

# **RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**COGNITIVE TESTING REPORT**

**OCTOBER 2021**



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# SUMMARY

## Overview of approach

UN Women commissioned Ipsos to conduct cognitive testing on a set of questions that have recently been fielded as part of the Rapid Gender Assessment on the Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women in 13 countries through Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The goal of the cognitive testing is to ensure that survey concepts and questions are understood as intended, and specifically for the purposes of this study to assess the sensitivity of respondents to being asked about violence against women (VAW) in various ways. Cognitive testing is particularly important in fielding multi-country surveys to ensure that questions are translated and understood in comparable ways across the study geographies. In addition, considering that this research is empirical and aims to test the adaptability and efficiency of some innovative methods to collect quality data on VAW, the cognitive testing aims to add to the field observations in order to validate findings and feed into the production of a global guidance on the remote collection of VAW data.

More detailed objectives included:

- Understand how potential survey respondents interpret and comprehend questions through both verbal and non-verbal cues and prompts and whether they are able to provide accurate and complete responses.
- Ensure questions (and question constructs) are understood the way they were intended. Test cognitive comprehension of potentially confusing techniques employed in this survey (i.e., vignette approach, list randomization).
- Understand respondents' level of knowledge on topics of interest and their abilities to respond to questions on these topics by accessing the information that they need (e.g., remembering something from the past), projecting themselves into the future, dealing with hypothetical situations, etc.
- Assess question sensitivity.
- To contribute to the technical survey report (i.e., to understand whether there were specific reasons for lack of clarity in some responses as well as in the interpretation of the data in the country statistical reports).
- To contribute to the body of knowledge that UN Women is developing to guide the development of future surveys conducted remotely on VAW.

In October 2021, Ipsos conducted 40 in-person 45-minute cognitive interviews, equally split across Bangladesh and Kenya. This allowed researchers to test five questions and two concepts from the main survey (study protocols are included in Appendix 1). Testing occurred in-person, in full adherence with COVID-19 safety protocols, and participants were recruited from Dhaka and Gazipur in Bangladesh and Kisumu and Nairobi in Kenya to ensure adequate coverage of both urban and rural populations and the cognitive dissonance that may be present. Additional information on methods can be found in Appendix 2.

Each interview was conducted by one trained female moderator, who was also accompanied by a female note-taker, to record the results of the exercise, as the interviews were not audio recorded. Teams were provided with an Excel-based reporting tool to consolidate and share findings with the analysis team. Responses were analysed systematically at both the individual, demographic group and country level.

This memo presents results for each protocol, divided into three sections: Background & objective, Summary of results (further broken down by Comprehension, Sensitivity and Results), and Recommendations. The Background & objective section sets the context of the protocol, explaining the reasons it was included in the cognitive testing exercise and what researchers aimed to learn as a result of its inclusion. The Summary of results details the comprehensibility of each question, the extent to which participants were triggered or rendered uncomfortable by the question, and an overview of the answers that participants gave to the questions from the questionnaire. Finally, the Recommendations section offer suggestions for improvements or additions to the research instrument that follow from the specific findings of each protocol.

## Participant profile

Ipsos developed a recruitment screener to ensure that cognitive testing participants met quotas that align with planned quantitative sample respondent distribution in the quantitative survey. A demographic profile is included in Appendix 3; however, generally participants were:

- Women above the age of 18
- Range of marital statuses – married, cohabitating, single, divorce, widowed
- Range of educational attainment, from little formal schooling to university level
- Range of income levels
- Range of employment levels
- From both rural and urban areas

## Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Questions that ask directly about the prevalence of intimate-partner violence (IPV) should be asked going forward (C26). Despite the sensitivity inherent in asking a direct question about women's experiences with physical abuse, this question was deemed important by all participants, and participants unanimously agreed that women should be directly asked about their experiences with IPV. Women appreciated the opportunity to express themselves and raise awareness of the prevalence of IPV.
  - a. It is important to note that this direct prevalence question was posed face-to-face (F2F); however, the quantitative interview was conducted remotely using CATI methods. Thus, the question was asked neither the way it would be in a traditional F2F survey nor how it would have been in a CATI phone survey. While the results from these cognitive tests

provide good feedback on sensitivity, asking direct prevalence measures via CATI interviews should be further explored.

2. The cognitive testing confirmed the need for specific training, involving specialists in identifying signs of distress in respondents and minimizing this distress in order to manage the sensitivity of the topic. The findings also confirmed the crucial need for close oversight throughout fieldwork to ensure cases of distress are being handled appropriately.
3. The cognitive testing findings reaffirmed the importance of compiling a list of referral resources so that any respondents who need further counselling or a place to report a specific incident receive guidance from their interviewer on where to go relevant to their specific geographies.
4. The survey instruments and interviewer notes should be sufficiently detailed to provide a set of definitions or a frame of reference so respondents understand the types of behaviours or situations that are relevant for this study. This will aid in providing clarity when asking respondents about fears they have or threats they might experience inside their homes.
5. Terms around isolation or food/shelter insecurities should be clarified to emphasise that what is relevant to the study are threats made consciously within households rather than an expression of COVID-19 policies or communal economic insecurity. Emphasis should be placed on questions that inquire about Forced Isolation and Denial of Basic Needs, as these concepts are less familiar to respondents and more vulnerable to misinterpretation. Moreover, in analysis, impactful events and situations should be taken into consideration, as they are likely to introduce cognitive bias among respondents/participants. For instance, questions on forced isolation asked during the COVID-19 pandemic are very likely to be understood as national lockdown measures, rather than an act of violence perpetrated by a household member.
6. The list randomization exercise should be retained in the survey to keep participants engaged and facilitate expression. Participants found the exercise easy to follow, and it provided them with a way to more comfortably and indirectly disclose violence they may have experienced.

# DETAILED FINDINGS, BY PROTOCOL

## PROTOCOL ONE (Vignette, C14)

I would like to learn a bit more about the area where you live to understand what type of support women need. I will tell you a short story that is not real, but I want to get your views on how likely you think it is that these things happen where you live.

[FEMALE NAME] is a woman. She sells goods in a store in town, she commutes to and from the store in the morning and in the evening. [FEMALE NAME] often finds herself alone in the store, especially when she is in charge of closing it at night. Sometimes, men in the town come into the store to say things about her appearance and their desires that are unpleasant and make her feel unsafe. Because of this, [FEMALE NAME] is afraid of travelling in the evening, in case one of them may harm her.

C14. How common do you think this type of situation is for women in the area where you live?

## Background and objective

This protocol was designed to determine whether the vignette in its current form is relatable and appropriate from the perspective of respondents. The vignette is used as a medium through which respondents can employ projective techniques to express their thoughts without having to draw from personal experience. For this to work properly, the story needs to resonate with respondents, and respondents need to be able to put themselves in the position of the characters.

This specific vignette was employed to conduct an indirect measure of sexual harassment. In describing this hypothetical scenario, the vignette made it possible to ask participants how common such situations are in their communities and thereby collect information on the perceived pervasiveness of this type of harassment. This protocol assessed how easily participants were able to make these judgements and how they define the specific terms “common” and “area where you live.”

