

# MODULE 5

# Gender Sensitivity



ZAMBIA

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# MODULE 5

## GENDER SENSITIVITY

### CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Foreword	
Acknowledgements	
Introduction	1
Unit 1. Sex and Gender	3
Topic 1. Sex	
Topic 2. Gender	
Topic 3. Sex and Gender Roles	
Topic 4. Sex Role Stereotypes	
Unit 2. Gender Differences in Society	24
Topic 1. Gender Gaps: Gender Differences in Various Spheres of Life	
Unit 3. Gender in the School	66
Topic 1. The Problem	
Topic 2. Factors Affecting the Education of Girls	

## FOREWORD

African Ministers of Education have long been aware of the growing number of social problems which affect the lives of young Africans, particularly girls, and determined some time ago that their education systems had to play a much more active and positive role in promoting the growth and development of the young people entrusted to their care.

Before taking action, they took into account the declarations and recommendations of the Pan African Conference on the Education of Girls (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 1993) and the Fourth Conference on Women (Beijing, China, 1995) and other international gatherings on matters related to women. They then convened a series of technical meetings in English and French-speaking countries, at both the regional and the national level, to decide in greater detail what should be done. The consensus reached was that Guidance and Counselling should be an integral part of the education of children and should be included in the teacher training programmes.

This co-ordinated effort resulted in the establishment in April 1997, of a Board of Governors, made up of African Ministers of Education, who would be responsible for policy decisions and for establishing procedures in the development of the Guidance and Counselling Programme. In preparing the programme African countries would collaborate so that it would benefit from the best of African expertise. It was also agreed that the '**Guidance Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa**', designed to provide training for teacher trainers and youth and social workers from all over the continent, would be set up in Malawi. While this programme was intended for use with boys and girls, its content and organization are such that special attention is given to the needs and requirements of girls.

Assistance is being given by a number of international and regional agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAWE (the Forum for African Women Educationalists), DANIDA, the Rockefeller Foundation and from countries such as Finland and the USA.

A Training Package on Guidance and Counselling has been prepared by African specialists from various countries in consultation with other competent persons. It consists of eight training modules – *Guidance, Counselling, Social Work, Behaviour Modification, Gender Sensitivity, Guidance and Counselling Programme Development, Adolescent Reproductive Health, and Workshop Administration and Conduct Guidelines*. The modules encourage the use of non-threatening approaches, particularly with regard to sensitive issues, and are accompanied by charts, transparencies and video films as teaching aids. Supporting materials are also drawn

from relevant programmes being implemented in the respective countries. Although intended for use in the training of trainers, the suggested activities are also generally suitable for use with school-age children. Each module is comprised of units and sets out objectives and activities for small and large groups. Because of the shortage of appropriate relevance materials for Guidance and Counselling, each module includes additional reading.

This Module on '**Gender Sensitivity**', prepared in Zambia, provides a careful analysis of the differences between sex and gender, gives a description of their respective roles and stereotypes, and shows how these are seen by society in general. There is a full account of the achievements made in the advancement of women during the last 50 years, and how widespread recognition of their human rights has been obtained, by means of Declarations made at a series of international gatherings and conferences. Particular attention is given to attitudes towards gender in school, and to ways in which girls can be encouraged to improve their educational achievement.

Colin N. Power  
Deputy Director-General for Education  
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## **Acknowledgements**

Dr Mable Milimo of the University of Zambia came to the programme highly recommended by the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE). She lived up to this recommendation in both the preparation of the Module and the training of trainers in the Regional Workshop, which is held in Malawi every year. She is especially remembered for raising the level of gender sensitivity in the other training modules.

Dr Milimo is known and respected for her work in gender issues in anglophone Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her contribution to the programme, and I hope that she will continue to give her services to the welfare of girls and women.

I must also express my thanks to the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP for their contributions, both in cash and in kind, to the preparation of this module.

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## Gender Sensitivity

### ***INTRODUCTION***

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**I**n nearly all societies, men and women, boys and girls, have a different status and play different roles. Men and women behave differently, dress differently, have different attitudes and interests, and have different leisure activities. Contrary to traditionally held beliefs that these differences between male and female behaviour are biologically or genetically determined, recent research has revealed that they are to a large extent socially constructed, or based on the concept of gender.

What is *gender*? The word was used by Ann Oakley and others in the 1970s to describe those characteristics of men and women which are socially determined, in contrast to those which are biologically determined. This distinction between gender and sex has important implications, which are elaborated throughout this manual. Essentially, the distinction between gender and sex is made to emphasize that everything men and women do, and is expected of them, with the exception of their sexually distinct functions (impregnation, childbearing and breast-feeding), can change, and does change, in time and according to changing and different cultural factors.

Gender is a dynamic concept. Gender roles for men and women vary greatly from one culture to another, and from one social group to another within the same culture. Race, class, economic circumstances, age - all of these influence what is considered appropriate for men and women. As culture is dynamic, and socio-economic conditions change over time, so gender patterns change with them. Sudden crisis, like war or famine, can radically and rapidly change what men and women do. Sometimes, however, the old attitudes return after the crisis (as women ex-combatants in liberation struggles have found). Sometimes, the changes have a permanent impact.

This module deals with gender training. Gender training is a development activity which aims at changing awareness, knowledge, skills and behaviour in relation to gender. It differs from training in other subjects in that it touches on personal and political issues, even when this is not deliberately planned.

The first step in understanding is gender awareness. *Gender awareness* is not a separate or additional issue. It is a way of seeing, a perspective - insights which form our understanding of people and society. Gender awareness means looking at things with new eyes, which are constantly open to learning more. Gender awareness will be

discussed in more detail in Unit 1.

It is now generally accepted that the future of the African continent will depend on the establishment of a new relationship between the sexes in the overall economic process, hence the concept of cultural adjustment. *Cultural adjustment* applies to all socio-cultural values, which govern the very notion of the relationships between men and women in society. Cultural adjustment will be effected mainly by making men and women aware of the loss to society by discrimination on the grounds of sex. Unit 2 will cover the different implications of gender roles in society.

It must also come about as a result of appropriate training focused on considerations of gender and an upgrading of the image of women. In targeting this, training priority must be given to schools, which are vital centres for building a new equal gender concept. This will be further discussed in Unit 3.

**Sex and Gender*****RATIONALE***

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**T**he purpose of this unit is to introduce the concept of gender and sex, explore the participant's, as well as the teacher's, emotions and ideas about gender relations, and begin to find explanations for the differences between men and women.

***LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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**B**y the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- realize that gender and sex are different, and that gender is socially constructed and transmitted during the process of socialization;
- reach a greater awareness of your own assumptions about the roles and abilities of women and girls;
- increase gender awareness among students and explain the reason for the concept of gender.

***CONTENT***

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**T**his unit includes the following:

- Topic 1. Sex
- Topic 2. Gender
- Topic 3. Sex and Gender Roles
- Topic 4. Sex Role Stereotypes

## Topic 1. SEX

Sex, as defined by Susan Basow, is a biological term referring to people, animals, etc., being either *female* or *male* depending on their sex organs or genes. Sex also refers to the differences between individuals that make them male or female. These differences are biologically determined, e.g.:

MEN	WOMEN
Have no developed uterus and cannot become pregnant or give birth to children	Have a developed uterus and can become pregnant and give birth to children
Have a penis	Have a vagina
Have under-developed breasts	Have developed breasts
Grow a beard	Do not grow a beard

Sex is therefore **biologically** determined. According to Stoller, for example:

*'...to determine sex one must assay the following physical conditions: chromosomes, external genitalia, internal genitalia, gonads, hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics....One's sex, then, is determined by an algebraic sum of all these qualities, and as is obvious, most people fall under one of two separate bell curves, the one of which is called 'male' and the other 'female'.*

(Cited in Oakley, 1985, p. 158).

### **Activity 1.1: The Biology of Sex**

#### Part 1

1. Go through Reading 1.1, The Biology of Sex, by Ann Oakley (diagram showing sex differences), on page 21.
2. Divide yourselves into groups.
3. Discuss the biological differences that determine the sex of females and males.
4. List the biological differences/characteristics/qualities that determine the female and male sex in two columns, as shown above.
5. Discuss the completed charts in class. Make sure that the differences are **biological** and **NOT** psychological or social differences or stereotypes.

## Part 2

1. Using the same grouping, discuss the biological similarities between males and females.
2. List these similarities on the flipcharts.
3. Discuss the similarities and their development in class.

## **Topic 2.** **GENDER**

### ***Activity 1.2: Gender***

#### Note to the facilitator:

1. Ask participants to list on a piece of paper the functions/roles they play at home.
2. Ask individuals to read what they have written to the rest of the class.
3. Facilitator writes the answers in two columns on the flipchart, e.g.:

**MEN**

gardening, etc.

**WOMEN**

cooking, etc.

4. Discuss/brainstorm with the class the reasons for the differences in the roles played by women and men.

Contrary to sex, ‘gender’ has *social*, *cultural* and *psychological* rather than biological connotations. It is defined in terms of femininity and masculinity. The proper terms for describing sex, for example, are ‘*male and female*’ while the corresponding terms for gender are ‘*masculine and feminine*.’ Although the latter may be independent of biological sex, masculinity pertains to the attributes that describe males in the social and cultural context. Hence, the ‘normal’ male has a preponderance of masculinity, while the ‘normal’ female has a preponderance of femininity (Stoller). According to Stoller, therefore, ‘gender’ is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person.

Gender also refers to ‘subjective feelings of maleness or femaleness (i.e., femininity or masculinity), irrespective of one’s sex’ (Basow). This is known as *gender identity*. It is possible to be genetically of one sex with a gender identity of another sex, e.g., *transsexuals* identify themselves with the gender of the opposite sex. This implies that one’s gender may not necessarily be synonymous with that of one’s sex.

