations of L3M could consider:

- Hiring data collectors that have qualitative experience, and then allowing for at least 4 total days of training. The first 2 days of training would be on comprehension of the context and content of the tools. This training would be supplemented with 1 day of field practice, during which data collectors would go to an area outside the one targeted by the L3M exercise to practice using the tools in the field. The last day would be focused on analysis, training on data entry, note-taking and transcription.
- During data collection, debriefings at the end of the day would help to synthesize the experience of the data collectors, provide them with feedback, and identify and correct issues encountered during the course of data collection.
- Improved training and supervision related to the household listing/mapping in order to minimize the errors that were found in the results of the listing. This is particularly important as UNICEF was considering doing a full mapping of households. Additionally, refining the household listing tool and method especially to help the listing teams to verify criteria e.g. age, poverty (family incomes), definition of child labor.

6.2 Improving data collection to ensure data quality and analysis capacity

The pilot succeeded in rapidly producing vast amounts of data, however, the quality of the data is unclear. This was partly the result of insufficient training for data collectors, but it was also due to the mismatch between the large scope of the activity and relatively short amount of time in which to complete it. Because of this, not all recordings could be transcribed and therefore it was decided, for the purpose of the pilot, to rely mainly on data collectors' notes for the analysis. The analysis of some 70 interview notes and FGD transcripts can be cumbersome and time consuming, particularly if UNICEF and partners do not have the capacity to analyze the data. The quality of the data from the household questionnaire was also potentially compromised as there was missing data for key variables, which the data management consultant team had to impute. Future iterations of L3M could consider:

- Choosing fewer communities per L3M cycle for in-depth exploration, with a focus on communities that are either positive or negative outliers.
- Sampling based on smaller units of analysis for the social norms questions – the adolescent, mothers and fathers, and ensuring that the sample size is calculated to allow the detection of differences among the various units of analysis at the community level.

- Simplify qualitative data collection tools by focusing on asking fewer questions, but going more in-depth through probing.
- Reviewing L2 monitoring tools and L3 household questionnaire to ensure complementarity and minimize overlap.
- Identifying terms that have varying cultural definitions (poverty, etc.), establishing operational definitions and reaching consensus among the data collectors during the training on their translation; making sure these are translated in the same way among the translators, as well.
- Refine social norms questions and ensure that data collectors are qualified to present them to respondents; reduce redundancies in the social network questions where subtle differences in questions did not provide additional data.
- Administering the household survey in all communities, but choosing a select few communities in which to delve deeper into program implementation and social norms change.
- Ensuring supervision of data collection and processing (i.e. translation, transcription) to improve data quality.
- Ensure sufficient capacity to transcribe qualitative interviews, for producing highest quality data.
- Ensuring that the capacity to analyze the data – and the timeframe for analysis – is considered when designing the project.

6.3 Strike a better balance between getting government buy-in and minimizing bias in data collection

One of UNICEF’s core objectives is to develop the capacity of the Bangladeshi government to implement and monitor Child Protection activities, and in the L3M pilot, local government representatives in charge of implementing the interventions acted as data collectors. For example, in CCT areas, social workers in charge of administering the CCTs and identifying eligible families were also in charge of collecting data in the same areas. This approach may have helped to increase their buy-in into the program; however, it also introduced bias and conflict of interest. This potential bias and conflict of interest might want to be avoided in the future by using different surveyors and interviewers. The social workers and other data collectors were being asked to evaluate the program they are responsible for. Therefore, they may have wanted to avoid data that suggested anything negative about the program, and respondents may have been more likely to present UNICEF programs in a positive light to the social workers, since they are responsible for determining program participant eligibility. Social workers may have also been more likely to ask leading questions or to assume information about the respondents instead of probing, especially given their lack of experience with qualitative interviewing. While bias may have been present, it was not directly observed nor reported.

To remedy this situation, UNICEF could consider involving program implementers in *Level 2 monitoring* – which as noted earlier in this report, is a process to *assess the implementation of program inputs and activities that contribute to the removal the bottlenecks identified during Level 1* (See Figure 2). L2 monitoring could be carried out on a monthly or quarterly basis using a routine monitoring form, while a separate mechanism could be used for L3M (every six months).

To ensure the credibility of results and increase the likelihood that respondents share as much detailed information as possible (including negative information, which is nonetheless important for the program), UNICEF may also want to consider diversifying the composition of the data collection team, to include external, independent entities.

Options for reducing bias in L3M data collection could involve:

- External organization with capabilities in both qualitative and quantitative data collection to jointly conduct the L3M exercise along with government representatives.
- “Visiting” data collectors – government representatives who implement UNICEF programs and have capabilities in both qualitative and quantitative data collection, but would conduct L3M in a zone outside of their implementation area.

Government capacity can still be strengthened by involving officials in routine L2 monitoring, which is carried out on a monthly or quarterly basis, working with the government to plan and prepare the exercise, develop the tools, and review results

6.4 Maintaining ethical considerations and informed consent

During data collection, it was found that the recruitment and verbal informed consent procedures were a valuable addition to UNICEF L3M data collection (previous L3M exercises did not use recruitment and consent scripts).

However, sufficient female data collectors were not available. Adolescent girls and interviews or FGDs with female care-takers should have always been led by a female data collector, helped by female note-takers. Due to capacity constraints in the data collection team, this was not always possible. Future iterations of L3M should ensure that sufficient female data collectors are hired and available for data collection involving minor girls and female care-takers.

Additionally, it became clear that respondents also shared the burden of data collection, due to opportunity costs for their participation. Many respondents participated in multiple forms of data collection (for example, a mother might have participated in the household survey and in the Focus Group Discussion – resulting in an estimated commitment of almost 3 hours) or unnecessary contact (for example, when there was an error in the household listing, which resulted in the wrong family/individuals being contacted and introduced to the study) which interrupted the income generating activities of already vulnerable families and individuals.

Providing financial incentives to compensate families for the opportunity costs of participating in the research might create perverse behaviors for respondents – such as bias and participation only for the sake of the incentive. Instead, future L3M data collection should minimize the time required from respondents (i.e. ensuring minimal errors in the household listing, reducing or eliminating overlap between respondents for the household questionnaire and respondents for interviews and focus group discussions).

Future L3M activities should also consider how to contribute to the community, to compensate for time and effort invested to participate in the survey, and also to consider local dissemination of results. For example, in Sylhet, Interactive Popular Theatre (IPT) was organized before recruiting participants for FGDs. The UNICEF team instructed the IPT group to not show the entire play, especially the scenes where a resolution to child marriage was discussed. Nevertheless, because the IPT was on the subject of child marriage, it contained suggestive elements. While this was problematic for our data collection as it potentially introduced bias in the respondents’ answers, the IPT itself could make a good contribution to the community. Perhaps conducting an IPT on a different topic would still benefit the community but not bias respondents. For example, the IPT on drowning could be presented during next iterations of L3M for child marriage.

Also, selecting respondents who are eligible, but not in program zones or who have not yet been selected for program activities raised community expectations for UNICEF programs. Gaging and ensuring the interest of the government to expand programs in those areas and the availability of resources and capacity to do so should be a first step before selecting a site for L3M.

7. FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL NORMS ANALYSIS

This section presents a summary of the qualitative data analysis that was carried out as part of the L3M pilot in Sylhet and Khulna and the social norms data collected as part of the household questionnaires. In this section, we first describe the data that was collected and the profile of respondents. Second, we summarize the child marriage situation as described by our respondents, in terms of the extent to which child marriage is perceived to exist in the community, the conditions under which the decision for underage marriage is taken, and who is involved in this decision. We also present the findings from the social norms questionnaire, including the respondents' reference networks, and quantitative figures to highlight the presence of social norms. We summarize communities' awareness of child marriage policies, and their perceptions of the advantages or disadvantages of child marriage. We then draw linkages to the UNICEF interventions and, finally, summarize how UNICEF interventions contribute to overcoming the three selected bottlenecks.

7.1 Data summary and respondent profile

The data analysis is based on 22 in-depth interviews and 9 focus group discussions in Khulna and 31 in-depth interviews and 12 focus group discussions in Sylhet. These interviews were conducted with adolescent girls, parents/caregivers, and selected stakeholders (e.g. Kazi, religious leader, social workers (in CCT areas), and elected officials). Focus group discussions were carried out, separately, with mothers, fathers, and Community-based Child Protection Committees. Additionally, the social norms analysis is based on the questionnaires completed by 40 adolescent girls and 40 parents/caregivers in Khulna, and by 40 adolescent girls and 60 parents/caregivers in Sylhet. The following tables summarize the characteristics of these respondents.

Table 4 shows that in Khulna, all adolescent girls—both those who received the stipend and those who did not—were attending school. In Sylhet, most of the adolescent girls interviewed were not attending school at the time of the interview. Of the 6 who were selected as stipend recipients, 3 were not attending school. In neither site were any of the adolescents married.

Table 5 displays the characteristics of the parents interviewed. Only a handful of parents were interviewed because the CCT program was only present in two of the villages included in the L3M pilot. It is unclear whether all the CCT recipients had birth certificates and children receiving UNICEF benefits who were enrolled in school, mostly due to poor data quality.

Table 6 summarizes the characteristics of the other stakeholders who were interviewed in Khulna and Sylhet. All but a couple of these individuals were long-term residents of the areas in which they were selected. Because they have played active roles in their communities for a significant amount of time, they serve as good informants for the L3M pilot and perspectives on child marriage, especially how child marriage has evolved in the two areas.

Table 4. Summary respondent characteristics of adolescent girls in Khulna and Sylhet.

Division	Area	Id nr.	Stipend	Age	In School	Class in school	Birth certificate	Father job	Mother job	Total HH members
Khulna	Nolian	1	No	16	Yes	10	Yes	Laborer, mud-cutting	Housewife	5
	Nolian	2	No	15.5	Yes	10	No	n/a	n/a	6
	Nolian	3	Yes	15	Yes	10	Yes	Mechanic	Housewife	7
	Nolian	4	Yes	15	Yes	10	Yes	Shrimp fry trader	Housewife	7
	Sreenagar	5	No	16	Yes	10	Yes	Day laborer	Housewife	4
	Sreenagar	6	No	14	Yes	10	Yes	Farmer	Housewife	4
	Sreenagar	7	Yes	15	Yes	8	Yes	Day laborer	Housewife	4
	Sreenagar	8	Yes	n/a	Yes	10	Yes	Service holder	Housewife	6
Sylhet	Hoar	9	No	14	No	0	Yes	Paddy seller	Housewife	7
	Hoar	10	No	18	Yes	9	Yes	Farmer	Housewife	9
	Hoar	11	Yes	14	No	0	Yes	Imam	Housewife	7
	Hoar	12	Yes	18	Yes	10	No	Farmer	Housewife	7
	Slum	13	No	14	Yes	5	Yes	Rickshaw puller	Housewife	6
	Slum	14	No	14	No	0	Yes	Junk materials	Housewife	6
	Slum	15	Yes	18	No	8	Yes	Junk materials	Housewife	4
	Slum	16	Yes	14	No	0	Yes	Deceased	Deceased	4
	Stone-crushing	17	No	14	No	0	Yes	Unemployed	Extracts sand	8
	Stone-crushing	18	No	15	No	0	No	Extracts stones	Extracts sand	8
	Tea garden	19	No	17	No	0	Yes	Tea garden secretary	Tea garden	5
	Tea garden	20	No	17	Yes	5	No	Deceased	Tea garden	2
	Tea garden	21	Yes	15	Yes	6	Yes	Tea garden	Tea garden	8
	Tea garden	22	Yes	15	Yes	6	Yes	Tea garden	Tea garden	7

Table 5. Summary of parent characteristics interviewed in CCT areas in Khulna and Sylhet

Division	Area	Parent	CCT or Stipend?	Age	Total HH members	Job	Children's Birth certificate	Children in school (if UNICEF support)	Notes
Khulna	Rajapur	Father	n/a	37	5	Day laborer	Yes	1	
	Rajapur	Father	n/a	35	4	Disabled	Yes	1	
	Rajapur	Mother	CCT	35	6	Daily laborer	n/a	1	
	Rajapur	Mother	n/a	33	3	House maid	Yes	1	
Sylhet	Slum	Father	n/a	48	n/a	n/a	Yes	1	Children in school since the last 7 months
	Slum	Father	CCT	45	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	One of the children in school since the last 7 months; others don't want to go
	Slum	Mother	n/a	40	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	One of the children in school since the last 3 months;
	Slum	Mother	n/a	40	5	n/a	Yes	1	All except elder has birth certificate. Three of them go to school since the last 2 years

Table 6. Summary of stakeholder characteristics from interviews in Khulna and Sylhet