## Summary of results

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants found the vignette clear and relatable – many said that either they themselves or someone they knew closely regularly experienced these circumstances and thus it was easy to put themselves in the position of the character (*“I thought about those people who [sit] in tea stalls, whistle and make bad comments when they see women passing the road. It is a common scenario [in] my area.”* – Woman, age 37, Gazipur (urban); *“I thought of my friends and*

*myself. We face this situation regularly.*” – Woman, age 34, Gazipur (rural). Participants found the follow-up questions clear, comprehensible and easy to answer, citing their familiarity with the circumstances as the primary explanation for the ease of answering.

- **Kenya:** Respondents expressed that they found it easy to answer the questions because the incident described is something they know to have occurred in their communities, and as a result they were easily able to imagine themselves in the character’s position (*“I once witnessed the same situation happening to a woman in my community”* – Woman, age 30, Kisumu). Participants found the story both easy to understand and representative of the type of scenario that occurs frequently in their community (*“It’s the reality, it’s like it’s [become] the norm.”* – Woman, age 28, Nairobi).
  - A few participants (all from rural areas) had trouble understanding the follow-up question about how common the scenario described in the vignette was in their community. These participants needed the question to be repeated multiple times before they could answer. The adjective “common” was not easily grasped by these participants, so the moderator assisted them by breaking down by frequency (how many days in a month, in a week, and so on).

- Sensitivity

- **Bangladesh:** Moderators indicated that the vignette and follow-up questioning elicited some sadness and embarrassment from participants, and over a third of participants found this protocol quite sensitive. This sensitivity stemmed from the fact that respondents either had faced this form of harassment themselves and felt it was embarrassing to discuss or because their own children had faced it. However, these emotions did not preclude participants from answering the questions and continuing the interview.
- **Kenya:** Moderators did not note any particular sensitivities or emotional responses to the vignette and the follow-up questions; rather, they indicated that participants were comfortable responding to the questions.

- Results

- **Bangladesh:** Participants felt that the scenario described in the vignette was “very common,” but held different definitions for “very common,” ranging from once or twice a week to once a month.
- **Kenya:** Nearly all participants said that the incident described in the vignette was either “common” or “very common,” although definitions of common varied widely, from 10 times per day to once or twice per year.

## Recommendations

Even with a projective technique, some respondents found this story to be sensitive and cause an emotional response; however, this was highly dependent on the context. Knowing that approaches like this can be troubling for participants and recognizing that it can be emotionally and psychologically burdensome for women to recall their own experiences in similar situations, it is particularly important to ensure that interviewers are equipped to handle any adverse reactions to questions. Given this, the researchers recommend the following for future surveys:

- Devoting concentrated time during interviewer training to ensuring that interviewers know how to detect signs of discomfort or unease and how to conduct the interview once these signs emerge in respondents.
- Establishing and briefing interviewers on a referral protocol so that any women who experience serious distress during the interview have additional resources to turn to once the conversation concludes.

Most participants understood “common” in the sense of the frequency with which such events happen rather than the number of women in the community to whom such an event happens. To standardize conceptions of the term “common,” the researchers also recommend rephrasing the question itself. Rather than asking “How common do you think this type of situation is for women in the area where you live?”, the question can instead be phrased either as “How often is this type of situation happening in your area (daily, weekly, monthly, never) or as “How many women in the area where you live have experienced this type of situation?” (All, most, some, few none).



## PROTOCOL TWO (C21, C23)

In the last six months, did you ever feel unsafe in your home?

Why did you feel unsafe in your home?

What are some things that would make you feel unsafe in your home?

### Background and objective

The objective of this protocol is twofold: it serves both to unpack how the respondent defines “safety” at home and to assess the level of sensitivity/discomfort with the question itself. With this question, the research aims to distinguish between fear or unsafety resulting from an external threat and fear resulting from a threat inside the home (i.e., an intimate partner or family member). For the purposes of the research, they were interested in the latter and aimed to test in this protocol whether the respondents answered the question from this perspective.

### Summary of results

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Respondents were able to answer the questions easily and to cite their own experiences in doing so (*“I thought of physical and verbal abuse by household [members,] which makes me feel unsafe at home.”* – Woman, age 20, Gazipur; *“I thought about a theft case in my apartment building, where the perpetrator sprayed medicine to [make] them unconscious. The building is also under construction and fear of theft/robbery (intrusion by outsiders) is a major concern.”* – Woman, age 29, Dhaka city). In assessing whether or not they felt safe at home, participants thought about both themselves and their children (*“I thought about [the] safety of my children at first.”* – Woman, 43, Dhaka city).
  - Kenya:** Overall, respondents did not struggle to understand or to answer the question. While thinking through the questions, participants had different ideas about what constituted or contributed to their feelings unsafe.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Over half of the participants (11 out of 20) found the question sensitive, and moderators commented that these participants were sad, emotional and found the topic difficult to think and talk through, largely because it was a recurring issue that they were facing themselves.
  - **Kenya:** According to moderators, most participants were comfortable answering the question and did not find it particularly sensitive or triggering, even if they had experienced or were experiencing safety threats themselves.

- Results

- **Bangladesh:** All but three participants said they felt unsafe in their homes in the last six months. Some attributed this to forces outside the immediate household (e.g., vandals, thieves, floods, other dangers in the community), and others attributed this to physical and verbal violence they experience at the hands of their husbands or even their in-laws.
- **Kenya:** Respondents were split on the answer to the question itself – roughly equal proportions said that they had and had not felt unsafe in their homes in the last six months. Some urban participants interpreted the question as being about external rather than internal or domestic threats.

## Recommendations

Similar to Protocol One, these findings again validated globally agreed standards of VAW data collection that adequate training for interviewers and referral protocols are critical to ensure the emotional and psychological health of participants.

In addition to this, the findings confirmed that the existing questionnaire structure of asking about feeling unsafe broadly, then following up to glean more information on the causes of these feelings is effective. Similarly, the list of answer codes at C23 sufficiently covered the majority of responses given by participants. Since participants often had multiple reasons for feeling unsafe, it is also prudent to leave this question as a multi-code and to read out each potential response and receive a Yes/No answer for each. After Response 2 to C23 (“2. My shelter is insecure from external threats (e.g., there are no locks on my front door)”, the researchers recommend including an additional response to capture threats from environmental concerns, which emerged in the responses of women from Bangladesh. This could read: “My shelter is vulnerable to environmental dangers (e.g., floods, storms, earthquakes).

## PROTOCOL THREE (C3o)

Now I'm going to ask you about some situations that you or any other women you know may have experienced. For each situation, please tell if you or any other women you know have experienced this only before the start of COVID-19, only since the start of COVID-19, both before and since the start of COVID-19, or not at all:

- Been slapped, hit, kicked, had things thrown at them, or other physical harm
- Been yelled at, called names, humiliated
- Had resources (like healthcare) or basic needs (like money, food, water, shelter) denied
- Been forced to stay alone for long period of time or denied communication with other people
- Been the subject of inappropriate jokes, suggestive comments, leering or unwelcome touch/kisses

### Background and objective

The goal of this series of questions is to understand how the respondent interprets questions about prevalence of VAW and assess the level of sensitivity/discomfort inherent to each. With this protocol, the research aims to understand how respondents conceptualize the different types of VAW and how they respond to being asked about them. In addition, the researchers probed further to determine whether they would think, when no setting is specified in a VAW-related question, that each type of VAW occurs primarily in public or private spaces. Participants were also asked to specify whether each form of violence occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic, since the COVID-19 pandemic, or both before and since the pandemic in order to glean more information about the influence of the pandemic on the prevalence of each type of VAW. Finally, because participants were asked to consider both themselves and women they may know, this protocol also sought to understand who women have in mind when asked about these other women they may know.