One’s gender can be determined in many ways, e.g., behaviour. In most societies, for example, humility, submissiveness, etc., are considered feminine behaviour and women are expected to behave that way. Men, on the other hand, are expected to be

dominant, aggressive, etc.

Feminine  
submissive  
gentle  
emotional  
quiet

Masculine  
dominant  
aggressive  
not emotional  
talkative

Other determinants of gender may include dress, gestures, occupation, social network, and especially the ROLES played by the sexes in society.

**Note:** Go through Reading 1.2, Differences Between Sex and Gender, on page 21.

### ***Activity 1.3: Gender, in Contrast to Sex***

1. Read the following two passages from Ann Oakley: *Sex, Gender, and Society*, 1991, pages 58 & 59.

#### Passage 1

William Davenport writes of a Southwest Pacific society in which:

*'Only men wear flowers in their hair and scented leaves tucked into their belts or arm bands. At formal dances it is the man who dresses in the most elegant finery and...when these young men are fully made up and costumed for the dance they are considered so irresistible to women that they are not allowed to be alone, even for a moment, for fear some women will seduce them.'*

#### Passage 2

Anne Anastasi quotes a passage from Garreau on France at the time of the crusades:

*'A trait peculiar to this epoch is the close resemblance between the manners of men and women. The rule that such and such feelings or acts are permitted in one sex and forbidden to the other was not fairly settled. Men had the right to dissolve in tears, and women that of talking without prudery... If we look at their intellectual level, the women appear distinctly superior. They are more serious, more subtle. With them we do not seem to be dealing with the rude state of civilization that their husbands belong to... As a rule, women seem to have the habit of weighing their acts; of not yielding to momentary impressions.'*

2. Answer the following questions:
- Compare and contrast the differences in the behaviour of women and men in these societies to that of women and men in your own society
  - What do the differences tell us about **gender** in contrast to **sex**?
  - What accounts for the differences in the behaviour of these societies compared with your own?

### **Topic 3.**

## **SEX AND GENDER ROLES**

The trainer must ensure that students are able to realize the differences between biological and social roles. Often the social dimension of labour is treated as natural. This leads to the wrong assumption that women are not capable of playing roles normally played by men and vice-versa.

### ***Sex Role***

A sex role is a function or role which a male or female assumes because of the basic physiological or anatomical differences between the sexes. It is a biologically determined role which can be performed by only one of the sexes, e.g., women give birth to children while men make women pregnant.

#### Female Sex Role

child-bearing  
lactation  
gestation

#### Male Sex Role

ovum fertilization  
produces spermatozoa which  
determine child's sex.

These roles are not exchangeable because they are biologically determined.

### ***Gender Role***

A gender role, as defined by Susan Basow, refers to society's evaluation of behaviour as masculine or feminine, e.g., cooking is feminine, while fishing is a masculine role in most societies.

#### Feminine Role

cooking  
childcare  
housecare

#### Masculine Role

fishing  
hunting  
repair work in the home  
e.g., repairing broken furniture

## ***Differences Between Sex Roles and Gender Roles***

(Adapted from the classification by Susan Basow.)

### **GENDER ROLES**

1. May differ from society to society.
2. Can change with history.
3. Can be performed by both sexes.
4. They are socially, culturally determined.

### **SEX ROLES**

1. Same in all societies: they are universal, e.g., it is only women who give birth to children all over the world.
2. Never change with history
3. Can be performed by only one the sexes.
4. They are biologically determined.

### ***Activity 1.4: Building Gender Awareness Choosing the Sex of Your Child***

#### Objectives:

1. To bring out participants' assumptions about female and male children.
2. To examine how true and deep-rooted these assumptions are.

#### Method:

1. Tell the participants this story:

*A couple is struggling to conceive a child. They go to a diviner who tells them they will have a child, but only after they have decided which sex they want it to be.*

2. Give each participant a piece of paper and ask them to imagine being in this situation. Ask them to write down the sex they would choose for their child.
3. Ask participants also to write down their reasons for choosing the sex. Give them a few minutes and collect the papers. Put the result on a flipchart: 'Number of those who chose girls' and 'Number of those who chose boys', and list the reasons.

4. Discuss with participants:
  - a) Number of boys and girls.
  - b) Reasons for choosing the sex.
  - c) The effect of assumptions like:
    - Boys will continue the line.
    - Boys will take care of parents during old age.
    - Boys will remain with parents, girls will get married.
    - Boys will inherit, girls will not.
  - d) Discuss the implications of how male and female children are socialized and treated, to prepare them for the roles they play in society.

Note to the Facilitator:

1. This activity was used with grassroots women and men in Kenya and was revealing. The discussion took several directions. Almost all participants chose boys. Family planning became the centre of discussion because women and men continue to have children in order to have a boy. The whole question of who determines the sex of the child (biologically) was addressed.
2. It raised the question of how the community looks at a woman with only girl children, and the implications of succession and inheritance differences for boys and girls.
3. The activity can provoke a great many issues. It is a good introduction to looking at socialization processes and conceptualizing gender roles and the relationship between men and women.
4. If the group is made up of different cultures, you may need to look at very different assumptions made about girls and boys, and discuss these differences between one culture and another.

(Source of the activity: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.)

### ***Activity 1.5: The Gender Game***

#### Objectives:

1. To introduce the term 'gender' to a group unfamiliar with the concept.

#### Method:

1. Ask the group if they understand the differences between 'gender' and 'sex'.
2. Explain the differences quickly and simply.
3. Hand out sheets of paper to the participants and ask them to write the numbers 1 to 10 in a list on the paper.
4. Read out the numbered list of statements in the Handout 1.1, On Statements About Men and Women, on page 22, and ask participants to write 'G' against those they think refer to gender, and 'S' against those they think refer to sex.
5. Distribute Handout 1.1 and discuss the answers with the whole group. Focus on the following questions and key ideas:
  - a) Did any statements surprise you?
  - b) Do the statements indicate that gender is inborn or learned?
  - c) Gender roles vary greatly in different societies, cultures and historical periods.
  - d) Age, race and class are also major factors which determine our gender roles.
  - e) Women in every country experience both power and oppression differently.

(Source of the activity: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.)

### ***Activity 1.6: Preparing for a Baby***

In this activity, two couples are preparing for the birth of a child. One couple is preparing for a boy, the other for a girl. Each couple is engaged in a discussion about:

- a) What provisions they need to buy for the baby, such as types of clothing, toys and materials needed to decorate the room the baby will occupy.
  - b) What plans and dreams they have for the baby, such as education, profession, hobbies, interests.
  - c) What each one will be able to contribute to the child's upbringing, e.g., what she/he will do for the child at home, what he/she will teach the child, what leisure or recreational activities each will share with the child.
  - d) Why each one is happy that the child will be a boy/girl.
1. Form groups of two. Half the groups should discuss preparing for the birth of a girl, the other half for the birth of a boy. Use (a) to (d) above to guide your discussion.
    - a) What conclusions did you draw?
    - b) At what stage does gendering begin?
    - c) Which sex would you prefer for your own baby and why?

## **Topic 4. SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES**

According to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary, a *stereotype* is a 'person or thing seeming to conform to a heavily accepted type'. Sex-role stereotypes have also been defined as 'the rigidly held and oversimplified beliefs that MALES & FEMALES possess distinct (and similar) psychological traits and characteristics.' These beliefs tend to be very widely held in society. (Basow)

In some societies, for example, the following stereotypes are thought to pertain either to males or females only.

Feminine

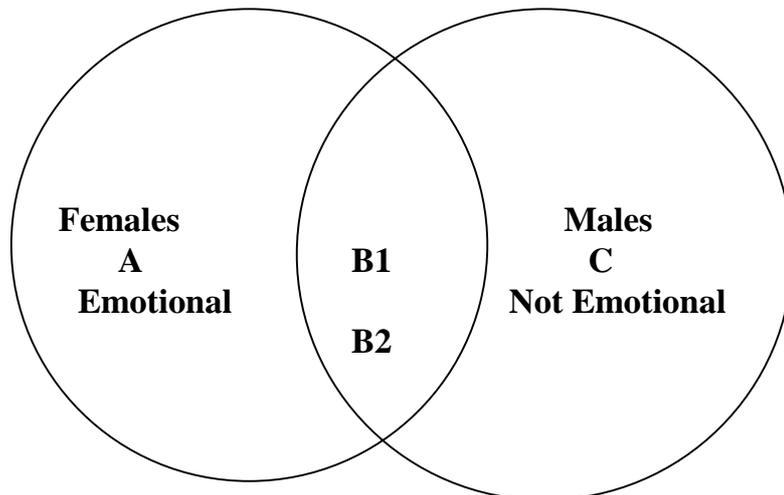
Females are thought to be:  
emotional  
not aggressive  
not good at making decisions  
dependent  
gentle  
tactful

Masculine

Males are thought to be:  
unemotional  
very aggressive  
very good at making decisions  
independent  
rough  
blunt

***Do Sex-Role Stereotypes Reflect the True Situation?***

Stereotypes may reflect the generally observable characteristics of a particular sex group. However, stereotypes can be unfair because they tend to GENERALIZE. They are unfair to those people who do not possess those traits or characteristics. Refer to the diagram below.



In the diagram:

- A = Females who are emotional
- B1 = Females who are not emotional
- B2 = Males who are emotional
- C = Males who are not emotional

The diagram shows that stereotypes do not reflect real behavioural differences. This is important to remember.