Division	Area	Stakeholder function	Long-term in community	Details
Khulna	Nolian	Imam	Yes	In this community for 13 years
	Nolain	Kazi	Yes	Has been Kazi for 40 years in the community
	Nolian	Elected official	Yes	Has been on the council for almost 10 years
	Rajapur	Imam	Yes	Living there for 25 years
	Rajapur	Kazi	Yes	Has lived there 16 years, acting as sub-Kazi for 5 years
	Rajapur	Social worker	Yes	Working as a social worker for the last 24 years
	Rajapur	Elected official	Yes	Lived and raised family there
	Sreenagar	Purohit	Yes	Has been a Vedic priest for the last 7-8 years
	Sreenagar	Religious leader	Yes	Religious leader since the 80's, also a school teacher
	Sreenagar	Elected official	Yes	Working here for the last 25-30 years
Sylhet	Hoar	Elected official	Yes	Born in this village, elected for the last 10 years
	Hoar	Kazi	n/a	Covers 26 villages, this being one of them
	Hoar	Religious leader	No	Working as imam for the last 1 month
	Slum	Elected official	Yes	Born here, just elected for second 5-year term
	Slum	Kazi	Yes	Not from Sylhet, but here as Kazi for the last 10 years
	Slum	Religious leader	Yes	Worked in Slum for past 8 years
	Slum	Social worker	No	Worked in Slum for less than 1 year; as a social worker for 5 years
	Stone-crushing	Elected official	No	Not his own village, worked there for the last 2 years
	Stone-crushing	Kazi	Yes	Worked here since born, picked up business from his father
	Stone-crushing	Religious leader	No	Here since last 1 month
	Tea garden	Elected official	Yes	Own village, elected member for the last 4 years
	Tea garden	Purohit	Yes	Not his own village, working here since last 13 years
	Tea garden	Religious leader	Yes	Worked there in Tea Garden for the last 23 years

7.2 Child marriage in Khulna and Sylhet - A summary of respondents' perspectives

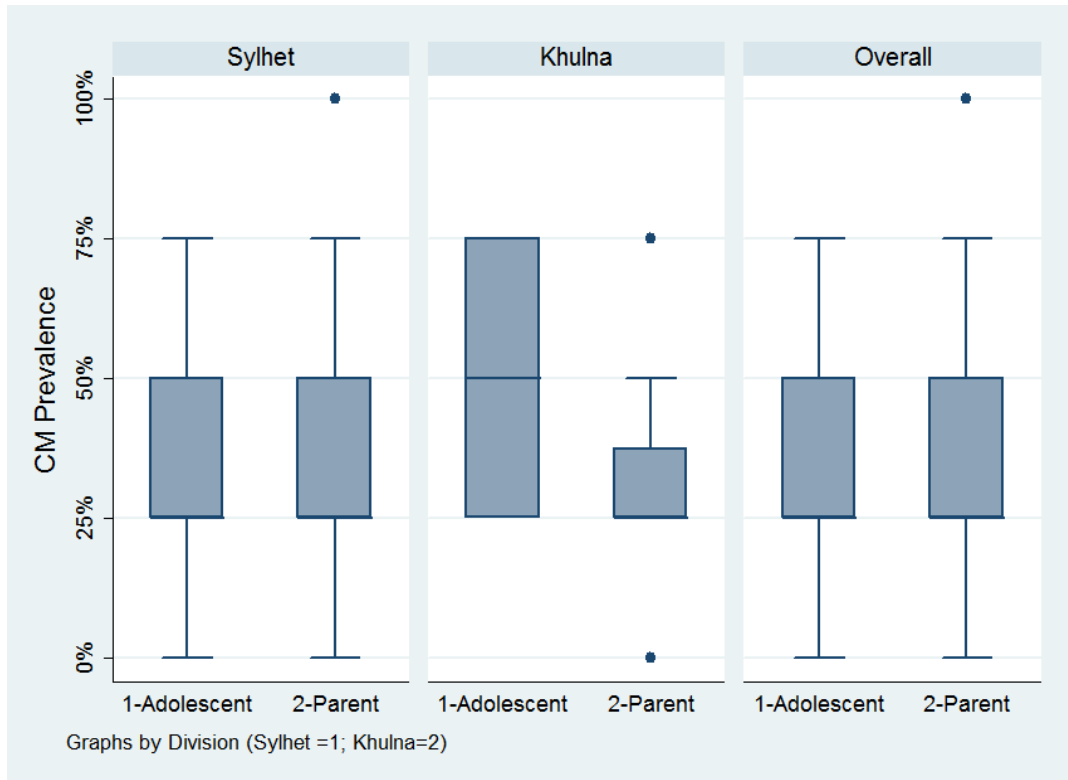
Existence of Child marriage in L3M pilot communities

In Khulna, all but a few participants thought that child marriage was still present in the community, although in lower numbers than in the past. The estimates of perceived child marriage rates ranged from 30 to 70 percent. Respondents perceive that child marriage has changed little in the last six months, but that it occurs noticeably less than compared to five years ago. In Khulna, a father in a FGD used cyclone Aila as a reference point to explain that "before Aila child marriage was more in number than now, it is reduced but still going on. Suppose here we are eight, five out of eight will not agree with child marriage but rest three is still not sure" (Participant number 11)(P11). Another father in the same FGD argued that rates were a bit higher, with 60 percent of people still supporting child marriage (P11). In another area in Khulna, a member of the CBCPC stated that "10 percent of people in our society support child marriage, and among it eight out of ten are women. And this 10 percent is only from the poorest families" (P21). The same respondent believed that, five years ago, at least 25 percent of society supported child marriage (P21). Mothers paint a slightly more grim picture, as they explain that 85 percent of girls in class 10 got married, and out of these half were married before 18 (P23). In Khulna, responses from interview and FGD participants were consistent in both group and individual settings, and across respondent types.

In Sylhet, it was more frequent than in Khulna that respondents said that there was no child marriage in their communities and that it is not a persistent phenomenon. However, overall, child marriage likely still exists. In an FGD, mothers proposed that "there is no child marriage these days" (P3). In the same FGD, however, another mother posited that "half of the community supports child marriage" (P3). All respondents discuss a reduction in child marriage rates compared to 5 years ago: whereas before, half of community members supported child marriage, in present times only 20 percent support it (P8). CBCPC FGD participants in one area proposed that supporters of child marriage are somewhere between 10 percent and 30 percent. This was higher in the stone crushing area and the tea garden, where mothers (P58) and fathers (P65), respectively, participating in the FGD estimated that 50 percent of people in their community supported child marriage.

Figure 4 displays the perceived prevalence of child marriage, based on the findings from the analysis of the quantitative social norms data. The prevalence is generally perceived to be under 50 percent, this estimate seems consistent to the findings from the qualitative data.

Figure 4. Perceived prevalence of child marriage (CM)



Underlying factors

The factors and conditions that drive decisions about underage marriage were found to be similar in both Khulna and Sylhet. Poverty was the most frequently mentioned reason for child marriage. Poor families cannot afford to pay food and schooling fees for all of their family members, and, therefore, opt to marry their daughters when an opportunity arises. A CBCPC member in Nolian, Khulna explained that "we consider a girl child a burden because of poverty" (P11). A religious leader in Khulna proposed how some fathers estimate the burden of a girl child in the family:

"Because of poverty a father arranges his daughter's marriage before 18; a father calculates in this way that for food and clothing a girl needs 12 mund (40kg=1 mund) of rice in one year, i.e. one mund for 1 month, it means 1,000 taka per month; the father want to save that money" (P55).

In addition to being considered a burden on the family due to daily expenses, the cost of marriage or dowry, incentivized poor families to marry their daughters early, as dowry increases with age. A Muslim religious leader in Khulna explained: "a poor family who has a daughter, for marrying their daughter they need to spend a lot of money, but if a boy of well off family offer to marry the girl then that parents will not think about their daughters age"(P18). In Khulna, giving dowry is considered a "law": "Yes, there is law that during marriage we need to give clothes, money, and give other things to the boy" (P29). A mother from the same area explained that "no marriage takes place without at least a dowry of 50,000 taka" (P23). In Sylhet, mothers in the Slum FGD report that [the groom's family] "will ask for a lot of things as dowry: television, motorbikes" (P34). A complicating factor was that dowry was often not asked of younger girls, before the age of 18. One of

the adolescent girls interviewed in Khulna explained, when discussing a friends' experience, that "dowry was not demanded for those early aged girls so the family agreed for arranging their marriage before 18. After 18 years of age dowries may be demanded" (P15).

While poverty surfaced as a principal factor driving early marriage, helping daughters avoid the effects of the poverty also appear to play a major role in the marriage decision. A male CBCPC member in Khulna explained during a FGD that: "suppose I received a proposal from a doctor boy, while my daughter has just passed SSC [Secondary School Certificate], do you think that time I shall consider the age of my daughter? No, if a boy is a physician or an engineer we usually not go for considering age of girl, she can be 13 or 14" (P11). Mothers in a FGD in Sylhet discussed a similar situation, which was exacerbated in this area because many Sylhetis immigrate to London, but return to Bangladesh for a bride:

"Participant 10: if they find a groom living in London they will arrange marriage

Another participant: there are parents who arrange marriage for their daughter even at the age of 12 when they find a groom living in London; they do it for greed

Participant 5: greed, families will be greedy with the wealth of the groom's family and think that their girl will be at peace so that they will arrange marriage for their girl

Participant 4: if they find a rich groom they may feel through the girl they have got the opportunity to get rid of poverty." (P4)

Some respondents highlighted exceptions wherein the cycle of poverty can be broken without resorting to child marriage. For example, a male member of a CBCPC in Khulna shared that: "when a girl has economic freedom then she can resist this obstacle, as in my school there are three or four girls, who denied to accept marriage proposal, because they have jobs, it is important" (P11). Another member of the CBCPC agreed: "suppose my daughter, does not go to school, may be less than 18, moves around without doing anything, every one's eyes gazed upon her, start to search for a boy or think: if there is any problem! But when the girl is engaged with her education or with any job then the risk of her pre mature marriage reduced" (P11).

Another major contributing factor to early marriage relates to protecting the family's honor by assuring the virginity of adolescent girls. On the importance of virginity, a male CBCPC member in Khulna explained:

"Boys family looks for under aged girl because they want to get a virgin, an untouched girl, they are afraid, when a girl is mature enough she may have some relationship with a boy she may lose her virginity! The boy can have relationship with many other girls but he wants a virgin as his wife" (P11).

In both Khulna and Sylhet, respondents shared how the virginity of a girl could be compromised - and therefore the honor of the family put at risk. In Khulna, an adolescent girl explains the circumstances under which one of her friends got married at 12 years of age:

"A boy from the village was disturbing her so her family thought any misshapen may take place, the boy can take her away, so they arranged a hidden marriage for her, they find a suitable boy and the marriage take place. That marriage held at the closure, they did not invite anybody" (P15).

Another adolescent girl shares a similar belief, that "a grown girl may have an illegal physical relationship, [parents] are afraid of it, so they want to be free from anxiety" (P17). Mothers in a Khulna FGD also highlight that "if [the girl] does not read, talks with boys, and her parents become afraid of some scandal" (P23).

In Sylhet, many families expressed "anxiety regarding family prestige." Mothers who participated in the FGD also agree with this perspective. One of them shared that "there are times girl fall in love with bad boys and can't keep their virginity, their family has no way but to arrange marriage" (P4). In another FGD, mothers expressed fears that,

"[While parents] go outside of the family for work, [the adolescent girl] can do whatever she wants and can be in love; the community will know and they will make lots of comments; if my daughter forces me to be burnt in fire with her wrong deeds, then I've to arrange marriage for her" (P58).

In another FGD, one of the CBCPC members shared that "my daughter, if she doesn't follow my instructions and doing things that are not good; there are bad boys who will follow my daughter and make comment in front of me. It'll ashamed me a lot; what I'll do with her? In those cases, we arrange marriage early" (P64).

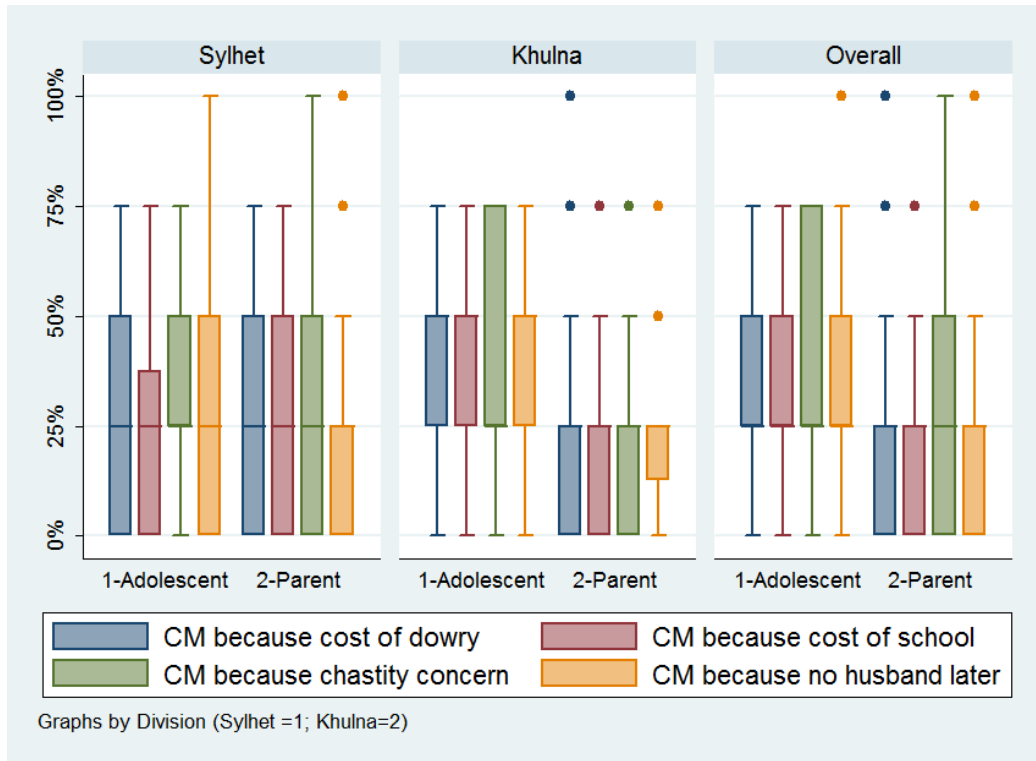
Related to virginity and the adolescent girls' age, some respondents also discussed their perceptions of looks and what seemed desirable to them. For example, in both Khulna and Sylhet, respondents believed that their daughters will look too old after 18 and will not be able to find a good groom.