### Summary of results

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants found the questions challenging overall but easy to understand and easy to answer. The sadness and embarrassment they felt was what rendered the question challenging, rather than it being confusing to interpret or understand. Participants also seemed to have no difficulty understanding how to answer on behalf of themselves *and* women they knew vs. answering just based on their own experiences. In fact, several indicated that their answer would change if they were discussing their own life exclusively, which shows that they were able to understand the difference.
  - **Kenya:** Participants found this set of questions straightforward and easy to answer and thought of neighbours, friends, community members, and even well-known artists when they were answering or thinking through these questions, highlighting that they knew how to answer the questions from a broader community perspective rather than just based on their own experiences. Several also indicated that their responses to questions would have changed if they were speaking only for themselves because they had not experienced the specific acts mentioned.

- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Several participants hesitated and struggled to answer when asked explicitly about verbal and physical abuse – many became sad and felt embarrassed to be discussing these things with the moderator.
  - **Kenya:** Moderators noted very few instances where participants experienced any difficulty or discomfort. Two women did, however, ask the moderator to wait until they could be sure no one was around, indicating that there is some level of sensitivity around answering these questions.
- Results
  - **Bangladesh:** All participants indicated that either they themselves or someone they knew had experienced at least one form of violence either before or since the start of COVID-19, or both.
  - **Kenya:** All participants indicated that either they themselves or someone they knew had experienced at least one form of violence before or since the start of the pandemic, or both.

## Results, by type of VAW

### Physical violence

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants did not struggle to interpret this statement.  
**Kenya:** Only one participant found the statement “Been slapped, hit, kicked, had things thrown at them, or other physical harm” unclear.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Seven of the participants hesitated upon first being asked whether physical violence had occurred due to discomfort.
  - **Kenya:** Three participants hesitated upon first being asked whether this had occurred, and two were rendered uncomfortable by the statement.
- Results
  - **Bangladesh:** All but one participant indicated that they or someone they know had experienced physical violence, with all 19 others indicating that it had happened both before and since the start of COVID-19. All said physical violence tends to happen inside the household.
  - **Kenya:** All but four participants indicated that this had happened to them or someone they know, with three saying that it had happened before COVID-19, four saying it had happened only since COVID-19, and nine saying that it happened both before and since the pandemic. Most participants (12) said this happens primarily inside the home, but three participants said it tends to happen outside the home, and five others said it happens both inside and outside the home.

## Verbal abuse

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants did not have difficulty understanding the statement.  
**Kenya:** Only one participant found the statement unclear.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Three participants initially hesitated to respond, due to discomfort with the statement.
  - **Kenya:** Three participants hesitated upon initially being asked about this statement, and five were rendered uncomfortable.
- Results
  - **Bangladesh:** All participants indicated that they themselves or a woman they knew had experienced verbal abuse, with all unanimously stating that this occurred both before and since the start of COVID-19. All said that verbal abuse tends to happen inside the household.
  - **Kenya:** All but three participants indicated that either they or a woman they know had experienced verbal abuse. Three indicated that it had happened before COVID-19, four indicated that it had only happened since COVID-19, and 10 indicated that it happened both before and since the pandemic. Participants were divided on whether it tended to occur more inside or outside the home – 10 said it occurs more inside the home, six said it occurs more outside, and four said it occurs in both places.

## Denial of basic needs

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** All participants understood this statement. One participant added that she could cite her own experience with denial of basic needs  
**Kenya:** Only one participant indicated that she did not understand the statement; however, three others seemed to have misinterpreted the question, citing poverty and ineffectual governments as the reasons one might be denied basic needs.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Two participants initially hesitated, due to discomfort, when asked about denial of basic needs.
  - **Kenya:** Three participants felt uncomfortable after initially being asked whether this had occurred.
- Results
  - **Bangladesh:** All but two participants indicated that they or a woman they knew had endured the denial of basic needs, with three saying it occurred only since the pandemic, two saying it occurred before COVID-19, and 13 saying it occurred both before and since COVID-19.

- **Kenya:** In total, seven participants said they or someone they knew had experienced the denial of basic needs, with five saying it happened both before and since the pandemic and two saying it had only occurred beforehand.

### Forced isolation

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** One participant was unsure what the statement “Been forced to stay alone for long period of time or denied communication with other people” meant; but no others had difficulty understanding this concept.  
  
**Kenya:** One participant found the statement unclear, and another participant conflated forced isolation with quarantining due to COVID-19.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** No particular sensitivity was noted around this statement.
  - **Kenya:** No particular sensitivity was noted around this statement.
- Results
  - **Bangladesh:** Two participants responded “don’t know,” but all others indicated that they or someone else they knew had been forced to stay alone, with four saying this had occurred before COVID-19 and 14 saying it occurred both before and since COVID-19. Most participants operationalized “forced isolation” as being locked up or cut off from communication. For instance: *“After severe beatings, my husband locked me up in a room and forced me to stay alone several hours and took away my mobile phone so that I cannot communicate with my parents/friends.”* – Woman, 30, Dhaka city.
  - **Kenya:** Six participants indicated that this had occurred to them or to someone they know, with four saying it had occurred both before and since the pandemic and two saying that it had occurred only since the start of the pandemic.

### Sexual harassment

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants did not struggle to understand this statement, and their own experiences, the experiences of loved ones, and the experiences of garment workers were cited in their responses.  
  
**Kenya:** Two participants found the statement unclear, but all others understood.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** One participant hesitated to respond when initially asked whether this had occurred, due to discomfort.
  - **Kenya:** One participant was rendered uncomfortable when asked whether this had occurred.

- Results

- **Bangladesh:** All 20 participants said that they or other woman they knew had been subjected to sexual harassment, with one saying this had occurred only before COVID-19 and 19 saying it had occurred both before and since the start of COVID-19. All said this type of violence most often occurs outside the home.
- **Kenya:** Ten participants said that sexual harassment had never happened to them or to anyone they knew; one said they did not know whether it happened; two said this occurred since COVID-19; one said it happened before; and six said it happened both before and since the start of the pandemic. Most said this occurs both inside and outside the home.

## Recommendations

Since there was some acknowledged and some unrecognized lack of clarity around the concepts of 'forced isolation' and 'denial of basic needs' in particular, it is important to ensure that these concepts are clarified for quantitative fieldwork. To ensure that respondents interpret the statements provided as intended, it would be beneficial to include examples or non-examples to clarify exactly what is meant. When referring to forced isolation, it will be important to specify that this does not include quarantine or isolation imposed as a result of public health conditions (since COVID-related quarantines may be top of mind). In addition, when introducing the concept of 'denial of basic needs', it will be important to specify that this refers to a household member intentionally denying basic needs rather than a lack of basic necessities due to conditions of poverty or government ineptitude. Therefore, the researchers recommend the following two changes for future iterations or implementations of this survey:

- Had resources (like health care) or basic needs (like money, food, water, shelter) denied (NOTE: By this, I mean as a form of punishment, rather than as a result of not being able to afford these things or because the government could not provide them).
- Been forced to stay alone for long period of time or denied communication with other people (NOTE: This does not include COVID-19-related quarantines or isolation periods but, rather, times when you were forced to isolate from others as a form of punishment).