**Activity 1.7:                      Sex-Role Stereotypes**  
**What are Male/Female Stereotypes?**

Objectives:

1. To increase awareness of male/female stereotypes.
2. To initiate discussion about some of the consequences of stereotyping.

Method:

1. Divide the group into small single-sex groups and give them two sheets of flipchart paper and some pens.
2. Explain that 'We are going to look at what we mean by sex stereotypes'. Ask each group to brainstorm all the characteristics of the opposite sex which they believe, or which they have heard commonly expressed, e.g., women are *talkative, patient*. They should write at the top of the first sheet 'women/men are...'.  
3. Ask them to repeat the list for their own sex. They should head the sheet 'men/women are...', e.g., men are *aggressive, do not show feelings*.
4. The small groups take five minutes to share initial reactions to these lists.
5. Put up the sheets on the wall and ask each group to present their ideas for five minutes.
6. Ask 'If these are some of the images of men and women that are commonly believed in our society, what are the consequences for men and women?, e.g., if the male image is aggressive and the female image passive, what can happen?' Each small group lists up as many consequences as it can.
7. Put up the sheets on the wall and allow the participants time to read them.
8. With the whole class, lead a discussion on stereotypes and their consequences. (Include the points found in the Facilitator's Notes.)

(Source of the activity: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.)

## *Effects of Sex-Role Stereotypes on Individuals*

Sex-role stereotypes can have both positive and negative effects on females and males in society. If the stereotype describing a sex group is negative, it could have negative effects on some members of that group and vice-versa. The following are the main effects of sex-role stereotypes on individuals:

### **1. Conformity**

Many people tend to conform to the stereotypes in two main ways:

- a) Impression management
- b) Self-fulfilling prophecy

#### a) Impression Management

In order to be accepted by society, women and men may start behaving in the way stereotypes portray their respective sex. Hence girls may tend to be shy, submissive, quiet, etc. They may conform to very negative stereotypes, e.g., girls are not good at mathematics and science. Studies done in the United States show that some girls deliberately perform less well than their boy friends in the 'hard' or 'masculine' subjects so as not to embarrass them. Boys on the other hand will behave in the opposite way, by trying to be good at mathematics and science, because society expects them to be good. They may also try to be aggressive and assertive just to impress others that they are 'real men'.

People who conform to stereotypes through Impression Management do not necessarily believe in the stereotype. They merely conform to the stereotypes in order to impress other people.

#### b) Self-fulfilling Prophecy

The effect of sex-role stereotypes is much more deeply rooted when people conform through what is known as 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. In this type of conformity, people tend to believe in the stereotype (i.e., they regard the stereotype as the best way to behave as females or males). If they are male, they believe that men ought to be aggressive. If females are viewed as 'not good at mathematics and science', they may set a negative goal for themselves in order not to achieve in these subjects. They may stop working hard in these subjects because they believe that they cannot do it. If males on the other hand are viewed as 'good at mathematics and science', they will set a positive goal to fulfil the stereotype. They will work hard in order to achieve good results in these subjects. This is done unconsciously and girls and boys do not realize that they are fulfilling a stereotype.

Through the different mechanisms of conformity, there tend to be a lot of women and men in society who behave in stereotyped ways.

The trainer must sensitize students to the existence of stereotypes in every society, and warn them about the dangers that may exist when people conform to

negative stereotypes, e.g., females may perform poorly or fail, if they believe that mathematics and science are for boys.

## 2. Self-Image

Sex-role stereotypes can also affect a person's self-image. *Self-image* refers to the way in which individuals view themselves.

Self-image incorporates other concepts, e.g.:

- a) Self-esteem - how one thinks of oneself;
- b) Self-confidence - an estimate of one's abilities; and
- c) Locus of control - a sense of control over one's life.

All these are aspects of self-image. Research findings based on American society indicate that, generally, females tend to have a somewhat more negative self-image than do males. This is due to the fact that sex-role stereotypes contain many more negative characteristics of females than males.

### a) Self-esteem

Research further shows that, in early adolescence, levels of self-esteem by females and males are almost the same. However, by the time they reach late adolescence 'Self esteem appears to be correlated with sex-typed role performance for both sexes'. Females tend to think of themselves as less important than men. Females have significantly lower self-esteem than males.

### b) Self-confidence

Research findings in the U.S.A. found striking sex differences in the areas of self-confidence and task-expectancy. Males on average have been found to show more confidence in their ability to perform various tasks than females. Males are also said to have higher expectations of themselves and have more confidence than females.

Females on the other hand tend to under-estimate their ability to perform certain tasks. Men, generally, tend to attempt to do more difficult tasks while women shy away from them.

As far as 'self-image' is concerned, sex-role stereotypes tend to have negative effects on females and positive ones on males in a number of aspects.

## *Consequences of Sex-Role Stereotypes on Society*

At the societal level, sex-role stereotypes can have negative or positive effects WHEN USED AS STANDARDS BY WHICH TO EVALUATE OTHERS (Basow).

For example, stereotypes attributed to women have generally led to **prejudice and discrimination against women**. This is particularly the case in the world of employment. Women may be considered to be less reliable as workers because of their child-rearing functions. Men on the other hand may be regarded as more reliable employees because they are deemed not to be affected by such functions.

### ***The Transmittal of Sex-Role Stereotypes***

The main way in which sex-role stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to another is through the **socialization process**. According to Susan Basow, the socialization process has what are known as:

1. Socialization agents, e.g.:
  - a) Parents
  - b) Teachers
  - c) Peers
2. Socialization forces, e.g.:
  - d) School
  - e) The media
  - f) Language
  - g) Play
  - h) Art and music
  - i) Religion, etc.

Among the socializing agents and forces, the most relevant for our purposes are parents, teachers and the school.

#### Parents

Parents begin to transmit sex-role stereotypes as soon as a child is born. Girls and boys are treated differently, e.g., they are dressed differently, given different toys (boys are given toy cars, airplanes, etc., while girls are given dolls, toy pots, plates and cups). The toys given to girls indicate their role as home-makers rather than workers.

#### Teachers

Teachers reinforce the sex-role stereotypes learnt at home. Teachers, too, have a tendency to treat boys and girls differently through role assignments, rewards and punishment for academic work. Teachers, for example, may tend to reprimand boys more severely than girls for doing badly in such subjects as mathematics and science, because they are 'expected' to do better than girls in these subjects.

#### School

The school transmits a lot of stereotypes about females and males. In some countries, for example, certain subjects are taught only to boys or girls, e.g., boys are taught technical drawing, wood and metal work, etc., while girls are taught domestic science or home economics, secretarial skills, etc. Schools also offer different games to girls and boys, e.g., girls play netball, while boys play soccer. Most games played by boys tend to be more competitive than those for girls.

**Activity 1.8: Impact/Consequences/Transmittal of Sex-Role Stereotypes**

1. Divide yourselves into groups.
2. Study Table 1.1 below on *Persons Convicted by Type of Crime and Sex*, and answer the following questions:
  - a) What do you think are the contributory factors for the different levels of crime committed by women and men? Could sex-role stereotyping be one of the factors?
  - b) Discuss the likely impact/consequences of sex-role stereotypes on the progress of female and male pupils in schools.
  - c) Discuss the impact of sex-role stereotyping on guidance and counselling services in schools.
  - d) How are sex-role stereotypes transmitted by teachers and schools?
3. Write your answers on the flipcharts.
4. Discuss your answers in class.

**Table 1.1  
Persons Convicted by Type of Crime and Sex, 1991-1994**

Type of Crime	1991		1992		1993		1994	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Escape from Law custody	-	431	14	410	-	289	2	305
Rape	-	72	-	101	-	24	-	65
Manslaughter	6	92	5	117	1	127	7	176
Murder	3	709	-	572	-	-	-	2
Theft of Motor Vehicles	-	104	-	126	-	34	-	146
Agg. Robberies	-	496	-	522	-	129	-	500
Burglary	22	2160	38	2129	3	977	3	1063
House-Breaking	16	1287	23	1366	7	541	74	3684
Arson	2	222	6	244	1	91	4	131
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>5573</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>5567</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2221</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>6072</b>

*Source: Force Headquarters, Crime Annual Returns, Zambia*

## Summary

In this Unit, we clearly differentiate between sex and gender. Sex is biologically determined, while gender is socially and culturally constructed and transmitted during the process of socialization. Our sex roles and gender roles are likewise different. While our sex roles are imposed on us by nature (through the basic physiological and anatomical differences between women and men), our gender roles are usually defined by society (e.g., there are behaviour/roles which are deemed as either *masculine* or *feminine* by society).

This leads to sex-role stereotyping which may have positive or negative effects on individuals. It may lead individuals to conform to the stereotypes. It may also have significant effects on an individual's self-image, which comprises his self-esteem, self-confidence and locus of control.

The biggest social agents and forces in the transmittal of sex-role stereotypes are the parents, the teachers and the schools.

**TRANSITION:** In Unit 2, we will talk about the gender gaps or the gender differences which exist between women and men in society, often to the disadvantage of women. The role of the school in perpetuating this gender gap will be discussed in Unit 3.