Finally, a third major contributing factor to child marriage is religion. The importance of religious beliefs came through more in Khulna than in Sylhet, and religious beliefs about child marriage were linked to both Islam and Hinduism. One of the Imam's interviewed in Khulna explained that when a girl "is only 12 or 13 of age, in Islamic religious point of view she is in marital age" (P18). In addition to these religious beliefs, there are also superstitions, that "grown up girls should no keep in house" (P50). A Hindu religious leader explains that one of the beliefs he has been trying to dispel has to do with parents perceptions of what happens when a girl reaches adulthood:

"In Hindu religion there was a system marriage which was called Gauri marriage, here a girl before reaching to her adulthood will be married and after marriage, in her husband's home she will reach to her adulthood. If a girl get into her adulthood while she is in her father's house, her father's 14th generation will not be able to come out from the hell" (P55).

The findings from the quantitative survey provide estimates for how widespread concerns over delaying child marriage are in the communities that were included in the L3M pilot (Figure 5). In Sylhet, adolescent respondents believed that between 0-50 percent of people in their community married their daughters early because of concerns over cost of dowry or cost of school. Chastity concerns are similarly important, as are concerns that the adolescent girl would not find a husband if she married after 18. We found similar perspectives between adolescents and parents, although parents perceived that a smaller proportion of their community married their daughters early due to concerns of not finding a husband later. Similar patterns can be observed in Khulna, although it seems that adolescents there generally think that a higher percentage of their communities (between 25-50 percent) engage in child marriage because of dowry and school costs, as well as chastity and no husband later. The parents' perspective is slightly different in Khulna, as the parents seem to downplay the importance of these factors in their communities. The data in Khulna also had more outliers. For example, a few respondents thought all of the members in their communities married their daughters early because of dowry concerns. These patterns might be related to misunderstandings in of the questions - as this was the first site where the social norms questionnaire was implemented. Alternatively, it could signal a greater variety in the community's perspective of CM and why it happens, particularly in Khulna, where CM rates are supposedly higher than in Sylhet.

Figure 5. Factors motivating child marriage – findings from social norms survey



Individuals involved in marriage process

The actors involved in the marriage process were similar between Khulna and Sylhet. The range of actors involved in determining when a girl is ready for marriage and when she should be married included the parents or guardians, elder brothers, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Respondents did not consistently distinguish between paternal and maternal relatives. However, when they did, adolescents mentioned the paternal uncle, paternal grandmother, and the maternal grandfather as most influential. Girls themselves were rarely involved in these decisions, although some parents signaled that adolescent involvement in marriage discussions is increasing. In Sylhet, the marriage media (match-maker) was also seen to have an important role in the marriage decision process, as he is the one who initiates many proposals. In both contexts, the groom and groom's family are perceived to play a very minor role, if one at all.

Among the most influential individuals, the vast majority of respondents listed the father. The final decision about marriage was almost always made by the male head of the household. The adolescent girl's mother, however, was also mentioned frequently, especially because she is perceived to be most knowledgeable about the girl's status and maturity. A few of the fathers' interviewed also explained that they seek the mother's advice and opinion on marriage and readiness for marriage. In a few instances, grandmothers were also listed as important. In one case, the grandmother was the young girl's advocate for continuing her education before marriage (P15).

The findings have been confirmed through the questions asking individuals about their reference network for both general and marriage-specific decisions. While there was a range of individuals whom respondents listed as most important in general decisions and marriage decisions (see Box 1), mothers and fathers were most important in both general and marriage related decisions, in both Khulna and Sylhet. This list reaffirms the importance of male figures in decision-making. It also confirms qualitative findings that the groom and groom's family do not really play a significant role in the decision to be married.

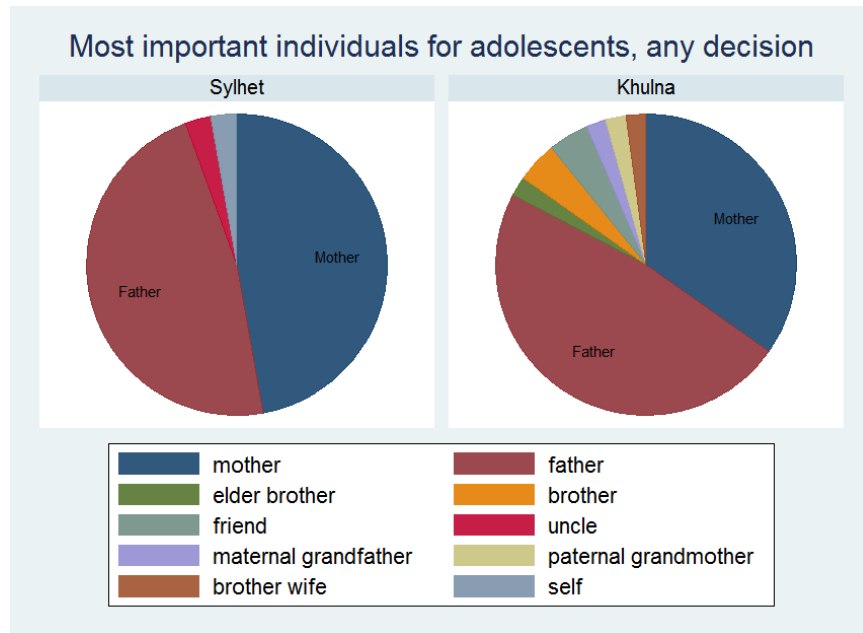
Box 1. All individuals which feature in respondents' networks for decision-making (no particular order)

Adolescents' network	Mothers' network	Fathers' network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother • Father • Elder Sister • Elder Brother • Sister • Brother • Friend • Paternal Uncle • Maternal Uncle • Aunt • Uncle • Cousin • Paternal Grandfather • Maternal Grandfather • Paternal Grandmother • Maternal Grandmother • Younger Sister • Younger Brother • Sister Husband • Brother Wife (Sister-In-Law/Bhabi) • Paternal Uncle's Wife • Maternal Uncle's Wife • Paternal Aunt • Neighbor • Maternal Aunt • Ngo-Sister • Up Member • Self • Teacher • Nephew • Landowner • Brother In Law (Debor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husband • Elder Daughter • Daughter • Elder Son • Son • Elder Brother • Brother • Neighbor • Elder Brother In Law • Brother In Law • Elder Daughters Husband (Elder Son-In-Law) • Daughters Husband (Son-In-Law) • Elder Sister • Son's Wife • Cousin • Paternal Grandmother • Paternal Grandfather • Grandson • Mother In Law • Father In Law • Uncle • Mother • Father • Nephew • Sister In Law (Vabi) • Mother Self • Maternal Uncle • Maternal Grandmother • Younger Sister • NGO Staff • Local Ward Member • Relative • Landowner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife • Elder Daughter • Daughter • Elder Son • Son • Elder Brother • Brother • Elder Brother In Law • Brother In Law (Salok) • Elder Daughters Husband (Elder Son-In-Law) • Daughters Husband (Son-In-Law) • Elder Sister • Sister • Brothers Wife • Father • Father-In-Law • Friend • Himself/Self • Husband Of Sister • Husband Of Sister-In-Law • Maternal Uncle • Mother • Neighbor • Cousin • Sister-In-Law (Vabi) • Paternal Uncle • Nephew • Mother-In-Law • Local Elite • Landowner

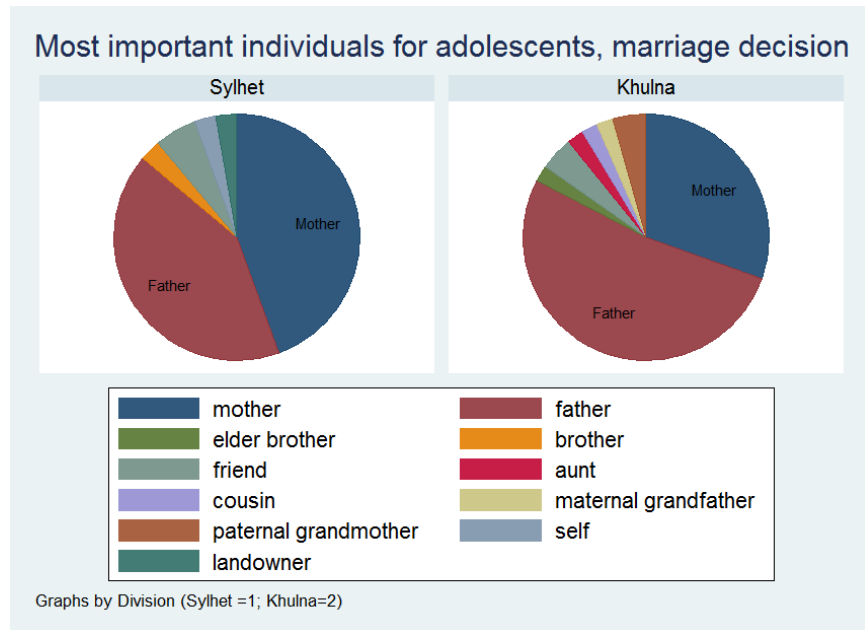
Figure 6 displays the most important individuals proposed by adolescents when making general decisions (a) and marriage decisions (b). Part (c) presents who was listed as most influential in the marriage decision. While mothers and fathers clearly dominate all decisions for adolescents, it is interesting to note that, on average, mothers and fathers appear equally important in Sylhet. In Khulna, fathers appear to be more important and more influential. Additionally, in Sylhet there appear to be fewer individuals in the network for decision-making and the “self” is more predominant than in Khulna. This finding could be an illustration of more empowered adolescents and less social influence on family decision-making in Sylhet, as compared to Khulna. For programmatic purposes, it will be important to further explore the influence of the multiple individuals listed as most influential in the marriage decision in Khulna (see graph (c)).

Figure 6. Adolescent’s network for decision-making

a. Any decision



b. Marriage Decision



c. Most influential in marriage decision

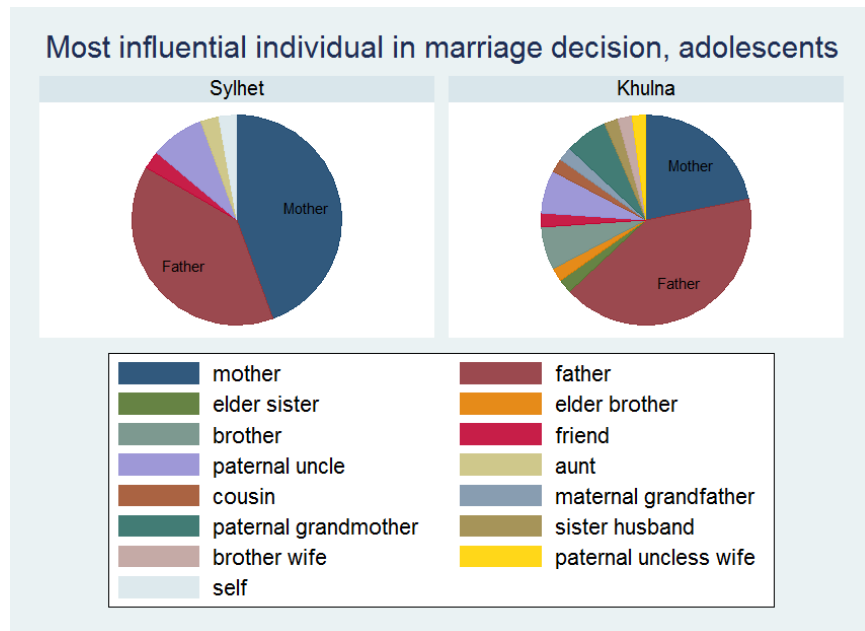
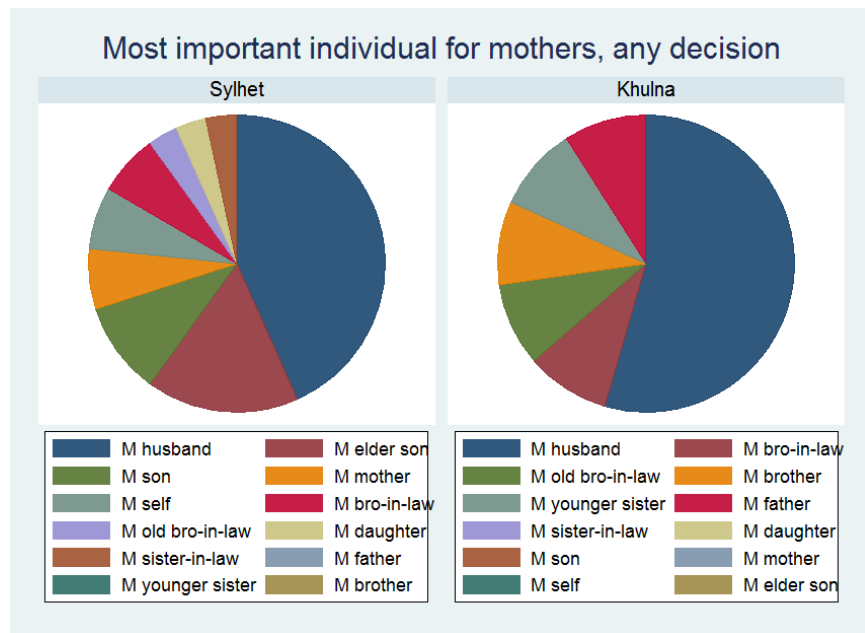


