

Lesson 3

The Story of Shilpi

A. Warm up activity

- ❑ **Imagine that a child marriage has been arranged in your neighbourhood. Discuss with your friends how you would convince the parents of the girl to cancel the marriage.**

B. Read the text and answer the questions that follow:

Shilpi was only 15 years old when she married Rashid in 2008. Marrying off daughters at an early age is a standard practice for many families living in rural Bangladesh. After her wedding, Shilpi joined a local empowerment group that provides adolescent girls with the tools needed to gradually change cultural practices, particularly those pertaining to early marriage and pregnancy. The group's activities include discussions on how to most effectively change behaviour related to reproductive health as well as one-on-one counselling. It also offers peer-to-peer support and life skills training that help adolescents say no to early marriage. The empowerment group is



one of more than 10,000 groups supported by some local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) working all over Bangladesh. These NGOs work through Canada's Adolescent Reproductive Health Project which also aims to increase access to quality health services for adolescents. During one of the group sessions, Shilpi came to understand the potentially harmful effects of early marriage and pregnancy.

While maternal mortality in Bangladesh has declined by more than 50 percent since 2001, the rate remains high with 173 maternal deaths per 100,000, live births in 2017—dropping from 322 in 2001. Girls who get pregnant are at risk of serious health complications. These include dangerous hemorrhage and fistula, a painful internal injury caused by obstructed childbirth that commonly leads to serious maternal morbidities and social exclusion.

When Shilpi heard about those risks, she invited her husband, Rashid, to discuss pregnancy with a counsellor. After hearing about the risks, Rashid agreed to delay having children for five years despite pressures from his parents and neighbours to produce an offspring. Together, the couple met with a female health care provider, who informed them about the various family planning options available.

Shilpi's mother-in-law and neighbours continued to pressurize the newlyweds. Deeply rooted cultural practices and traditions caused a rift between Shilpi and Rashid and their extended family, some of whose members insulted and criticized the couple. Unable to convince their close relatives of the risks, Shilpi and Rashid returned to the counsellor. They took the help of a parent peer who had been trained to speak to other parents about adolescent issues. Shilpi's mother-in-law and neighbours eventually came to understand the harmful effects of early pregnancy on mother and child.

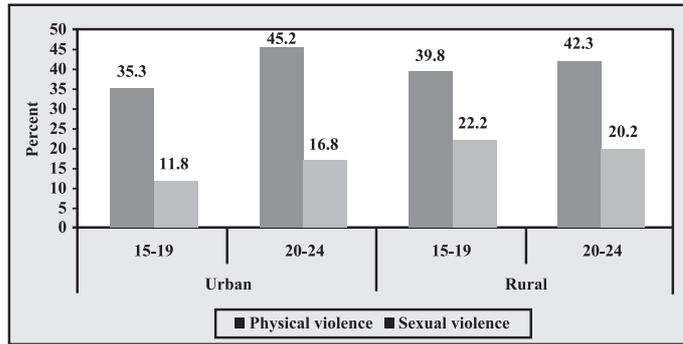
After that, the villagers no longer pressurized the couple; their parents and neighbours began to support them and speak out against early marriage and pregnancy.

C. Discuss the following questions in pairs:

- a. Why did Shilpi decide to delay her pregnancy?
- b. How were Shilpi and her husband able to handle the pressure for having children?
- c. What are the various health-related services that couples like Shilpi and Rashid need?
- d. Is there any empowerment group working in your area? If yes, what do they do?
- e. As an adolescent boy/girl, what peer support can you provide to boys and girls in your locality who have already married?

D. Think about what the adverse effects of child marriage can be and write a 200 word essay on the topic.

D. The graph below shows the percentage of 15-19 and 20-24 year old married women in urban and rural areas in Bangladesh who experienced physical or sexual violence in 2007. What do you think are the reasons for violence against women? Discuss the graph in small groups.



[Data Source: Health Profile of Adolescents and Youth in Bangladesh, Govt. of Bangladesh, 2007, p.23]

E. Complete the passage below that describes the graph. Use the words given in the box:

evident in contrast than older
 victims alarming compared to with

The graph illustrates the percentage of married women aged 15-19 and 20-24 who have experienced physical or sexual violence. In general, it is seen from the graph that women of both age groups are more likely to be victims of physical violence (a) sexual violence. The graph shows that 39.8 % of rural married adolescents (aged 15-19) and 35.3 % of urban adolescents have experienced some form of physical violence. On the other hand, 11.8% and 16.8% respectively of the urban age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 have been (b) of sexual violence (c)22.2% and 20.2% married women in rural areas. It is also (d) from the graph that young women aged 20-24 are more likely to have experienced physical violence than adolescents aged 15-19.



(e), younger women in rural areas are somewhat more likely to have experience of sexual violence than (f) women. Overall, the graph shows an (g) picture of rural and urban adolescents and young becoming victims of violence.

F. Adolescent health quiz

Take the quiz to see how healthy you are. Tick each item that is true for you. Each tick mark is worth 1 point. Add up the points and check your score.

Life at home

- You have the opportunity to make decisions that are important to you.
- You can talk to caring and responsible adults about important things.
- You feel safe at home.
- You understand and follow the rules your parents have set for you.

Life at College

- You do well in college and ask for help when you need it.
- You plan to do well in your HSC examination.
- You can complete your homework/college tasks on your own.

Making good choices

- Your friends do not use or offer you cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.
- You have friends who are trustworthy.
- You are active in college sports, cultural clubs and voluntary organizations.

Healthy lifestyle

- You have 3 healthy meals each day including breakfast.
- You take 3 calcium rich food items, such as milk or yogurt everyday.
- You eat enough fruit and vegetables daily.
- You avoid eating food high in fat, sugar and salt most days of the week.
- You watch 2 hours of TV or less every day.
- You exercise or play sports daily.

Bonus points

- You volunteer in your community to help others.
- You do things to help out at home.

Your total score is

- If your total score is 6 or less, you really need to think about changing yourself.
- If your total score is 7-10, you still need to work toward a healthier you.
- If your total score is 11 or higher, you have a healthy life. Keep it up!

[Source: Bright future: <http://www.mypeddoc.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=LGxFX-cvX98%3D&tabid=84>]

G. If your score is 11 or higher, explain how important the family is in shaping one's future.

H. If your score is less than 10, write a page discussing how you think you can change your situation for the better.

I. Find out the meaning of the following words and write sentences using them:

- a. empowerment
- b. reproductive
- c. counselling
- d. peer
- e. potential
- f. hemorrhage
- g. obstructed
- h. morbidity
- i. option
- j. advocate