# Readings

## Reading 1.1

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

#### Gender

Social differences between men and women are:

- learned
- changeable over time
- have wide variations within and between cultures

Socio-economic variable to analyze:

- roles
- responsibilities
- constraints
- opportunities
- needs of men and women

#### Sex

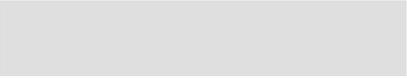
Biologically determined differences between men and women that are universal

# Handout

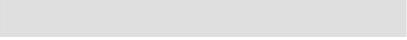
## Handout 1.1 Statements About Men and Women

1. Women give birth to babies, men do not. (S)
2. Little girls are gentle, boys are tough. (G)
3. In one case, when a child brought up as a girl learned that he was actually a boy, his school marks improved dramatically. (G)
4. Amongst Indian agricultural workers, women are paid 40-60 per cent of the male wage. (G)
5. Women can breast-feed babies, men can bottle-feed babies. (S)
6. Most building-site workers in Britain are men. (G)
7. In Ancient Egypt, men stayed at home and did weaving. Women handled family business. Women inherited property and men did not. (G)
8. Men's voices break at puberty, women's do not. (S)
9. In one study of 224 cultures, there were 5 in which men did all the cooking, and 36 in which women did all the housebuilding. (G)
10. According to UN statistics, women do 67 per cent of the world's work, yet their earnings amount to only 10 per cent of the world's income. (G)

*Source: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual. Oxfam UK and Ireland. 1994.*



## References



Susan Basow: Sex-Role Stereotypes: Alternates & Change.

Anne Oakley: Sex, Gender & Society.

G. Archer & B: Lloyd. Exploring Sex Differences.

## Gender Differentiation in Society

### *RATIONALE*

---

**T**he purpose of this Unit is to introduce you to the differences that exist between females and males in the world in relation to:

- work/employment
- access to the world's resources
- human rights
- culture and religion
- politics
- health, etc.

### *LEARNING OUTCOMES*

---

**B**y the end of the unit, you should be able to realize that:

- women tend to constitute an under-privileged class throughout the world;
- women and men tend to play different roles in various societies;
- economic development has tended to make the lives of the majority of women in the Third World more difficult;
- the world resources and property ownership are concentrated in the hands of men; and
- in most of the world, women's human rights are violated in the name of culture, religion, etc.

## ***CONTENT***

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**T**his unit includes the following:

### **Topic 1. GENDER GAPS: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN VARIOUS SPHERES OF LIFE**

Nearly all societies in the North, South, East and West, share in common the problem of female subordination. This is due to patriarchal structures and attitudes which prevail in all these regions. The problems women face in these areas vary, but women all over the world constitute a disadvantaged class. The United Nations has recognized the problem and, since 1975, has organized world conferences to tackle the many problems women face.

Available data in 1996 showed wide gaps in the situation of women and men globally:

**Table 2.1  
GENDER GAPS**

	<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>MEN</b>
Illiteracy	64%	36%
Labour force participation in developing world non-agricultural jobs	29%	71%
Politics: women and men in parliament (1991)	11%	89%

	WOMEN	MEN
<b>Health: Adults living with HIV/AIDS (in 000) in:</b>		
Sub-Saharan Africa	5447	4952
South and East Asia	1374	2748
Latin America	197	791
Caribbean	133	198
Western Europe	105	525
S.E. Mediterranean	10	50
Eastern Europe	2	27
Oceania	3	21
*MATERNAL MORTALITY about 500,000 deaths per year.		

The data on HIV/AIDS show that, in most parts of the world, the number of people living with the HIV/AIDS virus was higher among men. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, the number is higher among women. This is partly due to negative socio-cultural practices such as polygamy, widow inheritance and the sexual cleansing of widows. The modern form of polygamy for most married African men is the practice of acquiring concubines or ‘girl friends.’

Available data also show that illiteracy rates are higher in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else. Many factors, such as the economic crisis, affect various governments' education budgets. Parental attitudes towards the education of girls, and long distances to go to school, tend to affect the education of girls negatively.

### ***Activity 2.1: Gender Gaps***

1. Discuss the major areas of gender differences in your country with particular reference to:
  - a) access to resources;
  - b) reproduction; and
  - c) production: formal and informal.
2. With reference to 1.b above, do role playing on reproductive work, e.g.:
  - a) division of labour and functions between men and women in the home;
  - b) division of labour in productive activities like agriculture.

### *Access to Resources*

Gender inequality is evident in the distribution of resources in the world. The often quoted statistics still hold true:

- Women perform two thirds of the world's work.
- Women earn one tenth of the world's income.
- Women are two thirds of the world's illiterates.
- Women own less than one hundredth of the world's property.

### *Work: Production and Reproduction*

#### Reproduction

Both women and men have roles in the spheres of production (i.e., goods and services), and in public life. However, the roles associated with the reproduction of society fall almost entirely on women's shoulders. The term *reproduction* refers to biological as well as social reproduction, which encompasses child-bearing and early nurturing of infants, which only women are physiologically capable of performing (Momsen, 1995, p.28).

By social reproduction is meant the care and maintenance of the household. This involves a wide-range of tasks related to house work, food preparation and care for the sick, which are very time-consuming. In most societies, women are also expected to ensure the reproduction of the labour force, by assuming responsibility for the health, education and socialization of the children. Social reproduction also includes other tasks such as fuel and water collection, washing clothes, processing, preparing and cooking food. Throughout the world, these jobs are done mostly by women. One of the results of this is that, all over the world, women have longer working days than men. Refer to Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2**

#### **SRI LANKA: GENDER ROLES IN HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITY**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage (%) of total hours spent on each activity</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Food Preparation	8	92
Winnowing and parboiling rice	0	100
Preserving food for the hungry season	20	80
Storing grain at harvest time	70	30
Production of fruits, tubers, greens		

and vegetables for home consumption	20	80
Fetching water	2	98
Collecting firewood	35	65
Upkeep of the house and yard	5	95
Bringing up children	10	90
Bathing children	20	80
Attending to the sick in the family	15	85
(Source: J.H. Momsen, 1995, p.38.)		

For all its importance, reproductive work is under-valued. Its lack of value is expressed by the failure to recognize that it is real work. Women who labour in the home commonly say, 'Oh! I don't work,' because their work is not recognized and remunerated.

### ***Activity 2.2: The 24-Hour Day***

#### Objectives:

1. To identify the daily tasks of men and women in low-income households in different regions of the world.
2. To raise awareness of men and women's workloads.

#### Method:

1. Ask the participants to form small groups according to their country of origin, or areas/countries in which they have lived or worked. Ask each group to choose one low-income social group of which they have personal knowledge - such as fisher people, landless labourers, or an urban *shanty-town* community.
2. Ask the groups to imagine a day in the lives of a wife and husband from each social group in a particular season, to be decided by the group.
3. Using the 24-hour day chart as a model, as in Handout 2.1 on page 60, ask the groups to list the tasks performed by women and men in a household over 24 hours. Write the list on the flipchart.
4. Put the flipcharts up on the wall, and ask participants to walk around and look at each of them.
5. Help participants to draw out common points from the charts on the wall in class.
6. Give out Handout 2.2 on page 62, Mr. Moyo Goes to the Doctor, and Handout 2.3 on page 63, The Lie of the Land. Ask for comments.

(Source of the activity: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.)

## Production

### a) Informal Sector: Agriculture

Women tend to have a triple burden of work. This is particularly the case in rural areas of Third World countries, where they are expected to carry out the social reproduction of the household, as well as provide unpaid labour on the family farm.

In developing countries, 70-90 per cent of women live and work in rural areas. In Africa, women produce 60 to 80 per cent of the food for home consumption. Men tend to produce for the market. In Asia, women make up to 50 per cent of agricultural workers, while in Latin America and the Middle East they make up to 40 per cent of the agricultural workforce.

Available data indicate that the time spent on farm work by women tends to exceed that of men in many parts of rural Africa. In Central Africa (i.e., Chad and the Central African Republic), women work 23-38 per cent longer than men. In Congo, women devote about 200 days per year to agriculture compared to 30 days by men. In Gambia, women on average devote 20 hours per week in work on the land compared to about 9 hours by men (Jeanne Bisilliat).

The indication is that women and men are involved in agricultural activities in varying degrees throughout the year. Men seem to be more heavily involved in the initial land preparation activities. Thereafter their involvement decreases considerably. Refer to Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3**  
**PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORK TIME IN HOURS**

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Land preparation, clearing, cutting down trees, etc.	95	5
Ploughing	70	30
Sowing, seeding, planting, weeding	30	70
Harvesting	40	60
Bringing in the harvest	20	80
Stock piling/storing the harvest, building granaries, etc.	20	80
Taking food products to markets and selling them	40	60
Pruning trees	90	10
Getting water and fuel	10	90
Taking care of domestic animals, stables, etc.	50	50
Hunting	90	10
Feeding and caring for the children, the sick and the elderly	5	95

(Source: J. Bisilliat & Fieloux)

b) Formal Employment

In many countries, the percentage of women in non-agricultural jobs tends to be smaller than that of men. In 1995 the proportion of such jobs done by women was 35.3 per cent in Latin America, 24.3 per cent in Africa south of the Sahara, 27.9 per cent in Asia, 11.7 per cent in the Arab countries. (Momsen, 1995.)

Women tend to be marginalized in the formal employment sector. Several dimensions of female marginalization have been identified:

- Women are prevented from entering certain types of employment, usually on the grounds of physical weakness, moral danger, or lack of facilities for women

workers.

- Women prevail in low status and lowly paid jobs.
- These jobs tend to be characterized by poor working conditions, lack of fringe benefits and job security.
- In the public sphere at all levels, with a few notable exceptions, it is men who hold the high status positions and have decision-making powers. Women tend to fill the roles of support persons and organizers.

Cultural, ideological and historical factors account for female marginalization in the formal sector.