Overall, while these statements did cause some initial discomfort, participants were able to answer all questions and speak to the experiences of women in their community without being caused distress. That being said, these findings again reaffirmed the importance of adequate training for interviewers and referral protocols to ensure the emotional and psychological health of participants, both during and after the study.

## PROTOCOL FOUR (List randomization exercise)

You will read a set of statements and the respondent should listen to them all. Only once you are done reading, the respondent should indicate to you the number of statements that are true. That is, they should not reveal to you which of the statements are true, only the total number. *(Please see Appendix 1 for full instructions).*

- Round One:
  - I prefer [LOCAL FOOD ONE] to [LOCAL FOOD TWO]
  - I like [NAME OF WELL-KNOWN LOCAL MUSICIAN, BUT NOT ONE EVERYONE LIKES]
  - I have been slapped or hit by my husband or partner BEFORE THE ONSET OF COVID-19
  - Women in my family enjoy watching [POPULAR LOCAL SPORT].
- Round Two:
  - People in my family have played [POPULAR LOCAL SPORT].
  - I have been slapped or hit by my husband or partner AFTER THE ONSET OF COVID-19
  - I like [NAME OF WELL-KNOWN TV SHOW, BUT NOT ONE EVERYONE LIKES]
  - I prefer [LOCAL FOOD THREE] to [LOCAL FOOD FOUR]

## Background and objectives

This module aims to assess participant reactions to an activity conducted during the survey called list randomization, which asks participants to identify the number of statements out of a set of four that are true. The overall purpose of this activity is to allow people to express a sensitive experience without asking them directly, and the purpose of this protocol is to ensure that the exercise is adequately understood by participants. To ensure participants understood the exercise instructions, there were two instances when respondents had the opportunity to indicate that they did not fully understand and for the moderator to repeat the instructions.

## Summary of results

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants found this exercise simple to follow and felt comfortable responding to the prompts. Most kept a tally of the number of true statements by using their fingers to count, and both moderators and participants reflected that the objectives and the rules of the exercise were well understood.
  - **Kenya:** Participants did not struggle to understand or to participate in the exercise – effectively all were able to participate and relay the number of true statements to the moderator without difficulty or hesitation. Most kept track of the number of true statements by counting their fingers or simply by memorizing the true statements since there were only a small number.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** Unlike the previous questions, only one respondent received a score below 4 on the sensitivity scale, indicating that this exercise was more comfortable for respondents than



previous questions. Moderators did not note any significant emotional responses to this question.

- **Kenya:** Two participants indicated that the statements around physical abuse were difficult to hear, because they were forced to imagine themselves in that scenario, relive a traumatic experience, or because they were reminded of others who had been in that scenario. Other than these responses, however, moderators noted minimal sensitivity.

- **Results**

- **Bangladesh:** Just two participants said all four statements were true, and only for the second set of statements.
  - For the first set of statements, the mode was 1 and the average was 1.7
  - For the second set of statements, the mode was 3 and the average was 2.4.
  - While researchers cannot determine which statements were true for women, it is clear that it was rare for all four statements to be true.
- **Kenya:** The majority of participants did not indicate that all four statements in either set were true.
  - For the first set of statements, the mode was 2 and the average was 1.95.
  - For the second set of statements the mode was 1 and the average was 1.7.
  - Only one participant said all four statements were true, and only for the second set of statements.
  - Again, while researchers cannot determine which statements were true for women, it is clear that only one woman found all four statements to be true.

## Recommendation

Overall, this exercise was well understood, worked well and appeared to be an easy means of participation and expression for participants. Participants also felt more comfortable during this exercise than in answering other questions, perhaps because it was both more indirect and more anonymous. Thus, the researchers recommend conducting this exercise exactly as practiced through this cognitive testing process, keeping the number of statements to four to allow for both sufficient variety and a relatively low cognitive burden so participants can easily keep track of true statements. Adding further statements could place an unneeded burden on participants – particularly those that are less numerate – and introduce unneeded cognitive complexity that ultimately may detract from results.

## PROTOCOL FIVE (C26)

How often, if at all, in the past 12 months, has a spouse or partner pushed you, thrown something at you that could hurt you, punched or slapped you?

### Background and objectives

The purpose of including this question in the protocol is to understand the extent to which respondents are comfortable with or able to answer the question. In including this question in this protocol, the research is gauging the sensitivity around asking and answering it, to see whether it is too emotionally burdensome for respondents and if they think it is a question that should be asked.

### Summary of results

- Comprehension
  - **Bangladesh:** Participants did not need the question to be repeated and were largely able to answer immediately without hesitation. Most felt that it was not a difficult question to answer, again citing their personal familiarity with this type of violence as the reason for the lack of difficulty. Participants understood the question as being about physical violence or “this type” of violence broadly rather than only about the specific acts mentioned. For instance: *“I thought about my physical abuse caused by my husband. I suffer physical violence now and then. It happens with other women [in] my village.”* – Woman, age 39, Gazipur; *“This kind of violence happens with women, [although] it [has] never happened with me. I feel bad for those women who suffer this type of violence.”* – Woman, age 42, Dhaka City.  
**Kenya:** Participants were able to answer this question without hesitation, without a need for clarity, and without a need for more information. As in Bangladesh, participants interpreted the question as being about physical violence broadly rather than only the specific acts listed. For example: *“I imagine my life and the things like violence that I have endured in my marriage”* – Woman, age 55, Kisumu; *“[I thought of] violence that’s common in the community/home yet one thinks it’s [a] big issue.”* – Woman, age 52, Nairobi.
- Sensitivity
  - **Bangladesh:** While moderators noted that participants seemed and looked sad and embarrassed to have to discuss the violence they face at home, participants themselves were unanimous in their agreement that this question should be asked. Again and again, respondents indicated that these types of questions should be asked so that women can disclose what they experience and so that awareness can be raised among the community about the adversity that women face at home.
  - **Kenya:** Moderators did not note any particular sensitivity around this question, and all agreed that this question should be asked. Most said that they were thinking of others who had experienced such violence, and all felt that these stories should be brought to the fore to bring awareness to the fact that women around them were experiencing IPV.

- Results

- **Bangladesh:** Only one participant (from an urban area) said that she experienced intimate-partner physical violence often; nine (primarily from rural areas) said they had experienced it a few times; five said it occurred rarely; and five said they had never experienced it. As with before, participants had different conceptions of “often” and definitions ranged from once per week to once per month.
- **Kenya:** All but three participants (all in rural areas) said that they had never experienced physical violence at the hands of their partner. Conceptions of “often” varied as with conceptions of “common,” with answers ranging from every 2 hours to 4 times per year.

## Recommendation

Whether or not participants found this question difficult to answer, they unanimously expressed that it was important for women to be asked directly about their experiences with IPV. They felt that this provided them with an opportunity not only to express themselves but also to raise awareness of the pervasiveness of the issue, which seemed to them to be a step towards resolving the issue. Given these findings, we recommend asking directly about the prevalence of IPV, even though it might be challenging for respondents to hear, as long as adequate training for interviewers and referral protocols are in place to ensure the emotional and psychological health of participants.