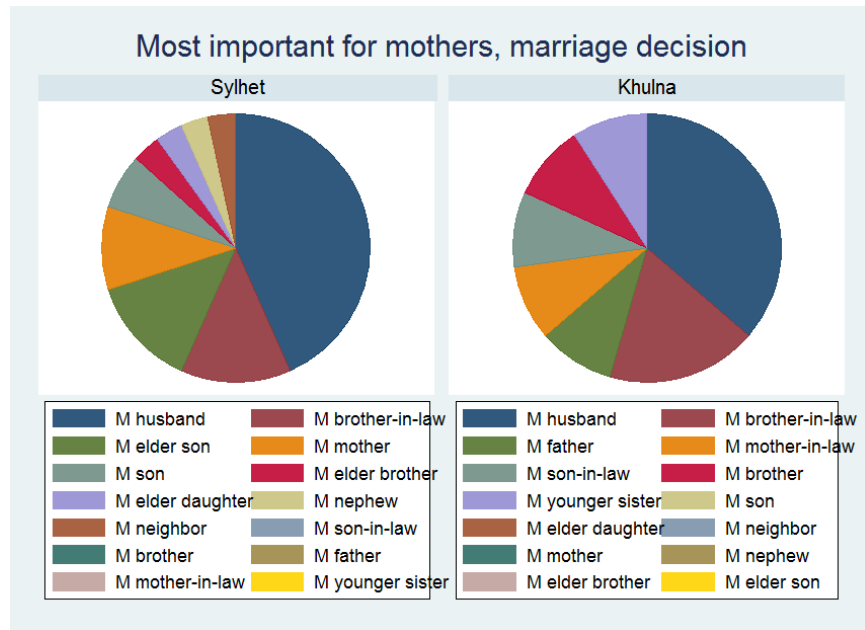
Figure 7 summarizes the most important individuals for the mothers that were interviewed in Sylhet and Khulna (a). Parts (b) and (c) illustrate the most important individuals in the daughters' marriage decision, and the most influential individuals, respectively. As expected in Bangladesh's male-dominated culture, the husband plays the most important role in all decision-making. The husband is also the most influential person in the decision on whether and when a daughter is married. Male relatives, such as the elder son and brother-in-laws also play a critical role in both Khulna and Sylhet. The mother's mother (or the adolescent's grandmother) plays a significant and consistent role in all decisions mothers take in Sylhet. In Khulna, on the other hand, it is the mother-in law who is an important actor in the decision for a daughter's marriage. That daughters themselves are one of the top six most influential actors in the decision on marriage in Khulna was surprising, although the data does not allow further insights – such as whether the daughter that is the most influential is the one whose marriage is being decided (c).

Figure 7. Mothers' network for decision-making

a. Any decision



b. Marriage of their daughter



c. Most Influential

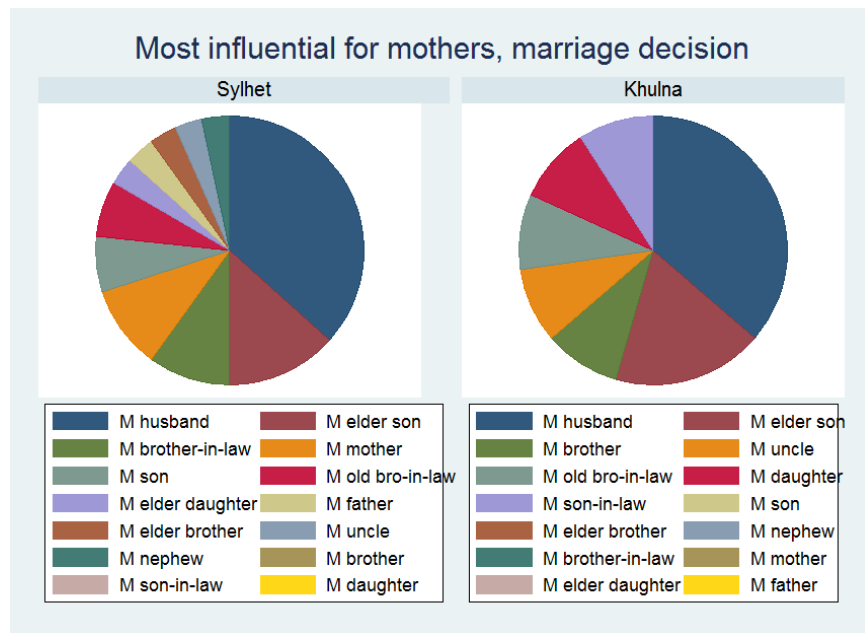
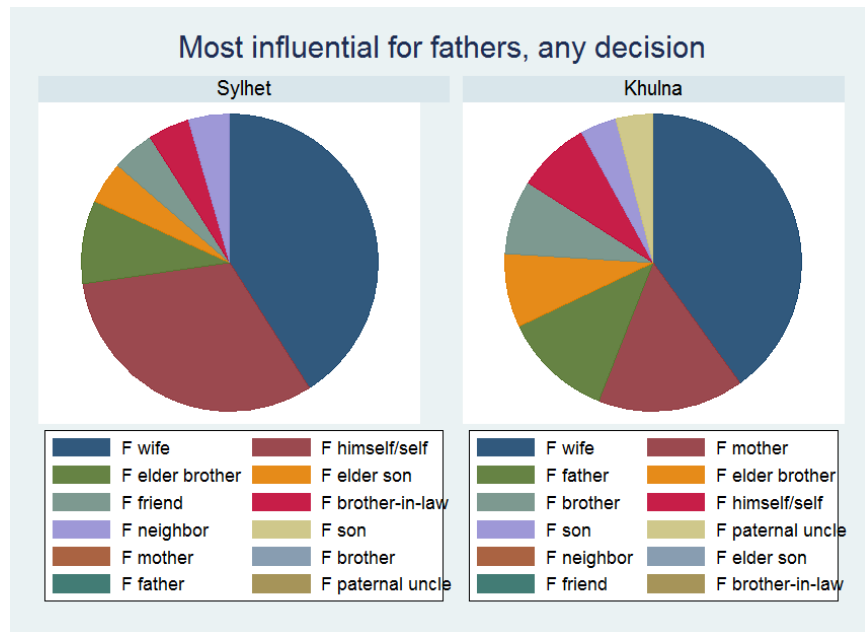


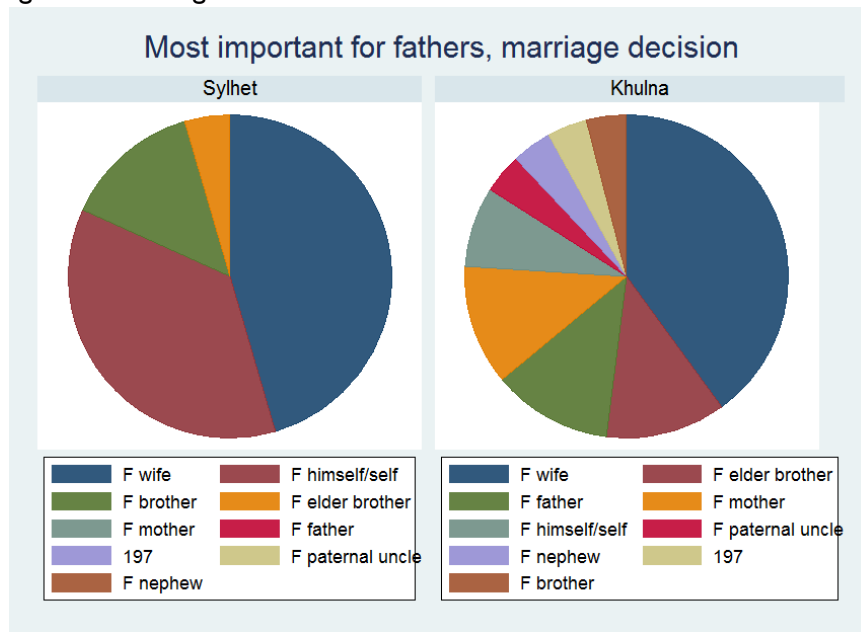
Figure 8 shows the father's network for decision-making, in Sylhet and Khulna. Although it is a male-dominated society, fathers consistently placed their wives as the most important individuals they consult for any decision (a), their daughters' marriage (b). Wives also had the most influence in the marriage decision. This does not correspond to the qualitative data where respondents proposed that the final decision is taken by the father. However, it does reinforce the notion that wives (mothers) play an important role in the decision to marry the daughter and the decision to determine a girl "ready" for marriage. The father himself was typically the other most important player in decision-making. We find that fathers from Khulna also list their mothers as an important actor in decision-making. This is confirmed by the fact that mothers in Khulna listed their mother-in-laws as one of the most important individuals for their decision-making. No fathers from either Sylhet or Khulna listed their daughters as important or influential in taking decisions about marriage, reaffirming that adolescents typically do not have a say in the marriage process. The adolescent girls that disclosed otherwise in the qualitative interviews might have either been exceptions in their communities, or perhaps they felt more empowered than they actually are in their communities.

Figure 8. Father's network for decision-making

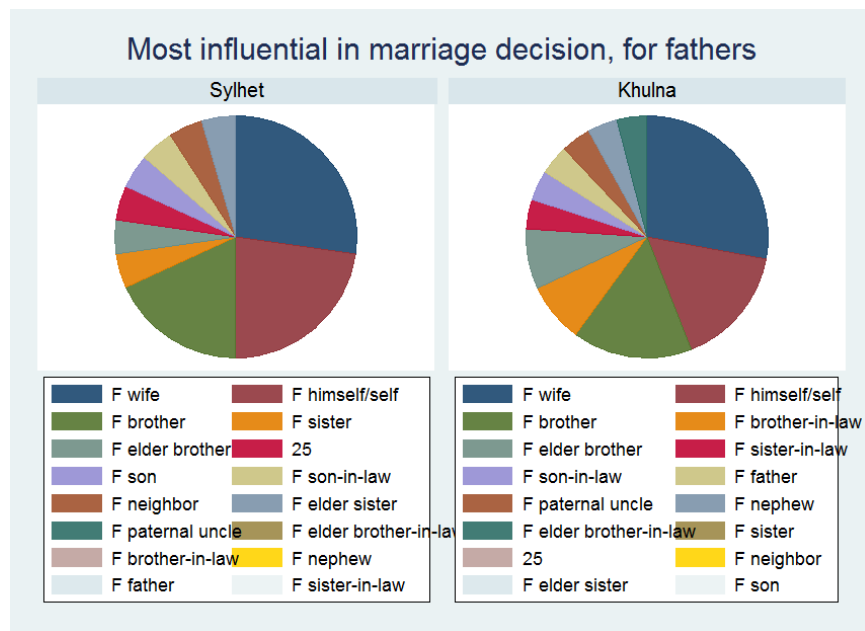
a. Any decision



b. Marriage of their daughter



c. Most influential



The findings above are presented at the zone level, comparing the networks of adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers in Sylhet with those in Khulna. Community-level analyses are presented in Annexes 1 and 2 for each of the seven villages included in this monitoring exercise. Because the sample size at the community level was at times quite small (sometimes 1 person per category), it is not clear how the community-level findings should be interpreted. Nevertheless, they are presented to provide a taste for the type of heterogeneity that could be found among communities.

Awareness: legislation, advantages, disadvantages

The vast majority of respondent were aware of a law describing legal ages of marriage. CBCPC and other stakeholders also highlighted high perceived levels of awareness within the community of the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls, in both Khulna and Sylhet.

There were a few surprising responses from some stakeholders, however. For example, an Imam in Khulna proposed that although "according to the law the marital age for girl is 18 and for boy it is 21. I think ideal marital age for girl should be 16 and for a boy it should be 21-22" (P18). Most respondents, however, believed that the ideal age for a girl to get married was between 18 and 21, and that boys should be 25 or older (a couple of respondents mentioned 30 or older).

In both Khulna and Sylhet, respondents generally thought the ideal age difference between the bride and the groom was somewhere between 2 and 10 years. Most adolescents thought a difference of 2-4 years was appropriate, while generally, parents and other stakeholders thought a difference of 5-7 years was most appropriate. Only a few respondents thought a difference of 10 years was ideal. Additionally, all adolescent girls who were interviewed did not believe that their parents would want them to get married before they finished their studies and got a job, around the age of 18 or 20. The perspective of adolescent girls on marriage did not differ between Khulna and Sylhet, or among stipend recipients and stipend non-recipients.

In addition to the laws on minimum legal age of marriage, respondents were also aware of the documentation necessary to carry out marriages. For example, respondents across Khulna and Sylhet declared that marriage cannot be arranged without a birth registration card (P1, P33, P45, P63, P18, P26).

Although awareness of child marriage laws was high, implementation of those laws was perceived as incomplete. In Khulna, a father proposes that "50% of people obey the law, and 50% people don't obey" (P24). In another community in Khulna, it was perceived that 80% of people obey the law. Furthermore, stakeholders in both Khulna and Sylhet complained that people were not sufficiently aware of birth registration laws - which are also important to the child marriage process. The legal definition of a "child," however, was less well known and most respondent suggested that children do not also include adolescents. A couple of the religious leaders in Sylhet, for example, proposed that a girl is a child only until she reaches puberty (P10, P45). The definition of a child has implications for both child marriage and child labor. Furthermore, although a valid birth registration card was deemed essential for the marriage to take place, some respondents suggested that the marriage registrar, the Kazi, can be bribed to be "convinced" of the age of the bride and groom (P1).