### ***Activity 2.3: Finding the Balance***

#### Objectives:

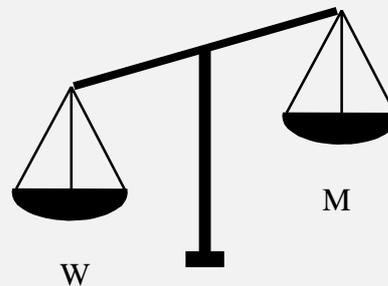
1. To share experiences of women's and men's roles in various kinds of work and decision-making.
2. To identify obstacles women face to full participation in decision-making, particularly in development programmes.
3. To think about strategies for creating an equal gender balance in decision-making and workloads.

Method:

Part 1

1. Distribute Handout 2.4, Grid: Gender Balance in Decision-Making and Workloads, on page 64. Those who work in the same area can work together in a group.
2. Explain that the participants should reflect on the roles women and men play in a developing country with which they are familiar, and consider particularly gender differences in workloads and participation in decision-making.
3. Ask participants to fill in the grid with reference to the country or area they know, using a diagram of a balance to indicate whether the degree of involvement is weighted in favour of women, or men, or equally balanced. Refer to the diagrams below.

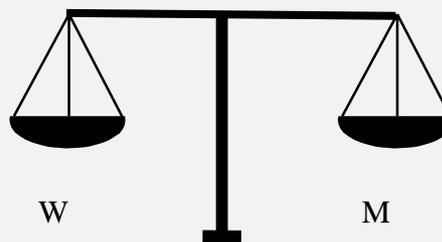
This indicates women are more heavily involved:



This indicates men are more heavily involved



This indicates a balance in involvement:



## Part 2

1. Ask the participants to consider the list of possible obstructions women may face to their full participation in community decisions and development programmes.
2. Ask them to rank these factors in order of priority according to the situation and social group with which they work.
3. In the whole group, ask participants to reflect on the issues raised in the ranking activity. Make notes on the flipchart of common points which emerge.
4. Bearing in mind the obstructions identified, ask participants to refer to the categories highlighted in the *balance* grid. Ask the questions:
  - a) Are there any ways in which an equal balance can be created between workloads and participation in decision-making between women and men? What changes will have to take place?
  - b) Are these changes feasible in the social group you have been considering, and work with?

(Source of the Activity: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.)

### ***Activity 2.4: Gender Differences in Decision-Making***

1. Group yourselves according to your country of origin.
2. Discuss the situation of women and men in decision-making in your country. GIVE STATISTICS. Special reference should be made to the numbers of women and men in:
  - a) The Cabinet
  - b) Parliament
  - c) Senior positions in the civil service, e.g., Permanent Secretary or equivalent
  - d) Local government: Councillors
3. Write your answers on flipcharts in two columns, e.g.,

	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>
Cabinet Ministers	5	25
Members of Parliament	6	184
Permanent Secretaries	8	22
Councillors	25	275

4. Make a consolidated list in class, e.g.:

	<u>Cabinet Ministers</u>		<u>Members of Parliament</u>		<u>Permanent Secretaries</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Malawi	5	25	6	130		
Zambia	1	22	14	136		

5. Discuss in class the reasons for the differences in the situation of women and men in politics.

### ***Health***

In all societies, women tend to encounter health problems that are not experienced by men, by virtue of women's biological productive functions. This is particularly the case in the area of maternal health. Despite positive advances in medicine, many women die from problems related to child birth. Maternal mortality is very high in many parts of the world today, especially in South-East Asia. On average, about 500,000 women die every year from maternal problems. Refer to Figures 2.1 and 2.2 on the following page.

#### Figure 2.1

Maternal mortality is much higher in developing regions, especially where women give birth with no trained attendant.

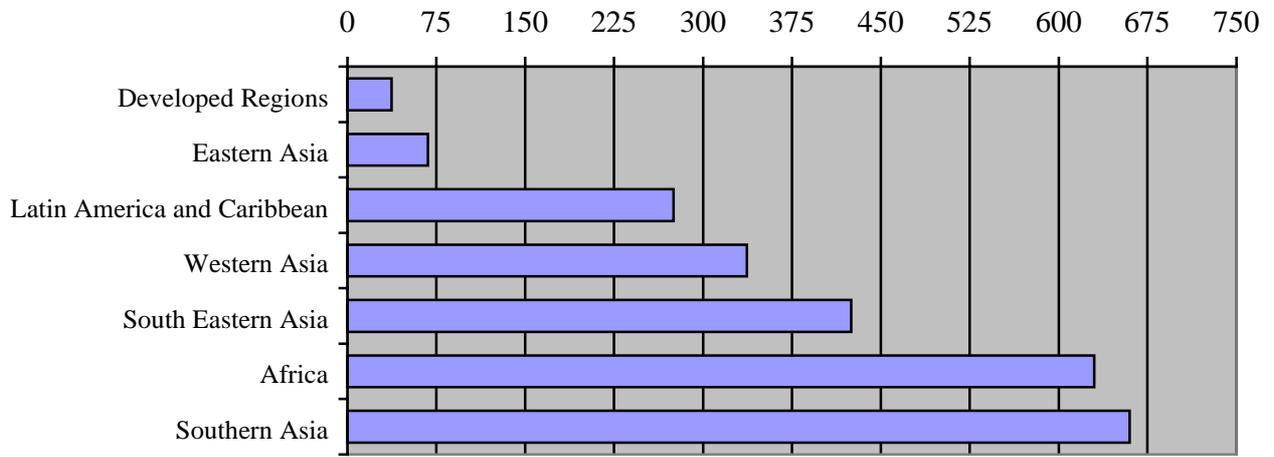
#### Figure 2.2

Higher mortality rates among girls between two and five years old have been found in a significant number of countries. In some of these countries (e.g. India), the population of women is lower than that of men.

**Figures 2.1 and 2.2\***

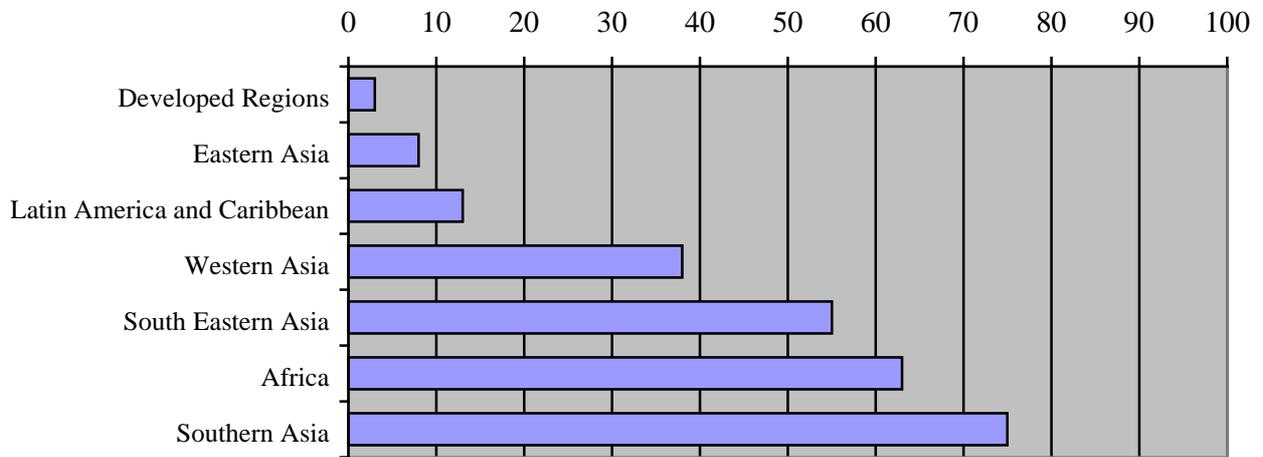
**MATERNAL MORTALITY FIGURES**

**Fig.1 - Estimated Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 Live Births, about 1983 (%)**



(Note: Rates are based on estimated totals in each region, not country averages)

**Fig.2 - Estimated Births without Trained Attendant, about 1985 (%)**



Source: *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics 1970-1990*. United Nations, New York, 1991.

## *Politics*

In the political sphere, women tend to be under-represented in decision-making bodies such as the Parliament and the Cabinet. In many countries, however, women are beginning to participate in a reasonable number of these bodies. This is particularly the case in the Seychelles and the Nordic countries, such as Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland. Refer to Table 2.4 below.

**Table 2.4**

### **WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Percentage of Women In Parliament</u>
Seychelles -----	45.8
Finland -----	39.0
Norway-----	35.0
Sweden-----	33.5
Denmark-----	33.0
Iceland-----	23.8
China-----	21.0
New Zealand-----	16.5
Mozambique -----	15.7
Canada-----	13.2
Uganda-----	12.6
Zimbabwe-----	12.0
United Republic of Tanzania-----	11.2
U.S.A. -----	10.8
Angola-----	9.5
United Kingdom-----	9.2
Russian Federation-----	8.7
Zambia-----	6.7
Nigeria-----	2.8
Yemen -----	0.7
Djibouti-----	0.7
United Arab Emirates-----	0.0
Kiribati-----	0.0

(Source: I.P.U. Women In Parliament as at June 30th, 1993, MAP.)

## ***Human Rights***

Despite the International Human Rights Law which guarantees all people equal rights, irrespective of sex, race, caste, etc., in many societies women are denied equal rights with men to land, property, mobility, education, employment opportunities, shelter and food. They are even denied the right to manage, control and care for the health of their own bodies and their reproductive functions. Despite the fact that the International Human Rights Law prohibits cultural practices which are damaging to women, in many cultures, women's bodies are ritually maimed and mutilated. They are routinely beaten, and even murdered, in the name of culture and tradition.

### ***Activity 2.5: Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

1. Go through Reading 2.1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on pages 41 to 58.
2. Discuss the different conventions held as part of the UN action for the advancement of women.