In contrast to a previous recommendation, on the use of qualitative phrasing to quantify how often an event may happen (or how common it is), the recommendation here is to leave the question phrasing for this question as-is. While it is possible to introduce a quantitative variable where women are specifically asked the number of times something has happened in a given timeframe, this would likely place undue stress, cognitive burden and trauma on participation. Additionally, from past research, researchers know that participant recall is often inaccurate. Therefore, they recommend keeping the phrasing as-is and allowing participants to self-define what “often” means to them, as this provides an accurate picture of the degree of frequency based on their own experience cognition. If preferred, a qualitative frequency scale could be introduced (“daily, weekly, monthly, every few months, once or twice”) or something similar; however, it is recommended that this be undertaken with care, given the sensitivity of the events that are being asked about.

# APPENDIX 1: COGNITIVE TESTING PROTOCOLS

## PROTOCOL ONE (VIGNETTE)

**Aim of question:** To determine whether the vignette as designed is relatable and appropriate.

**Important clarification:** If the respondent asks for more details about the vignette, tell them this is all the information that is available.

### MODERATOR READ VIGNETTE:

I would like to learn a bit more about the area where you live to understand what type of support women need. I will tell you a short story that is not real, but I want to get your views on how likely you think it is that these things happen where you live.

[FEMALE NAME] is a woman. She sells goods in a store in town. She commutes to and from the store in the morning and in the evening. [FEMALE NAME] often finds herself alone in the store, especially when she is in charge of closing it at night. Sometimes, men in the town come into the store to say things about her appearance and their desires that are unpleasant and make her feel unsafe. Because of this, [FEMALE NAME] is afraid of travelling in the evening, in case one of them may harm her.

### MODERATOR RECORD:

- Did the respondent ask for the vignette to be repeated? Y / N
- Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? Y / N
- Did the respondent misunderstand any points of the vignette? Y / N
- **IF YES to any**, please provide details:

### MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS:

- Did the story make sense to you? Would you change anything about it?
  - **IF YES, RECORD:**
- Was it generally easy to follow the story? Y/N
  - **IF NO**, what would have made it easier to follow?
- Was it generally easy to imagine how the fictional character of [FEMALE NAME] would feel in this situation? Y/N

- IF NO, what would have made it easier?
- Was it generally easy to imagine a scenario like this one happening in your community?
- What types of things did you think about when hearing the story?

**MODERATOR READ:**

C14. How common do you think this type of situation is for women in the area where you live?

(Answer options: Very common, common, uncommon, very uncommon)

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent hesitate? Y / N
- Did the respondent ask for the question to be repeated? Y / N
- Did the respondent ask for the vignette to be repeated? Y / N
- Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? Y / N
- IF RESPONDENT SAYS DON'T KNOW: Did they want more information? Y / N
  - Please provide some details:

**MODERATOR ASK:**

- What were you thinking about when you answered this question?
- Why did you choose the option you did?
- How did you go about deciding how to answer this?
  - Who or what did you think about?
- Does this story give enough information to help you answer this question?
- Was this an easy question to answer?
- What does it mean if this story is “very common”? How often would something like this happens if it were “very common”?
  - PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:
- What about if it was “very uncommon”? How often would something like this happens if it were “very uncommon”?
  - PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent ask for/ need more information? Y / N
  - IF YES, please provide details:
- Did the respondent misunderstand any points of the question? Y / N
  - IF YES, please provide details:

- Did the respondent think about the situation generally of women in the area where she lives, rather than what she has experienced only or what she thinks should be the experience? **Y / N**
  - Please provide details:

**MODERATOR RATE RESPONDENT'S OVERALL:**

- **Comprehension**

*Did not understand at all* 1      2      3      4      5 *Understood completely*

**If less than 4, please provide details:**

- **Ease of understanding**

*Very difficult to understand* 1      2      3      4      5 *Very easy to understand*

**If less than 4, please provide details:**

- **Sensitivity**

*Very uncomfortable* 1      2      3      4      5 *Very comfortable*

**If less than 4, please provide details:**

- **Response**

*Response did not fit options at all* 1      2      3      4      5 *Response fit options very well*

**If less than 4, please provide details:**

## PROTOCOL TWO (PERSONAL SAFETY)

**Aim of question:** To understand how the respondent defines “safety” at home and assess the level of sensitivity/discomfort.

**MODERATOR READ QUESTION:**

C21. In the last six months, did you ever feel unsafe in your home? (Y/N)

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent hesitate? **Y / N**
- Did the respondent ask for the question to be repeated? **Y / N**
- Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? **Y / N**
- **IF RESPONDENT SAYS DON'T KNOW:** Did they want more information? **Y / N**
- **IF YES TO ANY,** please provide details:

**MODERATOR ASK:**

- What did you think about as you heard this question?
- How did you define ‘unsafe’ to help you answer this question? What kinds of things did you think of?
- How did you go about deciding whether you have felt unsafe?
- Was it easy to come to this conclusion?

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent ask for/need more information? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES**, please provide details:
- Did the respondent misunderstand any points of the question? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES**, please provide details:

**MODERATOR READ QUESTION:**

C23. Why did you feel unsafe in your home?

OR, IF NO @ ABOVE

What are some things that would make you feel unsafe in your home?

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent hesitate? **Y / N**
- Did the respondent ask for the question to be repeated? **Y / N**
- Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? **Y / N**
- **IF RESPONDENT SAYS DON'T KNOW:** Did they want more information? **Y / N**
- **IF YES TO ANY**, please provide details:

**MODERATOR ASK:**

- What did you think about as you heard this question?
- How did you go about deciding what made you felt unsafe? What kinds of things did you think of?
- Was it easy to come to this conclusion?

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent ask for/need more information? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES**, please provide details:
- Did the respondent misunderstand any points of the question? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES**, please provide details:
- Did the respondent think about safety threats inside her home?
  - Please provide details:
- Did the respondent think about safety threats to her home from the outside?
  - Please provide details:

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent mention **physical violence or threats of physical violence** (hitting, throwing things)? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES:** Who was the victim of this abuse (adult women, adult men, children)? Please provide details.
  - **IF NO ASK:** if this happened in your home – for instance, someone threw something that could hurt someone – would you consider this a safety issue?
- Did the respondent mention **verbal abuse** (yelling, name-calling, insults)? **Y / N**
  - **IF YES:** Who was the victim of this abuse? Please provide details.

IF NO ASK: If this happened in your home – for instance, someone yelled at someone and called them names – would you consider this a safety issue?

**MODERATOR RATE RESPONDENT’S OVERALL:**

- **Comprehension**

*Did not understand at all* 1 2 3 4 5 *Understood completely*

If less than 4, please provide details:

- **Ease of understanding**

*Very difficult to understand* 1 2 3 4 5 *Very easy to understand*

If less than 4, please provide details:

- **Sensitivity**

*Very uncomfortable* 1 2 3 4 5 *Very comfortable*

If less than 4, please provide details:

- **Response**

*Response did not fit options at all* 1 2 3 4 5 *Response fit options very well*

If less than 4, please provide details:

## PROTOCOL THREE (PREVALENCE PROXIES)

**Aim of question:** To understand how the respondent interprets questions about prevalence of VAW and assess the level of sensitivity/discomfort.