In addition to being aware of legislation pertaining to child marriage, all respondents - both from Khulna and Sylhet, and across respondent types - seem to be aware of the disadvantages associated with child marriage and the advantages of delaying marriage until after 18 years of age. Disadvantages of child marriage, listed in various combinations by all respondents - including adolescent girls - included:

- Health effects: not being ready to bear and raise a child; difficulty in pregnancy; risk of child and maternal death; anemia; girl is mentally unprepared and therefore develops depression and/or anxiety; unhealthy or disabled child.
- Maturity effects: less knowledge and intelligence; can't take burden of family.
- Financial effects: frequent visits to the doctor; groom's family demanding money from bride's family.
- Family issues: domestic abuse; unhappy husband and in-laws; sending girl back to her family's home.

Waiting to be married until after 18 years old, generally resolved all concerns about these disadvantages, according to our respondents. Additional advantages for adolescent girls by delaying marriage included:

- Continuing their education.
- Contributing to their family's household and learning how to lead a household.
- Being able to make decisions on her own.
- Physical and mental maturity.

Many respondents even claimed that there are no advantages to child marriage. However, several acknowledged certain advantages to marrying daughters early. In both Khulna and Sylhet, these were mostly related to the financial factors that underlie the decision for parents to marry their daughters early in the first place: less economic burden in parents' household and no demand for dowry. One respondent also alluded to there being an advantage for "achieving social security for the girl" (P45).

These perceived advantages also relate to parents avoiding dishonor for the family if daughters were to engage in relationships with boys and less social pressure for the family to marry their daughter. Finally, another advantage of early marriage is that "the tenderness is visible on [the girl's] feature" (P49) and the girl looks young. Additionally, from a male perspective, it might seem easier to maintain a leadership position in the household if the bride is younger. As one father explains in a FGD in Sylhet, "at 15 years of age girls are becoming more physically attractive, they have got their physical structure; you can control her" (P2).

Existence of social norms around child marriage

We found that, although our respondents were aware of the disadvantages of child marriage and none admitted to encouraging child marriage or condoning it, that there were factors and instances in which respondents thought that it was understandable for others in their community to marry their daughters early. For example, in determining readiness for marriage, although respondents were very much aware of the legal age of marriage and of the disadvantages related to child marriage, not everyone proposed age as the determinant of a girl's "readiness for marriage." These findings were not different between Khulna and Sylhet. More than half of respondents proposed that ensuring a girl was 18 years old, by checking birth certificate or birth registration, and ensuring that the girl finished school are the main criteria for readiness for marriage. However, the responses from other study participants suggest that norms are also at play when deciding whether adolescent girls are ready for marriage or not. A father in a Sylhet FGD proposed that "when [the adolescent

girl] reaches her sickness, the menstruation period, it means she is ready to marry” (P2). Physical changes as markers of readiness for marriage were also important to respondents from Khulna. An adolescent proposed that “family members of a girl may decide her marital age or the decision may be taken by observing her physical change” (P17). A common saying in Khulna claims that “a girl become an old woman in her twenties, adult age of a girl starts quickly and finishes quickly, but for a boy it starts lately and finishes lately” (P21). Religious norms and conventions are also important. A CBCPC member in a Khulna FGD explained that “in a religious point of view, after the age of 13 a girl is marriageable” (P11).

Table 7 (a) and (b) presents the summary of the social norms questions for Sylhet and Khulna, respectively, as well as the overall average. The numbers fit on a Likert-type scale, where 1= Strongly disagree and 5= Strongly agree. The lower the number, the more the respondents disagreed with the statement. A score of “5” would have signalled strong agreement with a statement. The current data cannot be easily interpreted. However, through future iterations of L3M, changes in social norms can be detected by testing the difference between estimates from two separate time periods. The annexes show individual tables for each of the communities included in the L3M exercise.

Table 7. Data from social norms questionnaire by zone30

(a) Sylhet

Sylhet	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do					Normative – Self What I think I should do					Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do					Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do				
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)					I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)					I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)					I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)				
	Stone ³¹	Hoar ³²	Slum ³³	Tea ³⁴	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.
	3.4	2.6	1.7	3.8	2.63	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.34	3.5	2.4	1.7	3.4	2.52	I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c) N/A				
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)					I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)					I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)					I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)				
	Stone ³⁵	Hoar ³⁶	Slum ³⁷	Tea ³⁸	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.	Stone	Hoar	Slum	Tea	Avg.
	3.5	3	2.3	3.9	3.28	4.2	4.7	3.6	4.6	4.36	2.8	1.9	2.5	3.3	2.64	I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) Stone Hoar Slum Tea Avg. 3 1.7 1.8 3.5 2.58				

³⁰ 1= Strongly disagree and 5= Strongly agree

³¹ N=10

³² N=11

³³ N=21

³⁴ N=10

³⁵ N=10

³⁶ N=10

³⁷ N=6

³⁸ N=10

b. Khulna

hulna	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do				Normative – Self What I think I should do				Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do				Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do			
Parents' questions	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)				I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)				I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)				I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)			
	Nalian ³⁹	Sreena ⁴⁰	Raja ⁴¹	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.
	4.4	2.7	1.9	2.7	2.5	1.1	1.2	1.4	3.1	3.3	1.8	2.5	2.1	1	1.1	1.1
Adolescent girls' questions	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)				I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)				I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)				I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)			
	Nalian ⁴²	Sreena ⁴³	Raja ⁴⁴	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.
	4.4	4.7	N/A	4.5	5	4.8	N/A	4.9	3.5	2.9	N/A	3.2	1.7	1.3	N/A	1.5
	I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c)												I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c)			
	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.	Nalian	Sreena	Raja	Avg.
	1.9	1	1	1.2					3.7	3.2	N/A	3.4				

³⁹ N=8

⁴⁰ N=10

⁴¹ N=18

⁴² N=22

⁴³ N=24

⁴⁴ Adolescents were not asked social norms questions in Rajapur

In focus group discussions, when respondents were faced with an imaginary scenario in which a friend was considering marrying their daughter, who was aged 15, almost all decried the action and claimed that they would stop the marriage.

For example, fathers in a FGD in Sylhet:

“Question: Should your friend marry her 15 year old daughter before she turns 18?

3 voices: No

A participant: I’ll go to my friend and will protest that he is doing a mistake and it is not fair, it is wrong

Another participant: Yes, protest means we need to stop it; even these days a girl of 15 years is playing doll, she should not be fallen victim of child marriage, we will stop it

Another participant: we have to tell him on the better future of the girl

Another participant: we have to make him understand properly” (P33).

However, some respondents revealed other preferences. In response to a similar question, mothers from the same area in Sylhet who participated in the FGD had diverging perspectives:

“Participant 2: 20 years would be better for marriage for a girl

Participant 11: It is my daughter, I’ll decide what would be beneficial if I arrange marriage before or after 18 years of age and we have to be cautious” (P34).

Additionally, respondents did not frequently perceive negative consequences from the community, if they were to not marry their daughter early. CBCPC members explained during a FGD discussion in Sylhet:

“Question: But if I don’t arrange the marriage, people will make bad comments, no?

One voice (female): nothing will happen with what people say; they will always speak

Another voice (female): people will never understand what is better for my daughter, it doesn’t matter what they feel or do

Another voice (male): I have a daughter 12 years of old; there was a proposal from one of my relative and I didn’t listen to that

Question: So if I don’t arrange marriage for my daughter, shall I be treated badly by the society?

One voice (female): no, the society will be treating us good

Another voice (female): society will be happy with us; those who are aware they will treat us good; and those who are not aware they will consider it differently

Another voice (male): I’ll also convince the people why I refused to marry my daughter before 18; that will clarify that I followed the law and didn’t commit a crime by arranging the marriage” (P1).

In the few instances where negative consequences were mentioned, they were generally around community members gossiping. For example, a father participating in a FGD in Sylhet thought that “people will say [the daughter who is not married before 18] is older than marriage; in village even the neighbours will make comments that she is older” (P2). The elected official in that area agreed: “There are some people in the community who talk a lot when they see a girl not getting married, they say girl is getting old and talk a lot of unnecessary things” (P8). Similar opinions were expressed in a couple of instances in Khulna. An adolescent stipend recipient shared that “when a family doesn’t arrange marriage for their daughters before 18 years of age, then they have to hear bitter words from society” (P17).

This finding - that negative consequences did not occur often - is consistent with what we found in the quantitative survey.

Table 8 presents the average of respondents’ answers for the listed questions. The lower the number, the more the respondents disagreed with the statement. A score of “5” would have signaled strong agreement.

Table 8. Summary of quantitative figure on negative consequences related to child marriage

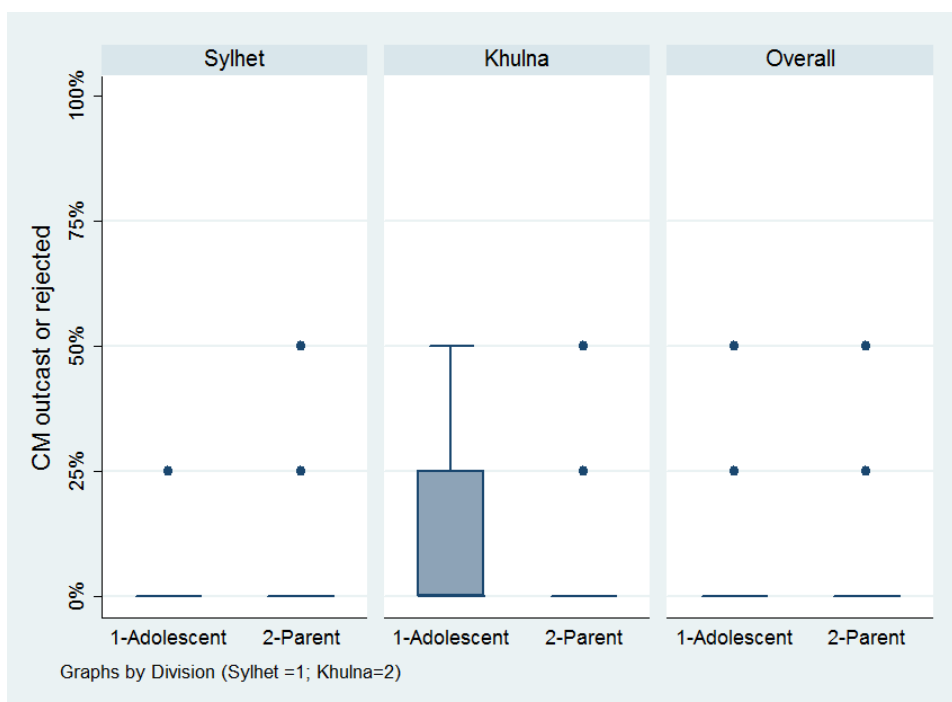
Question	Sylhet					Khulna			
	Stone crushing	Hoar	Slum	Tea Garden	Overall	Nolian	Sreenagar	Rajapur ⁴⁵	Overall
I believe that I will be regarded negatively if I do not marry before 18 (e)	1.7	2.4	1.6	2.6	2.1	2.9	2.3	n/a	2.6
I believe that I will be rejected by my family and community if I do not marry before 18 (f)	1.7	1.3	1	1.5	1.4	2.1	1	n/a	1.5
Parents									
I believe that I will be rejected by my family and community if I do not marry my daughter before they reach age 18	2.9	2.4	1.6	1.8	2.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3

Table 8 presents further information related to whether respondents believe that people in their community would be outcast or rejected if they married their girls after 18 (burgundy lines). According to this data, few parents and adolescents believe that being outcast or rejected is likely in their

⁴⁵ No adolescents were interviewed in Rajapur, Khulna

communities. In Khulna, it seems that even fewer adolescents than in Sylhet believe in this potential, although, the difference does not appear to be significant. Figure 9 shows perceived negative consequences as a result of not marrying daughter early.

Figure 9. Perceived negative consequences



7.3 Profile of UNICEF programs and participant awareness of these programs and activities

The activities currently being implemented in the L3M pilot sites are listed in Table 2 and Table 3. The only site where there were no interventions was in the stone crushing area of Sylhet. Respondents in other areas of both sites were aware of the CCT and adolescent stipend programs. For example, even non-recipient adolescent girls participating in the adolescent clubs had heard about friends receiving the stipend. The community also seemed aware of the Interactive Popular Theatre.

One of our findings was that many respondents were not aware of the Community-based child protection committees, even where they existed. For example, in one of the areas in Khulna, Rajapur, fathers participating in FGDs and IDIs, as well as the religious leader and the Kazi, claimed they did not know of the existence of a child protection committee (P22, P24, P25, P26, P27). This may be because the respondents call the committee by a name that was not suggested by the interviewer, or because the CBCPC is weak in this one particular area – which was hinted at in the FGD that was conducted with CBCPC members (P21). It may also be due to the fact that the CBCPC was newly established in some areas, such as Nolian, Khulna (P20) and the Slum in Sylhet (P42). In the Sylhet Tea Garden, although a CBCPC committee existed, in the FGD, members mentioned another committee: the Panchayet Committee, which is a tea garden oversight committee whose mandate also includes marriages and marriage disputes (P64). The Panchayet was perceived

to have significantly more power than the CBCPC on social issues in the Tea Garden, including education and child marriage (P64).