### ***Activity 2.6: Health and Human Rights***

#### **Part 1**

1. Divide yourselves into groups according to your country of origin, and discuss the following questions:
  - a) Discuss the situation of women in your country with regard to health. Special reference should be made to the following areas:
    - maternal mortality
    - teenage pregnancies
    - HIV/AIDS and female/male teenagers
    - women/men and HIV/AIDS
  - b) What are the reasons for the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among females/males (whichever is applicable) in your society?
  - c) In what way is health a human right?
2. Present your answers to the class.
3. Brainstorm in class the following questions:

What should governments do to improve female-related health problems like maternal mortality, etc.

## Part 2

1. Divide yourselves into groups according to your countries of origin.
2. Discuss the major areas of concern vis-a-vis the violation of the human rights of women in your society. Wherever applicable, these should include wife beating, rape, property grabbing, genital mutilation, etc.
3. Write your answers on the flipchart. Include possible solutions to the major areas of concern.
4. Present and discuss your answers in class.

### **Note:**

- a) If only one country is involved, this question should be discussed by the whole class using the brainstorming method.
- b) The facilitator will write the major areas of concern on the flipchart, and
- c) Discuss with the class some solutions to these problem areas.

## Summary

In the world today, there exist gender gaps/gender differences between women and men in various aspects of life, often to the disadvantage of women. This is especially so in Third World countries where women usually constitute the disadvantaged class.

The gaps persist in all aspects of life such as workloads, employment opportunities and remuneration, access to the world's resources, human rights, culture and religion, politics, health, living conditions, etc.

Awareness of these differences will encourage and help us find ways to lessen and eventually close this inequitable gap between women and men in our society.

### ***TRANSITION:***

One of the main ways to close this gap is through appropriate education/training which is focused on considerations of gender and on the upgrading of the image of women. In targeting this, training priority must be given to schools, which are vital centres for building a new equal gender concept. The next unit will focus on this topic - gender in the school.

# Milestones in UN Action for the Advancement of Women

## Readings

### Reading 2.1

#### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Λ **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**  
*(principles of equality and non-discrimination)*
- Λ **International Women's Year (1975)**
- Λ **World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 1975** *(first global conference ever held on women)*
- Λ **The UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985)**
- Λ **The Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979**
- Λ **World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women, Programme of Action for the second half of the UN Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 1980**
- Λ **World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, Nairobi, 1985**
- Λ **The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, 1995**

# **Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women**

## **Minimum Targets for the Year 2000**

- Λ Enforcement of laws guaranteeing the implementation of women's equality
- Λ Increase in the life expectancy of women to at least 65 years in all countries
- Λ Reduction of maternal mortality
- Λ Elimination of women's illiteracy
- Λ Expansion of employment opportunities

# **The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985)**

## **Concrete results:**

- Λ Gender equality firmly placed on the global agenda
- Λ Critical role of women in the development process acknowledged
- Λ Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979
- Λ Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies adopted by 157 countries
- Λ International women's movement expanded its network
- Λ Creation of two United Nations bodies devoted exclusively to women:
  - UNIFEM (the United Nations Fund for Women)
  - INSTRAW (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women)

## **The United Nations Conference On Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1995**

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states that:

*‘Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.’*



## **The World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 1993**

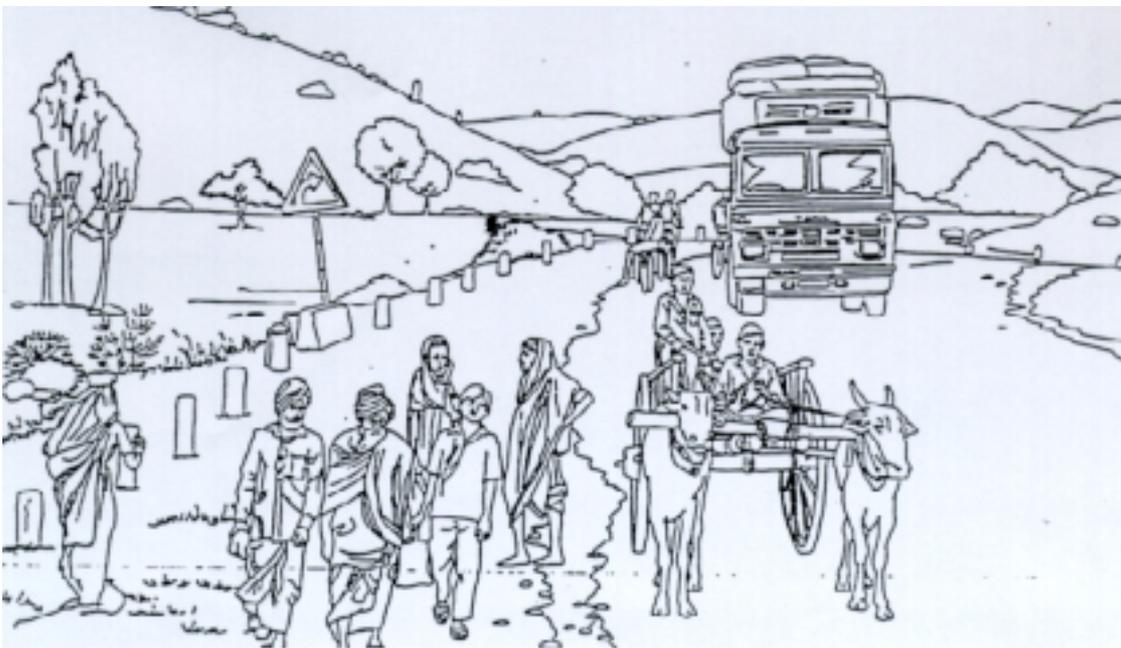
### **The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action:**

- Λ States that the human rights of women and of girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights
- Λ Expresses concern for the various forms of discrimination and violence to which women continue to be exposed all over the world
- Λ Urges the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, both hidden and overt

# The World Summit for Social Development, Denmark, March 1995

**This major United Nations event addressed gender dimensions in:**

- Λ the enhancement of social integration, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalized groups
- Λ the alleviation and reduction of poverty
- Λ the expansion of productive employment



# The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995

## Aims

- to draw up a Platform for Action to ensure the completion of the unfinished work in implementing the 1985 Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies
- to address the question of how women can be empowered by effective participation in decision-making on all issues which affect society

## Organization

- The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was the preparatory body for the Conference
- The United Nations Secretary-General requested Member States to set up national committees to initiate, organize and co-ordinate preparatory activities
- Regional preparatory conferences were organized. The outcomes were used in the preparation of the Draft Platform of Action for the Beijing Conference

## **Significant International Events:**

### ***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)***

The faith expressed in the Charter of the United Nations is reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting forth the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all women and men throughout the world are entitled, without any discrimination. Article 2, and articles 22 to 27, are particularly related to women's rights.

Article 2 sets out the basic principles of equality and non-discrimination as regards the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and forbids:

*'distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political and other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth and other status.'*

The economic, social and cultural rights recognized in articles 22 to 27 include the right to social security, the right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to rest and leisure, the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, the right to education, and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was a remarkable achievement, and a major step forward. The document was backed by the body of opinion of the United Nations as a whole, and millions of people – men, women and children – all over the world can turn to it for help, guidance and inspiration.

### ***International Women's Year (1975) and the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985)***

In 1972 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 1975 as International Women's Year, and decided to devote the year to intensified action

*'... to promote equality between women and men; to ensure the full integration of women in the total development efforts...' and '... to recognize the importance of women's increasing contribution to the strengthening of world peace'.*

In 1975, the World Conference of the International Women's Year was convened in Mexico City, the first global conference ever held on women, which was attended by 133 States and more than 1,000 delegates.

The 1975 Conference produced the first World Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women. A blueprint for action by Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it identified key areas for national action: international co-operation and peace; political participation; education and training; employment; health and nutrition; the family; population; housing; research; and the mass media. It highlighted the importance of employment and related economic roles to ensure women's integration into the labour force.

Acknowledging the growing global importance of women's issues, the United Nations General Assembly then proclaimed 1976-1985 as the 'United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace'. Described as the 'start of an international effort to right the wrongs of history', the combination of the Year and the Decade succeeded in putting women's concerns - in particular gender equality, full integration in the development process and the promotion of peace - firmly on the women's agenda.

### ***Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)***

A further milestone on the road of women's equality was the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, by the United Nations General Assembly, on 18 December 1979. Sometimes described as a women's Bill of Rights, the Convention requires governments to take all 'appropriate measures ... to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom on a basis of equality with men'. Article 11 (1) (d) of the Convention:

*'States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of women and men, the same rights, in particular ... the right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work'.*

The comprehensive Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women calls for:

- equal rights for women in all fields including political, social, economic, cultural and civil, regardless of their marital status;
- national legislation to ban discrimination;
- temporary special measures to enhance the participation of women in political and public life;
- equal access to education and the same choice of curricula;
- non-discrimination in employment and pay;
- the guarantee of job security in the event of marriage and maternity;
- equal responsibilities of men and women in the context of family life;
- special services to enable women to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life.

This Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981, and has now been ratified by over 100 nations, thereby legally binding them to implement its provisions.

In 1980, the mid-decade Conference was convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, to assess the progress made since the first World Conference, and to outline actions to be taken during the second half of the decade. Three themes were added to the agenda: education, employment and health, and the Programme of Action was adopted.

The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 1985, marked the end of the Decade. At the conclusion of the Conference, which drew some 16,000 delegates and non-governmental organization representatives from all over the world, all participating Governments adopted by consensus the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the Year 2000, a blueprint for women's future in all realms of life. It identified specific areas for action by governments and the international community, to improve the status of women over the next 15 years until the year 2000.

### ***The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women***

The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Nairobi, Kenya, 15-26 July 1985, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its Resolution 40/108, on 13 December 1985.