**MODERATOR READ QUESTION:**

C30. Now I’m going to ask you about some situations that you or any other women you know may have experienced. For each situation, please tell if you or any other women you know have experienced this only before the start of COVID-19, only since the start of COVID-19, both before and since the start of COVID-19, or not at all. You can also always answer “don’t know”.

**MODERATOR READ AND RECORD:**

	Before COVID-19	Since COVID-19	No, never	Don’t know
Been slapped, hit, kicked, had things thrown at them, or other physical harm				
Been yelled at, called names, humiliated				
Had resources (like health care) or basic needs (like money, food, water, shelter) denied				



Been forced to stay alone for long period of time or denied communication with other people				
Been the subject of inappropriate jokes, suggestive comments, leering, or unwelcome touch/kisses,				

**MODERATOR RECORD:**

- Did the respondent hesitate? **Y / N**
  - IF YES, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT
- Did the respondent ask for the question or any statements to be repeated? **Y / N**
  - IF YES, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT
- Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? **Y / N**
  - IF YES, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT
- Did the respondent answer anything with ‘don’t know’? **Y / N**
  - IF YES, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT
- Did they ask for more information? **Y / N**
  - IF YES, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT

**MODERATOR RATE RESPONDENT’S OVERALL:**

- **Comprehension**  
*Did not understand at all*    1    2    3    4    5    *Understood completely*  
 If less than 4, please provide details:
- **Ease of Understanding**  
*Very difficult to understand*    1    2    3    4    5    *Very easy to understand*  
 If less than 4, please provide details:
- **Sensitivity**  
*Very uncomfortable*    1    2    3    4    5    *Very comfortable*  
 If less than 4, please provide details:
- **Response**  
*Response did not fit options at all*    1    2    3    4    5    *Response fit options very well*  
 If less than 4, please provide details:

Now I’m going to ask you some follow-up questions about each specific situation. Please answer to the best of your ability. The first is “Been the subject of inappropriate jokes, suggestive comments, leering, or unwelcome touch/kisses”.

**MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS TO ALL:**

- What did you think about as you heard this description?
- Was this clear to you?
- Generally, is this something that you think happens more inside the home or outside of the home?

- When you think about “women you know”, who did you think of when answering this question?
- If this option had been asked about **only your experience, and not the experience of women that you know**, would your answer have changed?
  - IF YES, how would it have changed?
  - IF YES, why would it have changed?

The next is “Been forced to stay alone for long period of time or denied communication with other people”.

**MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS TO ALL:**

- What did you think about as you heard this situation?
- Was this clear to you?
- When you think about “women you know”, who did you think of when answering this question?
- If this option had been asked about **only your experience, and not the experience of women that you know**, would your answer have changed?
  - IF YES, how would it have changed?
  - IF YES, why would it have change?

The next is “Had resources (like healthcare) or basic needs (like money, food, water, shelter) denied”.

**MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS TO ALL:**

- What did you think about as you heard this situation?
- Was this clear to you?
- Generally, is this something that you think happens more inside the home or outside of the home?
- When you think about “women you know”, who did you think of when answering this question?
- If this option had been asked about **only your experience, and not the experience of women that you know**, would your answer have changed?
  - IF YES, how would it have changed?
  - IF YES, why would it have change?

The next is “Been yelled at, called names, humiliated”

**MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS TO ALL:**

- What did you think about as you heard this situation?
- Was this clear to you?
- Generally, is this something that you think happens more inside the home or outside of the home?
- When you think about “women you know”, who did you think of when answering this question?
- If this option had been asked about **only your experience, and not the experience of women that you know**, would your answer have changed?
  - IF YES, how would it have changed?
  - IF YES, why would it have change?

The last is “Been slapped, hit, kicked, had things thrown at them, or other physical harm”.

#### MODERATOR ASK AND RECORD ANSWERS TO ALL:

- What did you think about as you heard this situation?
- Was this clear to you?
- Generally, is this something that you think happens more inside the home or outside of the home?
- When you think about “women you know”, who did you think of when answering this question?
- If this option had been asked about only your experience, and not the experience of women that you know, would your answer have changed?
  - IF YES, how would it have changed?
  - IF YES, why would it have change?

## PROTOCOL FOUR (LIST RANDOMIZATION EXERCISE)

### BACKGROUND FOR INTERVIEWER

This module aims to assess participant reactions to an activity conducted during the survey called list randomization. The purpose of this activity is to allow people to express unpopular opinions without asking them directly. You will read a set of statements and the respondent should listen to them all. Only once you are done reading, the respondent should indicate to you the **number of statements that are true**. That is, they should not reveal to you which of the statements are true, only the total number.

**MODERATOR INSTRUCTIONS:** To minimize any discomfort for the respondent or any possibility that you might be able to guess which statements are true for the respondent based on physical cues, please turn around so you are not facing her while you read the statements out loud. Explain to the respondent why you are doing this, and tell her that when you turn back around, she can tell you the number of statements that are true. She can keep track of the number of true statements using her fingers.

### Introduction and explanation [READ TO ALL PARTICIPANTS]

We are going to start by doing an exercise. We'll do this exercise a few times in a few different ways, but generally it will work like this:

- I will read to you a number of statements
- You will not say out loud anything regarding the statements, however in your head please keep track of whether they are true or not.
  - It is very important that I don't know which of the statements are true for you, so please keep this to yourself!
- I will turn around to read the statements to you so that I cannot see you while you are keeping track of which statements are true. I will turn back around after I have finished reading each of the statements aloud.
- Once I have read all the statements, I will ask you to tell me how many of the statements are true for you. So, for example, if I read you four statements and two are true, you would simply tell me the number two.
- If you like, you can put a finger up on your hand up for each statement that is true and then show me the number of fingers that you have up at the end of the exercise
- Is everything clear? Do you have any questions about the game in general?

- IF NO, please read instructions again

### Round One

- Okay, we will start the exercise now. I will read you four statements. Please remember not to indicate which statements are true, just count in your head or use your fingers and only tell me the total number of statements. Are you ready to begin?
  - IF NO, repeat instructions
- READ STATEMENTS
  - I prefer [LOCAL FOOD ONE] to [LOCAL FOOD TWO]
  - I like [NAME OF WELL-KNOWN LOCAL MUSICIAN, BUT NOT ONE EVERYONE LIKES]
  - I have been slapped or hit by my husband or partner BEFORE THE ONSET OF COVID-19
  - Women in my family enjoy watching [POPULAR LOCAL SPORT].
  - Okay, please tell me, of the four statements I read, how many are true?
- RECORD NUMBER:

### INTERVIEWER RECORD

- Did the respondent understand the exercise?
- Did the respondent hesitate?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent ask for anything to be repeated?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent appear confused?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent appear upset?
  - If yes, record details:

### Round Two

- Okay, will do this exercise one more time. I will read you four new statements. Please remember not to indicate which statements are true, just count in your head or using your fingers and only tell me the total number of statements. Are you ready to begin?
  - IF NO, repeat instructions
- READ STATEMENTS
  - People in my family have played [POPULAR LOCAL SPORT].
  - I have been slapped or hit by my husband or partner AFTER THE ONSET OF COVID-19
  - I like [NAME OF WELL-KNOWN TV SHOW, BUT NOT ONE EVERYONE LIKES]
  - I prefer [LOCAL FOOD THREE] to [LOCAL FOOD FOUR]
- Okay, please tell me, of the four statements I read, how many are true?
  - RECORD NUMBER:

## INTERVIEWER RECORD

- Did the respondent understand the exercise?
- Did the respondent hesitate?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent ask for anything to be repeated?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent appear confused?
  - If yes, record details:
- Did the respondent appear upset?
  - If yes, record details:

## QUESTIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AFTER EXERCISE IS COMPLETE

Please note responses and provide in summary document

Now, I'd just like to ask you a few questions about the exercise we just did.