Adolescent clubs are a popular activity that all adolescents were aware of. The adolescent club activities included theatre groups, life skills trainings, child rights, and disaster management. Adolescents activities included such as sports, singing and dancing, and reading books. As mothers in a Khulna FGD explained, “They are developing by coming [to the adolescent club], mentally and physically they are developed now than before” (P49). All parents interviewed perceived adolescent clubs positively.

The adolescent stipend program was present in multiple sites. From the data, it is unclear whether the adolescents understood all the program conditions. In a few instances in the Sylhet Tea Garden, stipend recipients did not attend the adolescent club meetings regularly or currently (P69, P70). The lack of participation could signal issues in adolescent stipend recipients meeting the program criteria. One adolescent stipend recipient in Khulna – Sreenagar explained that she did not receive life skill training, although she had already received the stipend of 15,000 TK (P48).

All of the adolescent stipend recipients shared that they have been in touch with a stipend coordinator and that the decision for how to use the UNICEF stipend money was taken with the help of the stipend coordinator, as well as with the input of parents. In Khulna, adolescents used the stipend for:

- Buying shrimp fry that they can sell (profits to be used for education) and shrimp cultivation
- Fish farming
- Purchasing animals, such as ducks and hens
- Purchasing a sewing machine
- Getting sewing training
- Stitching and embroidering materials
- Starting a garage (assumed to be a mechanic shop, started by an adolescent boy).
- Paying school fees
- Starting a business
- Buying sheep
- Buying bamboo and tin for the cow-house

In some instances, it was unclear whether the adolescent made the purchase decision or the parents. For example, in a Sylhet FGD, fathers shared that they purchased cows with the stipend money, and that this will serve as a good investment should they need money for their children’s education (P2). Also, one adolescent gave the example of how she used 3000 taka to buy needles and good quality threads for stitching, but how she gave 6000 taka to her father for buying “machines” (P16). In the Tea Garden, fathers in the FGD explained that the stipend money was used to pay school fees for two daughters and buy a cow (P65). Mothers in the FGD explained that they have bought either cows or goats (P66). In a couple of instances, also in the Sylhet Tea Garden, the adolescent stipend recipients explained that the profits resulting from the cow or other investment made with the stipend money would be used during the time of the adolescent’s wedding or any “crisis moment for the family” (P70, P69).

The CCT program was only present in two of the sites that were included in the L3M project. In both sites, respondents reported that they received frequent visits from the social worker – either every week or every two weeks. All but one of the respondents was aware of all the conditions that must be met in order for the family to continue taking part in the CCT program – e.g. maintaining school enrolment, not engaging child in labour, and not marrying child before legal age. All respondents seemed confident in their ability to meet the conditions and maintain their participation in the program. One of the fathers who was part of a CCT household in Khulna explained that the condition which is difficult to obey is “that this money will not be used in family purpose” (P25). In this particular case, he had used some of the money to take care of some of his medical bills. Other examples of CCT use, within the program rules⁴⁶ included: for school fees, to hire private tutor; purchasing food, clothes, and medicine. In a couple of other instances, a father explained that he used the CCT funds to purchase land (P33, P41).

7.4 Overcoming bottlenecks

Overcoming the financial access bottleneck

As illustrated in the previous sections, poverty was determined to be the main contributing factor to parents’ decisions to marry their daughters early. Some respondents also perceived that girls that are economically empowered can remain in school longer and do not need to marry early. Both the adolescent stipend and the CCT programs are designed to tackle those issues. L3M pilot participants provided several examples of how UNICEF’s programs are succeeding at removing financial bottlenecks. In addition to removing financial bottlenecks, the stipend program also empowers adolescents, as illustrated by the following quotes:

“As a result of receiving stipend-grant, one of my sons who was involved with earning wages and dropped out from school, now readmitted again. I received an amount of 12000 in total as a stipend-grant. I bought some clothes required for my family and it took 2100 TK. Rest of the money invested into a small-scale business” (P44) – Father, Slum Sylhet

“The money they have received it has made some change in them, they are thoughtful about using this money, though it is a small amount of money yet they are very attentive, and they are providing support to the family.” Father – Khulna (P12)

“A change has taken place in me and my family, as my father has some better tools for his work so he is incoming more for the family and my mother and I have started stitching and hopefully we shall earn money from it. I have learned different types of stitch, such as filling stitch, cross stitch, button stitch, and chain stitch and learned how to make a design on blanket. Many changes have taken place in me after receiving the stipend, I could not talk open heartedly with anybody but now I can. Though I cannot take decision of my own but I try to think more clearly than before. Because of extreme poverty of my family I did not make plan of my own to use the money but I hope I shall be able to make my own plan after tackling the initial pressure of my family.” Adolescent stipend recipient – Khulna (P16)

⁴⁶ Program rules according to the conditions listed in UNICEF's MoRES Concept Note

“After receiving the money a change taken place in me, earlier I thought perhaps I cannot do anything which other people can do, but now I feel confident for doing something, to be self reliant. I have gained some skill of speaking, earlier I could not talk with people, I used to stammer in front of them but now I can talk. My friends think this stipend will do well for me; I will be able to earn my expenses along with my study. My parents are very happy; they are thinking I will do better in my study by my own earnings.” Adolescent stipend recipient – Khulna (P53)

“I learned self accomplishment, and getting established on my own. My friends and family were very happy and they inspired me to work hard; they also said that they would help me if I needed any. In future the money will be great use, I will buy clothes and sell” Adolescent stipend recipient – Sylhet (P37)

“**Another voice:** they like it and my daughter is also teaching me what she is learning from there

Another voice: we know every little; now we also learn a lot of things from our daughters

Participant 1: This has improved their life; they can capitalize their stipend; they can buy cow and poultry and can income

Another voice: whatever they learnt it’ll help them in return; the girls can take training on sewing and block-boutique works

Participant 3: They are making income out of it

Participant 1: they have also learnt how to play, they have formed a group; they are learning by themselves; they are wishing to learn sewing.” Mothers FGD – Sylhet (P66)

Future L3M efforts or other M&E efforts should monitor whether there are any unintended effects in the removal of financial bottlenecks. For example, in Sylhet, a couple of the adolescent stipend recipients explained that the profits from the investments supported by the stipend funds could be used for the daughters’ marriage. It would be counterproductive if these profits would eventually be used towards dowry payments and/or underage marriage. Additionally, one of the respondents hinted at the fact that some adolescents might not use the money productively. A Sylhet Tea Garden stipend recipient shared that “I know one person who is actually not doing much with the sewing machine she bought with the stipend, which is not the right thing to do” (P69). Although this might be an isolated incident, it hints at the need for UNICEF to monitor both how the money is used in the short term and progress over time. The restrictions or conditions for how the money should be spent were not available and the team could not discern to what extent social workers were in charge of monitoring how the money is spent.

Overcoming the legislative and policy bottleneck

Based on the data collected through the L3M project, UNICEF and its partners have been successful at raising awareness of the laws around minimum marriage age in the communities in which they work. Additional efforts appear necessary in regards to raising awareness about the legal definition of a “child.” Most importantly, the *enforcement* of the CM policies – in terms of the minimum marriage age, having valid birth registration for marriage, and the legal definition of the child needs to be improved.

There are examples where our respondents shared stories when marriage was successfully stopped. One of the adolescent girls residing in the Sylhet Slum shared that “members of the Kishori [adolescent] club and Didi [the social worker?] went to the place, met the councillor and did not let the marriage take place. Some people who were responsible for the act were arrested” (P35). In another instance, one of the fathers in a Sylhet FGD recalled:

“P6: there was an incident; in an area there was an attempt to arrange marriage, the bride was 13 years old and the boy 11 years; then the Kazi came and asked for the birth registration card, also the School Teacher came and he had shown the birth registration card (cards are kept at School at times) and he contacted with the police, they came and the marriage was stopped” Fathers FGD – Sylhet (P2).

However, in the same area, an adolescent stipend recipient recounts a different story:

“Yes, my friend did get married in early age, but they are living happily. The police was not contacted. No one intervened.” (P6)

In Khulna, there were several stories of religious leaders who refused to conduct underage marriage (P18). Also, in some instances respondents remembered police interfering with child marriage and arresting the culprits (P27). There were some stories of attempts to stop child marriages. One FGD participant recounts:

“Yes people of the society come forward to stop childhood marriage, some days ago when marriage of Mr X’s daughter was going to take place, the adolescent group went there at first to stop the marriage, and the police inspector and Chairman was informed through mobile, they also went to Mr X house, the marriage was stopped for that time but they went to Chalna in the evening...that’s the story. Many persons went there but actually there was no any organized leadership.” Father FGD Khulna (P12).

One of the adolescent girls who received a stipend recounts her friends’ experiences:

“7-8 of my friends got married before 18 years of age.

One of them is from an extremely poor family and her physical growth was too much visible.

CBCPC, Ullashi (NGO), public representatives and honorable persons from the society tried to resist the marriage but that was not fruitful, police was not informed. At first the girl did not want to marry but later she agreed for the sake of her parents.

They tried to make them understand that early age marriage will be harmful for the girl’s future but they did not care and took the girl away from home, and the marriage take place in her uncle’s house.” Adolescent stipend recipient – Khulna (P17).

In spite of NGO and government actions against child marriage, it remains easy to obtain false birth certificates (P11, P12).

“Government and NGOs are trying to resist child marriage, but when I am wanting to marry my under aged daughter, I am going to the union council and collecting a false birth certificate, and in this way we are spoiling our movement.” Male CBCPC member in FGD – Khulna (P11).

In addition to the falsifying birth certificates, families sometimes go to neighbouring villages to marry their daughters – where the Kazi, for example, is more lenient and more willing to register an illegal marriage. Several respondents in Nolian, Khulna explained that many people went to neighbouring Chalna village to marry their daughters early (P19). For example:

“Some days ago, our neighbor Mr. X arranged marriage for his adolescent daughter. Neighbor went to him not to let it happen, but he did not listen to anybody, when he could understand it would not be possible here then he went to Chalna with the girl by boat and the marriage took place there.” Father – FGD Khulna (P12).

“Two of my friends got married before 18 , one was of 15 years and another one was of 16 years of age. I know about one, she wanted to continue her study and her parents in laws also promised that they will continue her study but they did not, her study has stopped. She is pregnant now. People from Rupantar and union council authority tried to stop the marriage but they did not listen to them, they took the girl some other place and arranged her marriage. They took her to her maternal grandparents’ house, and then she was in class eight. The police was not informed.” Adolescent stipend recipient – Khulna (P16).

In this area in Khulna, the CBCPC members seemed passionate about intervening against child marriage. However, this is the same area where the CBCPC was newly established and not well recognized in the community. Further capacity building efforts are therefore necessary to help the CBCPC members act upon their passion to enforce child marriage laws.

Additionally, it appears that weaknesses in enforcement arise from the interactions between different policies, such as those governing child marriage and birth registration. For example, because birth registration is poorly enforced and birth certificates can be falsified, it can be difficult to enforce child marriage rules - if in the public records it does not appear that the bride was under 18. They also arise between different bottlenecks – extreme poverty and lack of alternatives for adolescent girls, which leads parents and communities to breaking the law and marrying their daughters early.

Overcoming the social norms bottleneck

Cultural norms in Bangladesh frown upon interactions between adolescent boys and girls. Through adolescent clubs, UNICEF promotes these interactions and therefore empowers all adolescents. As fathers participating in a FGD in Sylhet explained:

“P7: my daughter’s character is better now after going to adolescent club; she used to read books which doesn’t allow her to concentrate in other things, I find it good; they also mix with other girls, talk to them, it is also helpful

P5: whatever she is doing in the club is good for her; it’ll help her in future; they are learning how to behave with other people, how to behave with parents; they will learn the better things

P1: if the boys and girl go together to the club, they will mix and they can respect each other more, they will be more knowledgeable which is good

P5: children will be good if they are engaged in reading more books

P1: even we can take suggestions from our sons; they also learn discipline in schools”
Fathers FGD – Sylhet (P2)

7.5 Community recommendations for ending child marriage

At the end of the interview or FGD, respondents were asked for their recommendations for ending child marriage in their communities. They provided a series of perspectives and suggestions, which included:

- Improving law enforcement– setting an example of people who try to disobey the law
- Holding more IPT shows, especially in context where literacy is low
- Holding awareness campaigns, championed by NGOs together with government representatives and religious leaders
- Having officials be held accountable for their responsibilities, for example, by imposing a fine for stakeholders in charge of stopping child marriage, in case that they fail to stop child marriage
- Home-based counseling with social workers
- Improving birth registration
- Curbing the issue of false birth registration cards

Surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents also suggested “making people understand” and “raising awareness.” This finding is surprising because most, if not all of the respondents who participated in the L3M interviews and FGDs were themselves aware of both the policies around child marriage and the negative consequences of child marriage.

And although poverty was the principal reason motivating child marriage, none of the recommendations related to ending poverty or removing the financial barriers that drive families to marry their daughters early.

7.6 Summary and conclusions

In both Khulna and Sylhet, respondents confirmed the presence of child marriage in the community. Based on respondents’ estimates, child marriage continues to happen more frequently in Khulna than in Sylhet. Nevertheless, respondents proposed that child marriage rates had decreased significantly compared to five years prior.

The factors underlying child marriage were similar in Khulna and Sylhet. Poverty and financial reasons – such as cost of dowry – were the most frequently mentioned reasons why child marriage occurs. Protecting the family’s honor by assuring the girl’s virginity was another important reason. Religious beliefs linked to both Islam and Hinduism, as well as superstitions, represented another major driver of child marriage in the communities included in this study.