They call for:

*Equality*

- the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- equal rights under the law;
- equal rights to marriage and divorce;
- the establishment, in every country, of a high-level governmental body to monitor and implement progress towards equality.

*Women's autonomy and power*

- the right of all women - irrespective of marital status - to buy, sell, own and administer property and other resources independently;
- the protection of women's rights to land, credit, training, investment and income as an integral part of all agrarian reform and agricultural development;
- the equal involvement of women, at every stage and level of development;
- the promotion of women to positions of power at every level within all political and legislative bodies in order to achieve parity with men;
- measures to promote equal distribution of productive resources and reduce mass poverty among women, particularly in times of economic recession.

*Recognition of women's unpaid work*

- recognition of the extent and value of women's unpaid work, inside and outside the home;
- inclusion of women's paid and unpaid work in national accounts and economic statistics;
- the sharing of domestic responsibilities;
- the development of services, to reduce women's child-care and domestic workload, including introduction of incentives to encourage employers to provide child-care facilities for working mothers;
- the establishment of flexible working hours to encourage the sharing of child-care and domestic work between parents.

*Advances in women's paid work*

- equal employment opportunities;
- equal pay for work of equal value;
- recognition of the extent and value of women's work in the informal sector;
- measures to encourage women to work in male-dominated occupations and vice-versa, in order to desegregate the workplace;

*Briefing Kit: Gender Issues in the World of Work. ILO. Geneva; 1995.*

- preferential treatment in hiring of women so long as they are a disproportionate share of the unemployed;
- adequate social security and unemployment benefits.

*Health services and family planning*

- equal access to health services;
- adequate health facilities for mothers and children;
- every woman's right to decide on the number and spacing of her children, and access to family planning for every woman;
- discouragement of child-bearing at too early an age.

*Better educational opportunities*

- equal access to education and training;
- efforts to have more girls study subjects usually selected by boys, and vice versa, in order to desegregate curricula;
- efforts to ensure that girls do not drop out of school;
- the provision of adult education for women;
- the involvement of women in promoting peace and disarmament.

*Minimum targets for the year 2000*

- enforcement of laws guaranteeing implementation of women's equality;
- an increase in the life expectancy of women to at least 65 years in all countries;
- the reduction of maternal mortality;
- the elimination of women's illiteracy;
- the expansion of employment opportunities.

The objectives and policy measures set out in the Strategies match many of the ILO's programmes and resolutions. With regard to employment related issues, the Strategies recognize that steps must be taken to ensure, in practice, the realization of the right to work; and women's equal access to the whole range of economic activities. They emphasize the need to:

- ensure that national constitutions and legislation provide for full equality between women and men with regard to their rights and obligations in the field of work, as well as in social, political and family life;
- take special measures to ratify, and implement in national legislation, the relevant ILO Convention and Recommendations concerning the rights of women to equal employment opportunities, equal pay for work of equal value, equal working conditions, job security and maternity protection;

*Briefing Kit: Gender Issues in the World of Work. ILO. Geneva; 1995.*

- extend ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women;
- conceive, plan, execute and monitor programmes for eliminating unemployment and promoting job security;
- give greater attention, within the overall framework of policies on human resources development, to vocational and management training, as well as to delivery systems for education and training; this entails identification of discriminatory practices in education and training;
- provide an adequate response to the impact of technology on labour force participation, and the status of women in the workplace, notably by identifying growth sectors offering employment potential for women, diversifying women's occupations including at higher levels of skill, responsibility and remuneration, and increasing women's access to self-employment and to co-operatives; and
- strengthen measures in relation to safety and health in the workplace, working time, work organization, maternity protection, child-care facilities, population and family welfare programmes, and harmonization of work and family responsibilities (including recognition of the equal rights of marriage partners and the value of housework).

The Strategies advocate - the establishment of appropriate governmental machinery, the collection of data, and the refinement of research methodologies. They call for timely and reliable statistics on the socio-economic status, as well as the economic and other activities of women, including domestic activities and informal sector activities, that can be used as a basis for planning and promoting equal opportunities for women.

They recognize that women must be able to exercise effectively their right to control fertility; this constitutes an important basis for the enjoyment of other rights, including employment.

The Strategies also propose a basic change in the overall concept of development. They recognize that there are direct links between development, environment and the socio-economic status of women, and that by giving insufficient attention to women's advancement, major obstacles to development remain unchallenged. They emphasize that the genuine integration of women in development requires, not only the inclusion of women in programmes and projects, but the readjustment of the priorities and modalities of development, in such a way as to take the felt needs of women into consideration. They stress that technical co-operation activities in favour of women should not be viewed in isolation, but as an integral part of the interventions to foster comprehensive socio-economic development.

They emphasize that women's manifold needs are inter-related, and require a multi-faceted response, that would improve their social, economic, educational and health status in a synchronized manner.

They point to the fact that the provision of literacy and of vocational, technical and managerial skills can be made more effective if it responds to the practical needs and lives of the beneficiaries. It should be accompanied by other measures such as the development of organizational and leadership skills, and the provision of credit and other necessary productive resources, support services, including child care, family planning and counselling, and flexible and relevant training, curricula and methodologies.

The Strategies point to the important role which can be played by organizations at the grass-roots level. Women's associations, co-operatives and trade unions can make a significant contribution to combating discrimination against women and enhancing their position in society. The Strategies emphasize that workers' organizations, particularly trade unions, are among the most effective channels for the social and economic advancement of women and men workers.

The Decade for Women had some far-reaching and concrete results:

- women's concerns - particularly gender equality, full integration in the development process and the promotion of peace - have been firmly put on the global agenda;
- the critical role of women in the development process was much more widely acknowledged as data on women in developing countries began to be collected;
- the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979, which is sometimes described as the women's Bill of Rights;
- the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 were adopted by 157 countries, committing them to more action in the area of women and development. (Among others, governments are also called upon to establish national machineries at the highest level of government, and this has been done in a large number of countries);
- the international women's movement expanded its network to include grassroots women's organizations, encouraging interaction and the sharing of experiences;
- the creation of two UN bodies devoted exclusively to women: UNIFEM ( the United Nations Development Fund for Women), which funds innovative development activities to benefit women, especially in rural areas of the developing world; and INSTRAW (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women), which supports the fuller participation of women in the economic, social and political spheres;
- the donor countries' and international organization action in the area of women and development in the years since the Women's Decade has been substantial. WID offices, or focal points within development co-operation departments, have been set up, and many have specific plans of action which contain strategies for integrating women into development programmes and projects. Some have even gone farther and are treating women as a priority area for development co-operation.

### ***The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)***

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. It states that:

*‘Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is, therefore, essential to achieve sustainable development.’*

The section, entitled ‘Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equal Development’, recalls the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, particularly with regard to women's participation in national ecosystem management and control of environmental degradation. It calls upon governments to take the necessary measures, to increase the proportion of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation for sustainable development. It urges the eradication of all obstacles - constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social and economic - to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and public life. In particular, it advocates the promotion of gender sensitization of both men and women, through formal and non-formal education and training.

### ***The World Conference on Human Rights (1993)***

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, in June 1993. It stated that the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, are priority objectives of the international community. It expressed concern for the various forms of discrimination and violence to which women continue to be exposed all over the world. It urged that the human rights of women should form an integral part of all UN system-wide and government and non-government activities, including the promotion of all human rights instruments relating to women.

The section entitled *Equal Status and Human Rights of Women* underlines the importance of the integration and full participation of women, as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process. It urges the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, both hidden and overt. In particular, it advocates the dissemination of information, to enable women to make more effective use of existing implementation procedures, in their pursuit of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and non-discrimination.

It urges governments and regional and international organizations to facilitate the access of women to decision-making posts, and their greater participation in the decision-making process.

### ***The International Conference on Population and Development (1994)***

The Cairo Conference brought together about 14,000 participants from 180 countries. The pre-Conference publicity over controversial issues generated unprecedented interest and media coverage, and brought the population debate into millions of homes. In addition, the Conference also served to raise world-wide awareness on the linkages between population and development. The mainstreaming of population into the broader concept of development, and emphasizing quality of life, are issues which were at the heart of the adopted Cairo Programme of Action. This was reinforced by the central theme that ran through the document, demonstrating that efforts to slow population growth, reduce poverty, achieve economic progress, improve environmental protection and reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns, are mutually linked and reinforcing.

Of particular importance is Chapter IV of the Action Programme on Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women, which is considered by many to be one of the strongest statements on women's empowerment ever to be included in a UN document. It emphasizes that the improvement of women's political, social, economic and health status is both an important end in itself, and an essential condition for achieving sustainable development. It acknowledges that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. It recommends, therefore, that particular attention should be given to eliminating the disparities in educational access and support that are detrimental to girls.

The issues of reproductive health and women's reproductive rights were the subject of considerable and intense discussions. In the final text, delegates agreed that abortion must be addressed as a major health concern, and that 'in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning'. Agreement on this paragraph facilitated the resolution of sections on reproductive health and rights, family planning and safe motherhood.

Key issues from the International Conference on Population and Development were included in the Draft Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference for Women.

### ***The World Summit for Social Development (1995)***

The World Summit for Social Development was held in Denmark in March 1995. This major UN event addressed three issues:

- the enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups;
- the alleviation and reduction of poverty; and
- the expansion of productive employment and the reduction of unemployment.

The Social Summit highlighted the gender dimension of these three inter-related issues, since the situation of women is at the core of the social problems being dealt with, and because women's experience and survival strategies constitute a valuable source of innovative solutions.