1. How did you feel about the exercise?
  - Did you understand it? Did it make sense?
  - How did you keep track of the number of statements that were true for you?
    - If no: is there a way it could have been explained better?
  - Was there anything about it that made you uncomfortable?
    - If yes: why? What made you not comfortable?
2. Do you have any suggestions for the exercise? Could anything have been done better?
  - If yes RECORD

## INTERVIEWER RATE RESPONDENT'S OVERALL:

- **General comprehension of the game**  
*Did not understand at all* 1      2      3      4      5 *Understood completely*  
If less than 4, please provide details:
  
- **Ease of understanding of the game**  
*Very difficult to understand* 1      2      3      4      5 *Very easy to understand*  
If less than 4, please provide details:
  
- **Sensitivity/comfort level of playing the game**  
*Very uncomfortable* 1      2      3      4      5 *Very comfortable*  
If less than 4, please provide details:

## PROTOCOL FIVE (DIRECT PREVALENCE)

<p><b>Aim of question:</b> To understand the incidence of violence against women in the home</p>
<p><b>MODERATOR READ QUESTION:</b></p> <p>C26. How often, if at all, in the past 12 months, has a spouse or partner pushed you, thrown something at you that could hurt you, punched or slapped you?</p> <p>(Answer options: Often, A few times, Rarely, Never, Not Applicable)</p>
<p><b>MODERATOR RECORD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the respondent hesitate? <b>Y / N</b></li> <li>• Did the respondent ask for the question to be repeated? <b>Y / N</b></li> <li>• Did the respondent appear uncomfortable? <b>Y / N</b></li> <li>• <b>IF RESPONDENT SAYS DON'T KNOW:</b> Did they want more information? <b>Y / N</b></li> <li>• <b>IF YES TO ANY,</b> please provide details:</li> </ul>
<p><b>MODERATOR ASK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you think about as you heard this question?</li> <li>• What does 'often' mean to you? How many times or how regularly would this occur in order for you to consider it something that happens often?</li> <li>• Record definition:</li> <li>• Was it difficult for you to answer this question?</li> <li>• Do you think questions like this about violence should be asked?</li> </ul>
<p><b>MODERATOR RECORD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the respondent ask for / need more information? <b>Y / N</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>IF YES,</b> please provide details:</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did the respondent misunderstand any points of the question? <b>Y / N</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>IF YES,</b> please provide details:</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did the respondent think questions like this should be asked? <b>Y / N</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>IF NO,</b> please provide details:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>MODERATOR RATE RESPONDENT'S OVERALL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comprehension</b>  <i>Did not understand at all</i>    1        2        3        4        5    <i>Understood completely</i>  <b>If less than 4, please provide details:</b></li> <li>• <b>Ease of understanding</b>  <i>Very difficult to understand</i>    1        2        3        4        5    <i>Very easy to understand</i>  <b>If less than 4, please provide details:</b></li> <li>• <b>Sensitivity</b>  <i>Very uncomfortable</i>                    1        2        3        4        5    <i>Very comfortable</i>  <b>If less than 4, please provide details:</b></li> </ul>

- **Response**

*Response did not fit options at all* 1      2      3      4      5 *Response fit options very well*

**If less than 4, please provide details:**

## CLOSING

**MODERATOR READ:** We have talked about a lot of different topics related to violence against women in this survey. Before we end, I wanted to ask you if there is anything else you wanted to say on this topic that you have not already had the opportunity to express.

**MODERATOR RECORD ANYTHING THAT IS RELEVANT [RELATED TO RESPONDENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF QUESTIONS]:**

# Appendix 2: Methods and demographics

## Further methodological details

Ipsos developed this cognitive testing protocol jointly with UN Women following detailed discussions about which questions were most likely to cause confusion, suffer misinterpretation or elicit distress from participants. Once the protocol was complete, Ipsos conducted a training-of-trainers workshop with moderators from Kenya and Bangladesh to review the objectives of the research and eligibility criteria and to go over the protocol step-by-step.

Following the training, moderators conducted a total of 20 face-to-face 45-minute cognitive interviews in each country, for a total of 40 interviews. Recruitment for participation in cognitive testing was conducted using Ipsos databases and based on recruitment for the ultimate quantitative survey in that it focused on the same population of Bangladeshi and Kenyan women above the age of 18, ensuring a good spread on geography, age, education, economic status, etc. During screening and recruitment of potential participants, the level of comfort with the topic was assessed, and anyone who expressed discomfort about participating in the interview was considered ineligible.

Due to COVID-19 and fears surrounding being in and travelling to crowded public locations, interviews were conducted in private, secluded spaces in or near respondents' homes (or, in two cases, in their place of work). To ensure privacy, the following steps were followed:

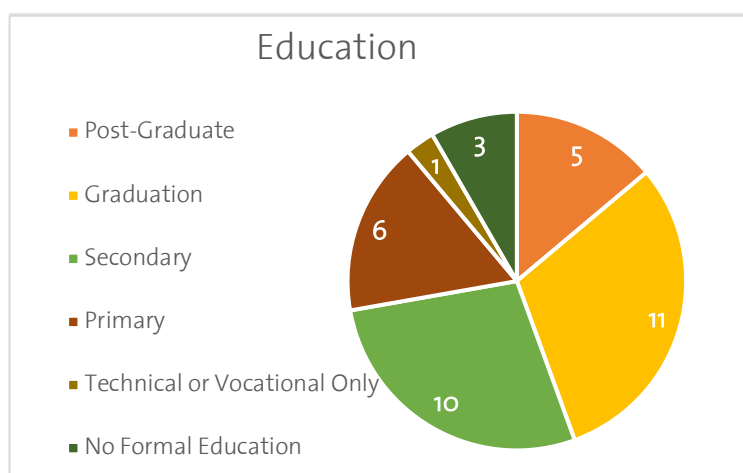
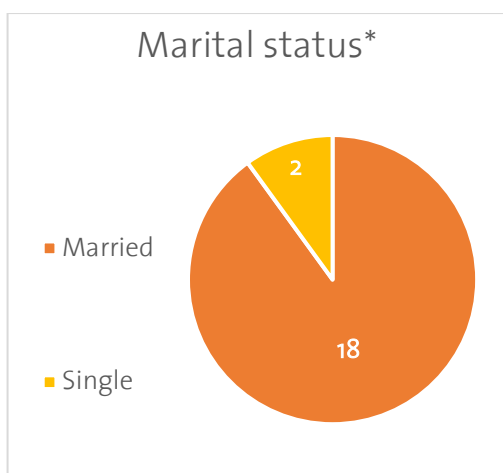
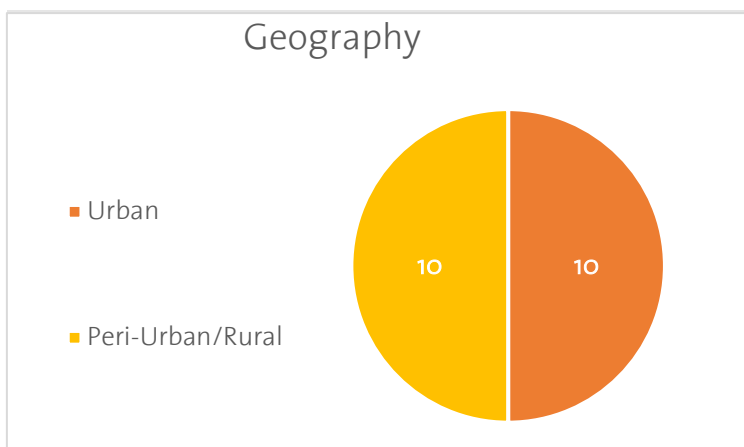
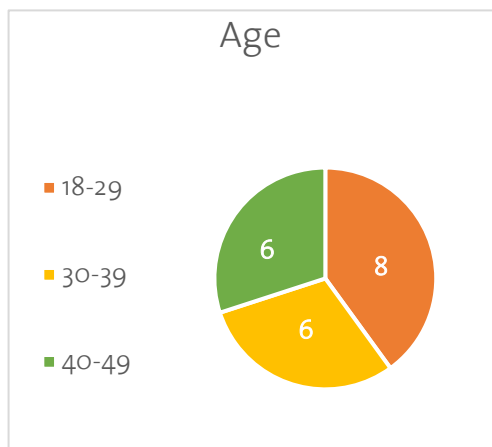
- The discussion (led by a female researcher) was conducted in private, inside a room where no one could overhear the conversation.
- While scheduling the interview, interviewers asked respondents to specify when the interview could be conducted without interruption. The interview was then conducted at the time specified by the interviewer in order to maintain her privacy.
- In the rural settings in Bangladesh, the interview was done in the kitchen (located at a distance from the main room), where it was easier to maintain privacy.
- Finally, all the interviews were done only when the woman was alone at home, except for children under the age of 2.