The range of individuals involved in the marriage process was similar between the two regions. The most influential individual was the father or male caregiver. The mother also played a major role, particularly in determining readiness for marriage. The network analysis findings were surprising as they revealed that in some areas there were many individuals who played a role in the decision-making process around marriage. These findings provide UNICEF with leads for improved targeting of communities through their interventions.

Awareness of policies and regulations around child marriage, as well as the disadvantages of child marriage, were surprisingly high across all of the sites included in this pilot. Nevertheless, implementation of laws was perceived as incomplete – with the government lacking capacity to enforce them and the community having the freedom to disobey. It was also surprising that the caregiver’s awareness of CBCPCs was very low. More community outreach is necessary to raise awareness of UNICEF and government child protection programs and resources.

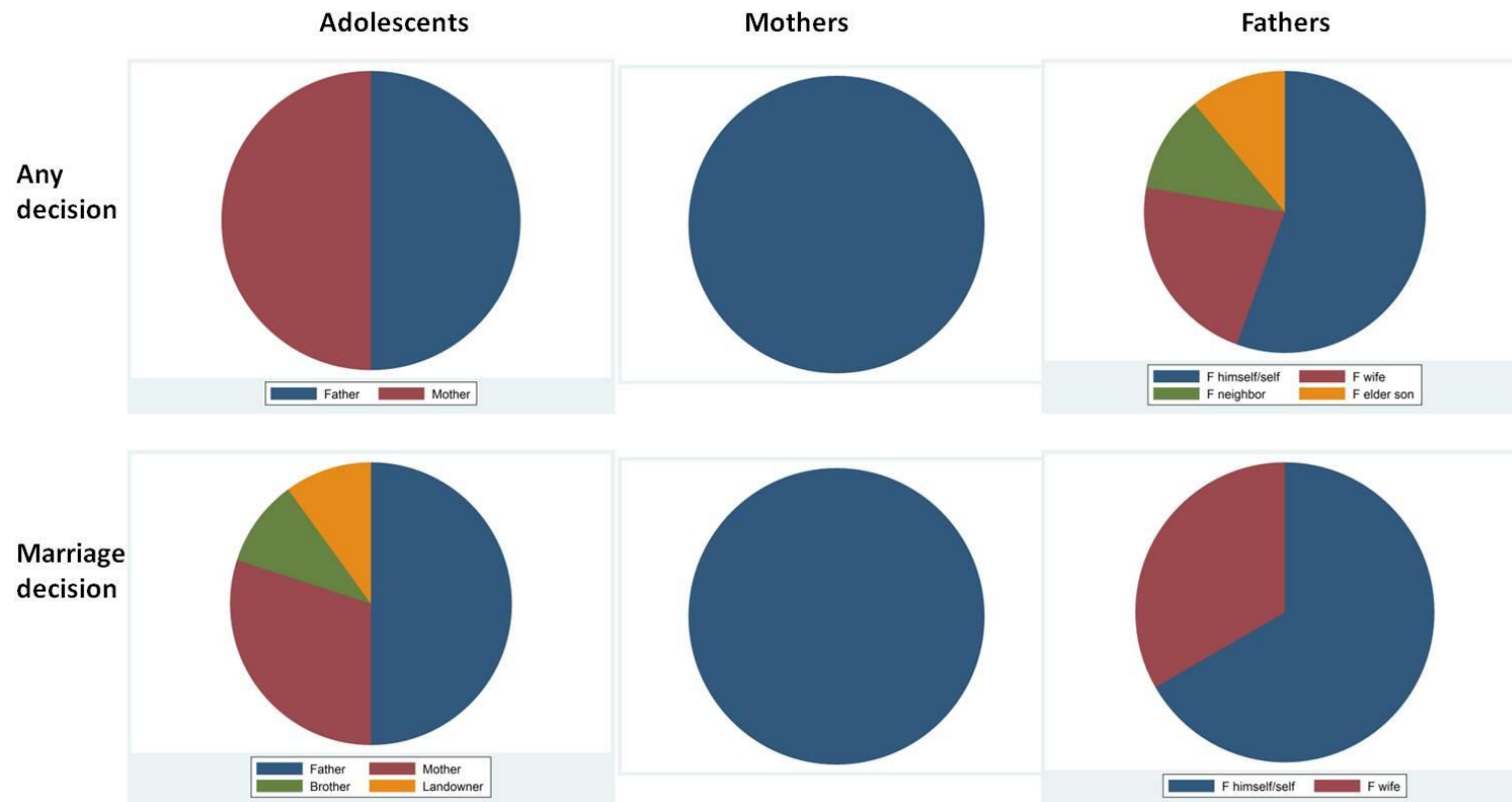
The social norms analysis hinted at the influence of social norms on child marriage in both Khulna and Sylhet. Unfortunately, because the questions were complex and challenging to translate, as well as to pose to the respondents, it is not clear from the current iteration whether the current approach represent a valid quantitative measurement of social norms.

Findings from the L3M pilot confirmed that child marriage remains an important issue in Khulna and Sylhet communities. UNICEF’s package of interventions contributes to removing financial access and legislation barriers to reducing child marriage. The L3M process provides an important opportunity to monitor progress of UNICEF activities towards reducing child marriage and the L3M methodology can be further refined based on the findings of the pilot described in this report.

ANNEXES

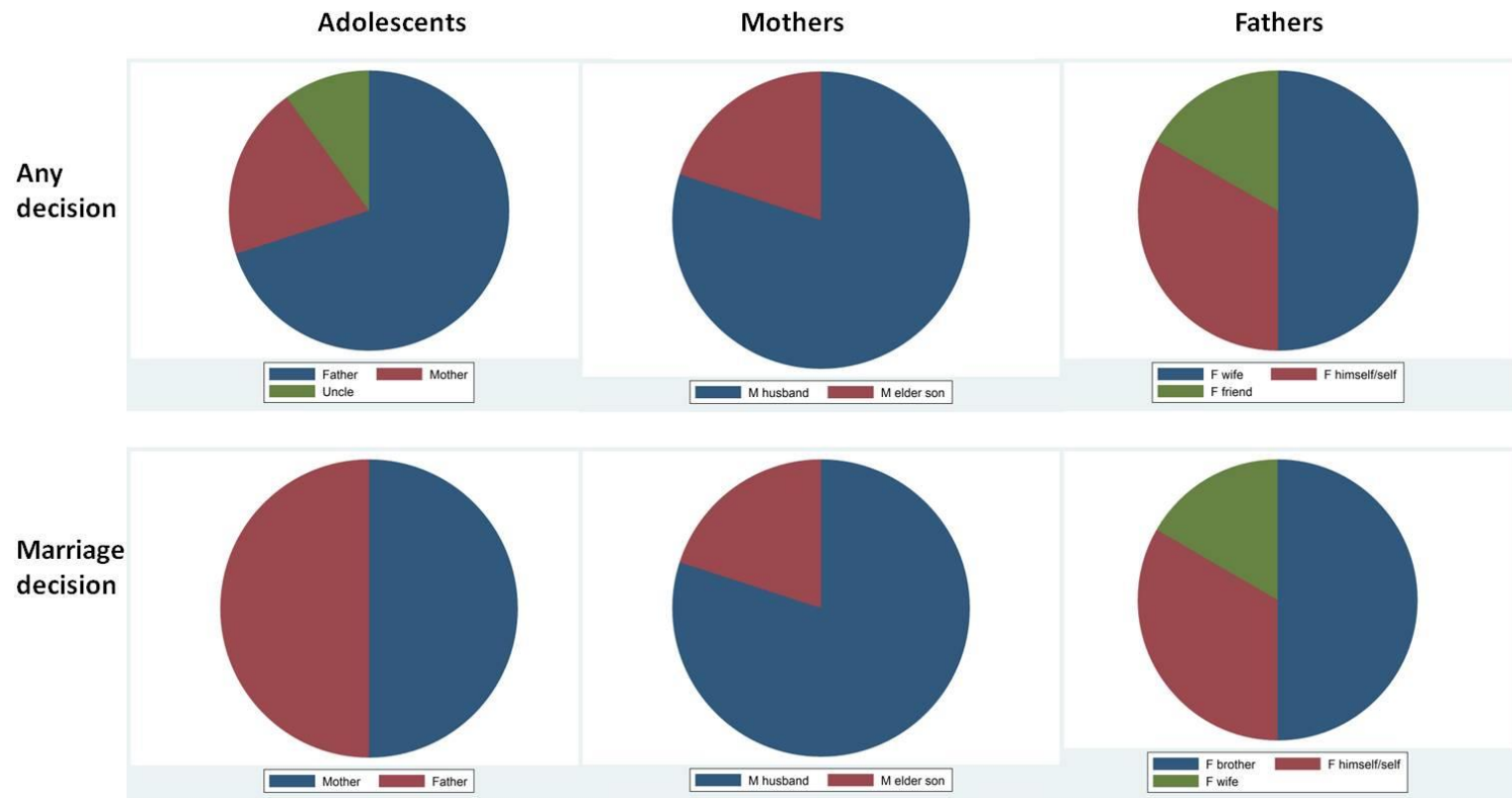
ANNEX I: DECISION-MAKING NETWORKS IN EACH COMMUNITY

I. Sylhet – stone crushing area⁴⁷

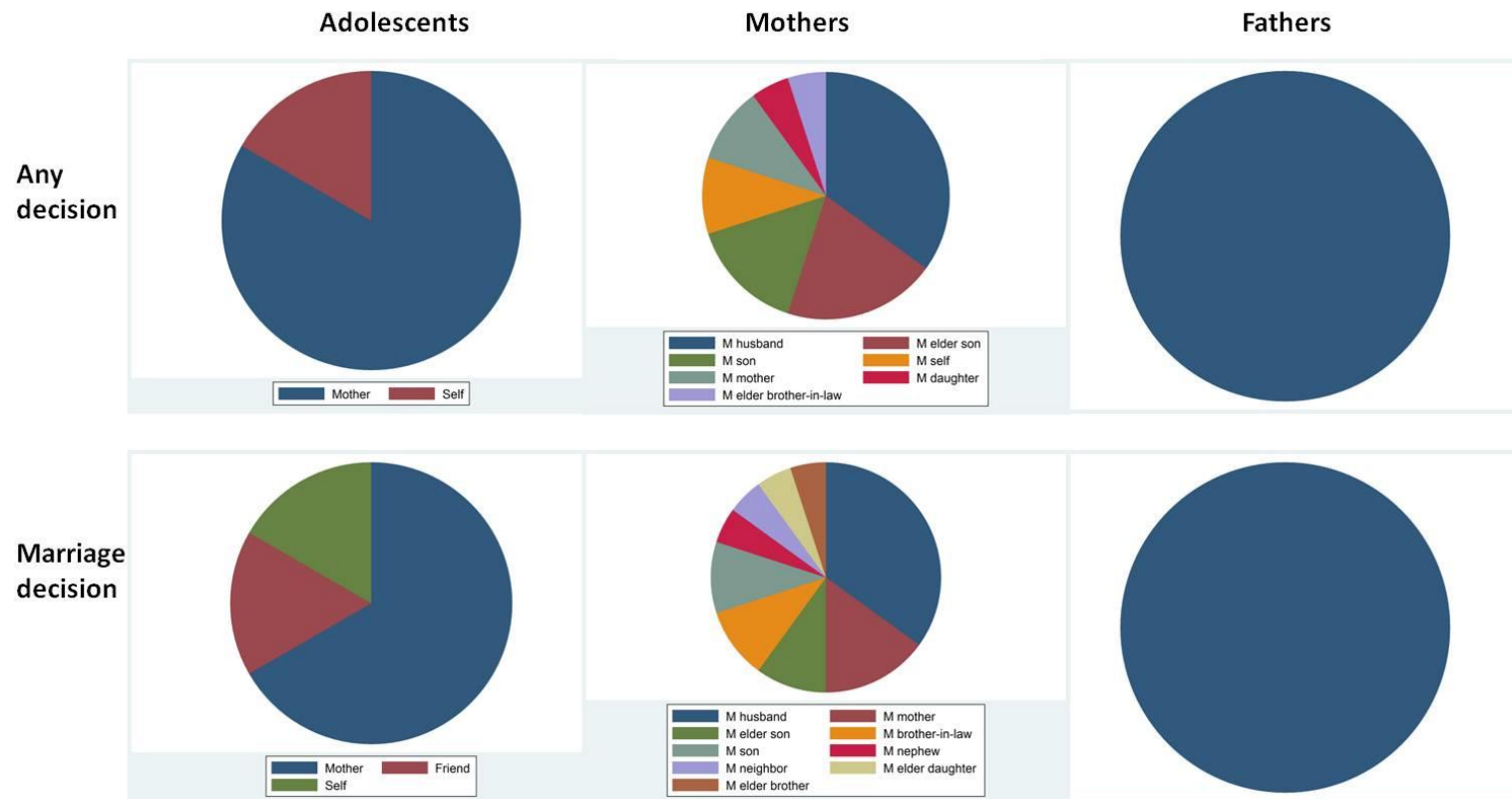


⁴⁷ Mothers group only had one respondent in this case. The mother selected her husband as most important for this question.