Moderators took diligent notes throughout the interviews (sometimes assisted by a female note-taker who also attended the interview) and ultimately transferred these notes into a standardized reporting template in Excel, which was then used to conduct analysis on the comprehension, sensitivity and results of each question. This memo and the recommendations provided herein are written on the basis of those results.



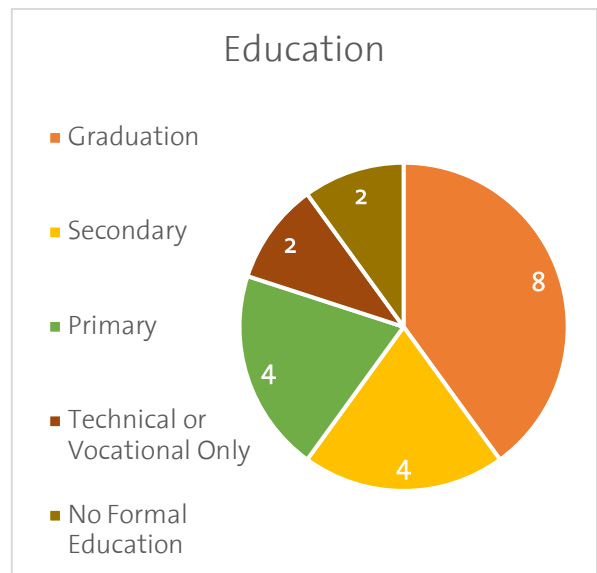
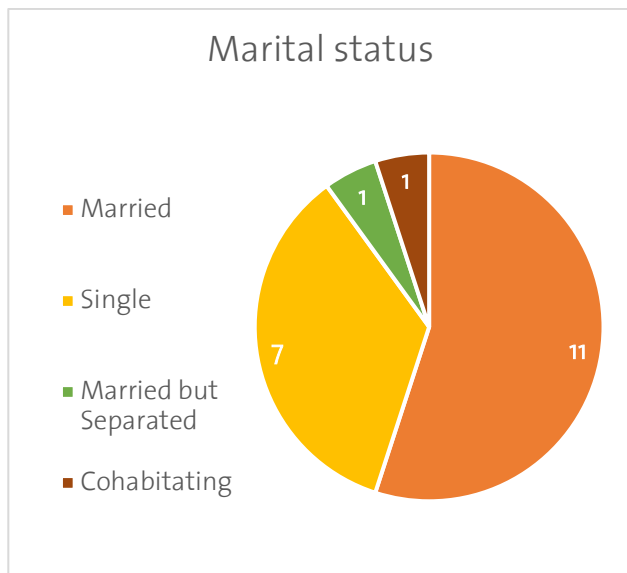
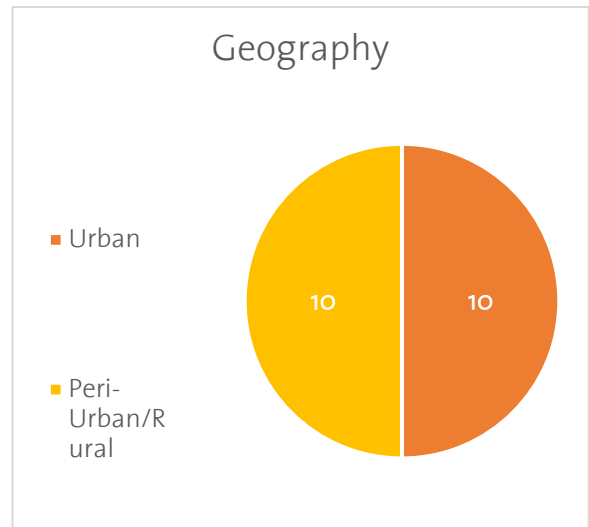
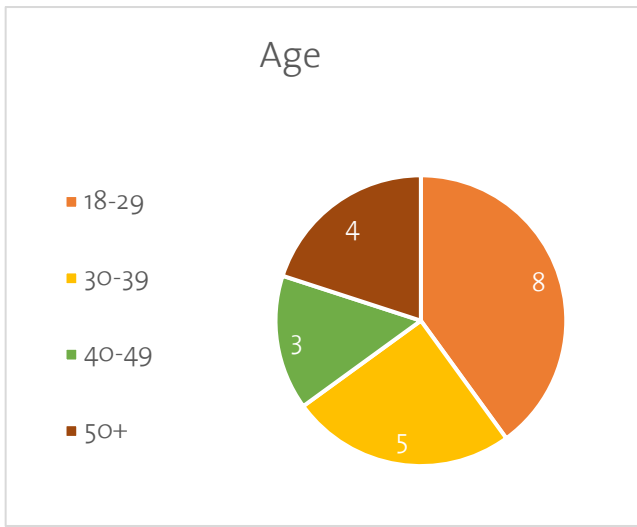
## Participant demographics

### Bangladesh



\* While teams aimed for a broader mix of marital status, recruiting unmarried women was difficult as they did not have the ability to conduct the interview privately due to arrangements at home not allowing for a private space where no one over the age of 2 could overhear. In the quantitative survey, the data also skewed towards married women (75%) indicating that this population of women (single, access to a phone, able to conduct an interview privately) in Bangladesh may be a minority.

# Kenya



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