2. Sylhet – hoar area

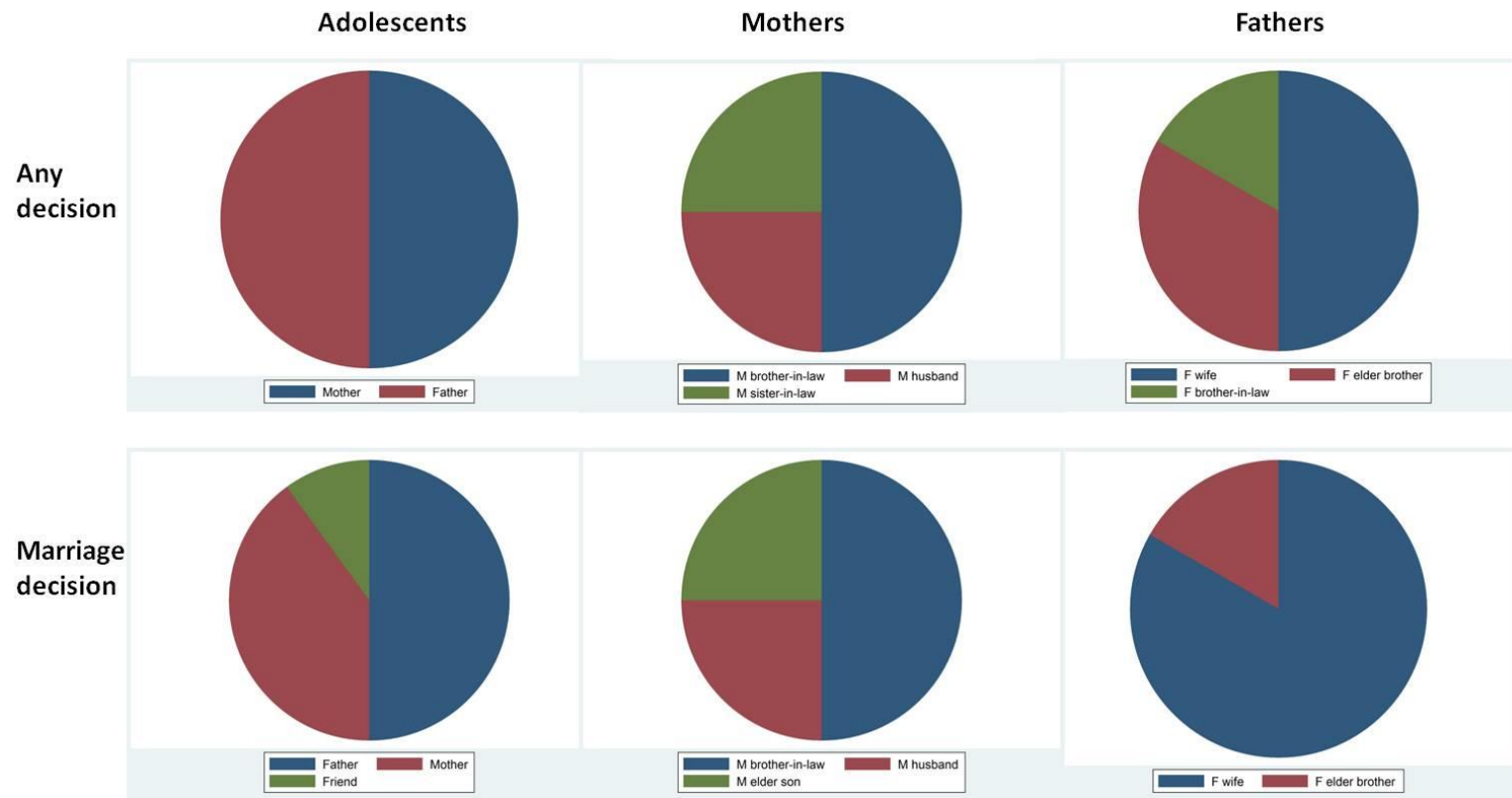


3. Sylhet – slum⁴⁸

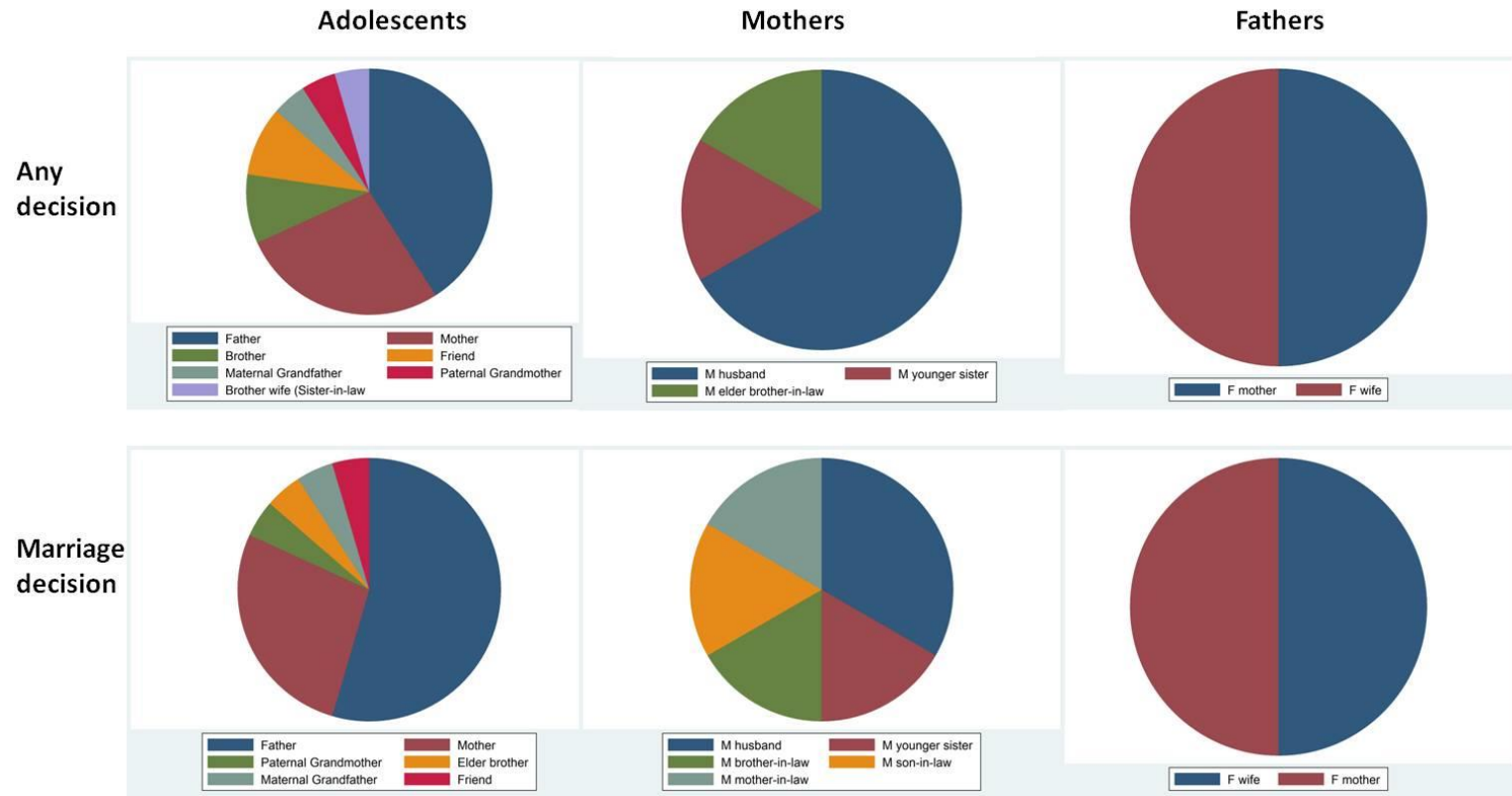


⁴⁸ The fathers group included only one respondent in this community. The father found his wife as most important for this question.

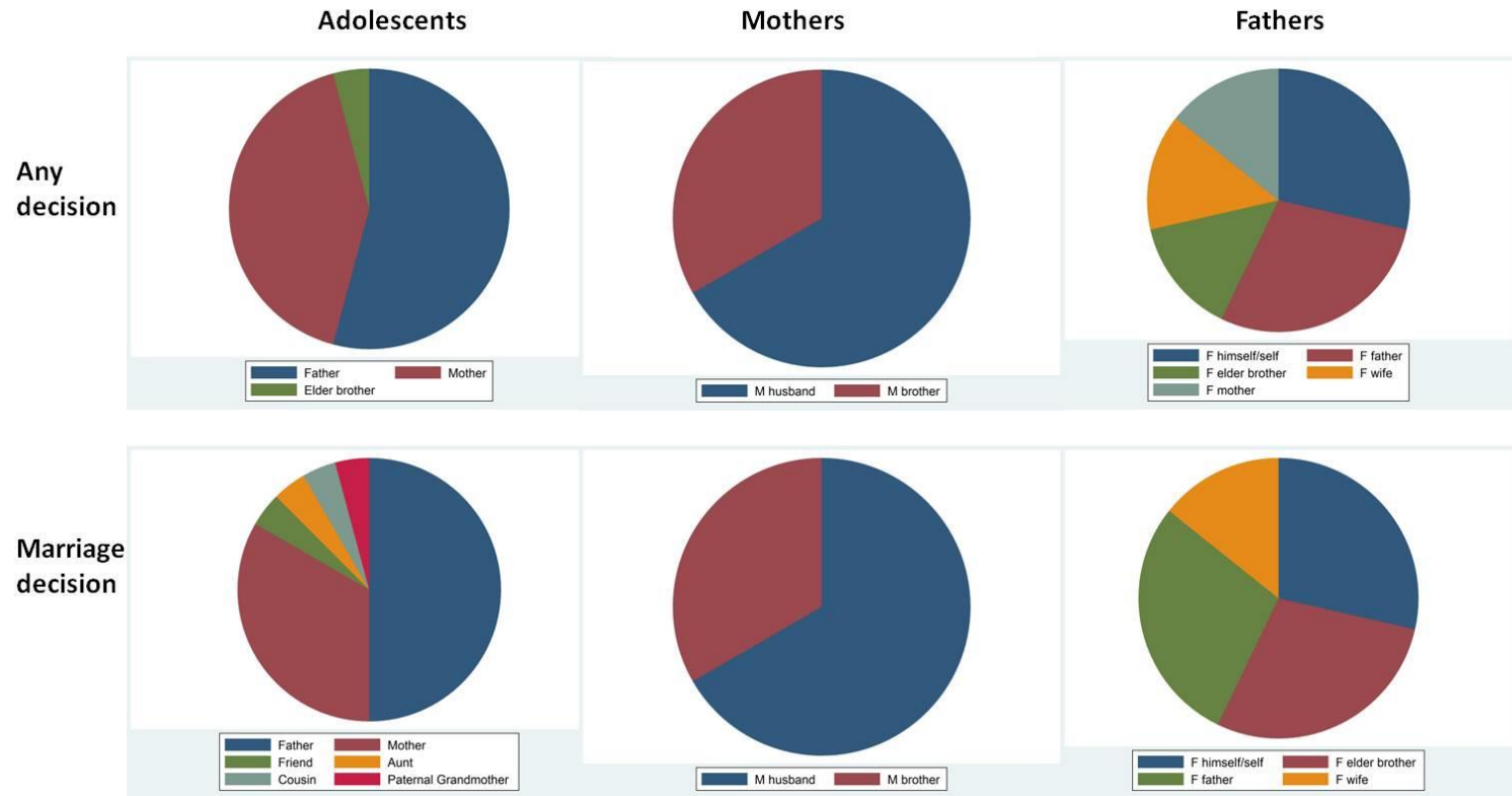
4. Sylhet – tea garden



6. Khulna – Nalian



7. Khulna – Sreenagar



8. Khulna - Rajapur⁴⁹



⁴⁹ No adolescents were administered the social norms questions in Rajapur.

ANNEX 2: SOCIAL NORMS QUANTITATIVE ESTIMATES BY COMMUNITY

Sylhet-Stone crushing area	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	3.4	1.7	3.5	2.7
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c)
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	3.5	4.2	2.8	3.1
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> get married before I reach the age of 18 (c)
				3

Sylhet-Hoar	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	2.6	1.4	2.4	2
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c) N/A
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	3	4.7	1.9	1.8
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) 1.7

Sylhet-Slum	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.7
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c) N/A
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	2.3	3.6	2.5	1.3
				I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) 1.8

Sylhet-Tea Garden	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	3.8	1.4	3.4	1.5
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c) N/A
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	3.9	4.6	3.3	2.2
				I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) 3.5

Khulna-Nalian	Empirical - Others 1st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	4.4	2.5	3.1	2.1
				I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c) 1.9
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	4.4	5	3.5	1.7
				I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) 3.7

Khulna-Sreenagar	Empirical - Others 1st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	2.7	1.1	3.3	I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c)
				I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)	I believe that the people I listed as important think that I <i>should</i> marry before I reach the age of 18 (b)
	4.7	4.8	2.9	1.3
				I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) 3.2

Khulna-Rajapur	Empirical - Others 1 st order What others do	Normative – Self What I think I should do	Normative – Others 1 st order What I think others should do	Normative – Others 2 nd order What others think I should do
Parents	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that my daughters marry only after they reach age 18 (f)	I believe that my friends and relatives in my community <i>should</i> marry their daughters before they reach age 18 (d)	I believe the people I listed as most important think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (b)
	1.9	1.2	1.8	1.1 I believe that most members in my community think that I <i>should</i> marry my daughter before she reaches age 18 (c)
	Adol.	I believe that most people in my community want their daughters to marry before reaching the age of 18 (a)	I prefer that children get married only after they reach age 18 (g)	I believe that people in my community should marry their daughters before they reach the age of 18 (d)
N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A I believe that most members in my community think that I should get married before I reach the age of 18 (c) N/A



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