### ***The Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)***

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women '**Action for Equality, Development and Peace**', took place in Beijing, China. The Agenda was the following:

- to review and appraise the implementation of the 'Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000';
- to draw up a Platform of Action, concentrating on some of the key issues identified as representing fundamental obstacles to the advancement of the majority of women in the world;
- to report the main conclusions and recommendations of regional preparatory conferences;
- to determine the priorities to be followed in 1996-2001, for the implementation of the strategies within the United Nations System, in order to ensure the completion of the unfinished work in implementing the Forward-Looking Strategies.

The Conference covered a selected number of critical areas of women's concern, and spelt out the practical steps needed to bring about the necessary policy and societal changes to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace. Its objective was to 'create the impetus and prepare women to move forward, well equipped to meet the challenges and demands of the 21st century for scientific, technological, economic and political development'. The Conference also addressed the all important question of how women could be empowered by effective participation in decision-making on all issues which affect society.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) served as the preparatory body for the Conference. At the national level, committees were set up to organize and co-ordinate preparatory activities, including preparing national reports reviewing and appraising the changes that had taken place, and the concerns that remained in their respective countries. At the regional level, preparatory conferences were organized to provide an opportunity for stock-taking, and comprehensive regional discussion of the major issues concerning women. The outcome of these regional conferences fed into the preparation of the draft Platform of Action considered at Beijing.

## **Mainstreaming women in development**

- Λ Strengthening women's active involvement in development by linking women's capabilities and contributions with macro-economic issues
- Λ Explicit consideration of the actual and potential role of women in all sectors of the economy, and the impact of all policies, plans and programmes on women
- Λ Include women-specific activities and positive action programmes

# Handouts

## Handout 2.1

### GENDER ROLE AND NEEDS: THE 24-HOUR DAY CHART

#### Objectives

1. To identify the daily task of men and women in low-income households in different regions of the world.
2. To raise awareness of men's and women's workloads.

#### Method

1. Ask the participants to form small groups, according to their country of origin, or areas/countries in which they have lived or worked. Ask each group to choose one low-income social group of which they have personal knowledge - such as fisherpeople, landless labourers, or an urban 'shanty-town' community.  
(5 mins)
2. Ask the groups to imagine a day in the lives of a wife and husband from each social group in a particular season, to be decided by the group.
3. Using the 24-hour day chart as a model, as in handout 2.0, ask the groups to list the tasks performed by women and men in a household over 24 hours on flipchart paper.  
(30 mins)
4. Put the flipcharts up on the wall, and ask participants to walk around and look at each of them.  
(10 mins)
5. Help participants to draw out common points from the charts on the wall in a plenary discussion.  
(25 mins)
6. Give out Handouts 2.1 Mr Moyo, and 2.2 The Lie of the Land, and ask for comments.  
(10 mins)

#### Materials

Flipchart, pens, 24 hour chart, **Handouts 2.0, 2.1, and 2.2.**

### **Facilitator's Notes**

1. *The low-income groups chosen for this activity should be distinct from each other and provide contrasts. They should include both urban and rural examples. If there are participants from industrialized countries, ensure that one group selects one of these countries, to examine the common assumption that in the developed world, women's and men's workloads are equal.*
2. *Encourage the groups to include all activities, even those which might not be thought of as work, e.g. breast-feeding, knitting, community meetings.*
3. *Some men, for whom gender is a new idea, may be shocked or surprised to discover the amount of work that women do, especially when the women are said 'not to work'. Some may feel threatened or unwilling to believe it, and thus may distort the information on the workload between the sexes. For example, in one training course, one group chose nomadic people who keep slaves, and thus the women were said not to have much work, although the slaves were also women. In another training course, one group described the husband's role as being much fuller than had been experienced by one of the facilitators who came from that area. Following this activity with an activity from **Section C.6 Women in the World** can be helpful.*
4. *Despite the very considerable differences in the daily lives of the different groups, common points usually emerge:*

*Women and men do very different things during the day.*

*Women usually work longer hours.*

*Women have more varied tasks, sometimes doing more than one thing at once.*

*Work for the family is done by women.*

*Men's work is usually outside the home.*

*Men have more leisure time.*

*Women have less sleep.*

*Men are more involved in decision-making.*

*In some societies, the traditional roles of men and women were more balanced in terms of workload, but changes have decreased men's traditional activities and increased women's.*

5. *This activity can start the discussion on how to reduce women's workload and increase men's participation, or how to address any other imbalances.*
6. *This activity begins the analysis of gender roles, but deliberately ignores differences due to age, class, season, historical period, the effects of war, etc. It can be done to show up these differences, (e.g. comparing the work that boys and girls do, or older men and women), but be careful that you do not make it too complicated.*

*(Source: 24-hour Day exercise designed by C O N Moser (1993).*

*The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, © Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994*

## Handout 2.2

### A STORY: MR. MOYO GOES TO THE DOCTOR

‘What is your job?’, asked the doctor.

‘I am a farmer’, replied Mr. Moyo.

‘Have you any children?’, the doctor asked.

‘God has not been good to me. Of 15 born, only 9 are alive,’ Mr. Moyo answered.

‘Does your wife work?’

‘No, she stays at home’.

‘I see. How does she spend her day?’

‘Well, she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fire, cooks breakfast, and cleans the home. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. Once a week she walks to the grinding mill. After that she goes to the township with the two smallest children, where she sells tomatoes by the road side while she knits. She buys what she wants from the shops. Then she cooks the midday meal.’

‘You come home at midday?’

‘No, no, she brings the meal to me about three kilometres away.’

‘And after that?’

‘She stays in the field to do the weeding, and then goes to the vegetable garden to water.’

‘What do you do?’

‘I go and discuss business and drink with the men in the village.’

‘And after that?’

‘I go home for supper which my wife has prepared.’

‘Does she go to bed after supper?’

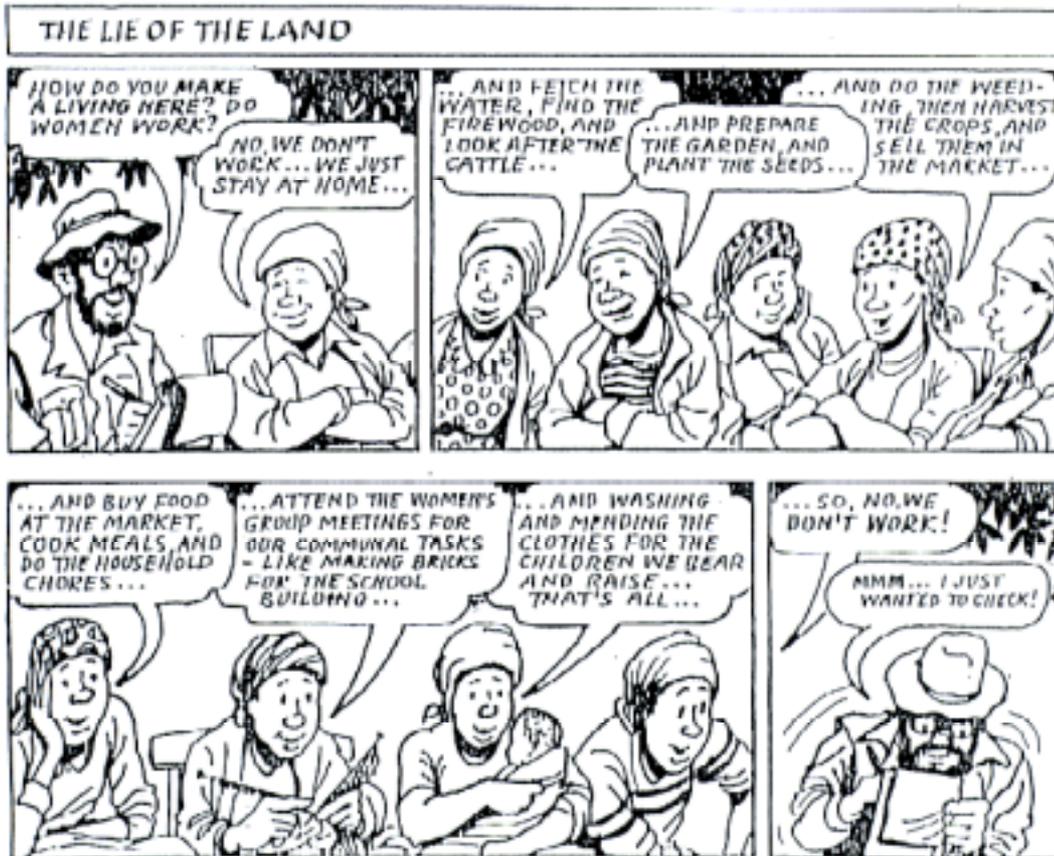
‘No, I do. She has things to do around the house until 9 or 10.’

‘But I thought you said your wife doesn’t work.’

‘Of course she doesn’t work. I told you she stays at home.’

*(Source: Presented by the Women and Development Sub-committee Ministry of Community Development and Community Affairs, Zimbabwe, to Women’s Regional Ecumenical Workshop, 26 June - 6 July 1989, Harare, Zimbabwe.)*

## Handout 2.3 THE LIE OF THE LAND



Handout 2.3  
THE LIE OF THE LAND

## Handout 2.4

### GRID: GENDER BALANCE IN DECISION-MAKING

Areas of Involvement	Comment	Women and Men Balance
Decision making		
<b>a. finance in the home</b>		
<b>b. education of children</b>		
<b>c. family planning</b>		
Contributions to:		
<b>a. health of children</b>		
<b>b. feeding of family</b>		
<b>c. production of food for family consumption</b>		
<b>d. production of food for cash payment</b>		
Community Discussions		
<b>a. agriculture</b>		
<b>b. water/sanitation</b>		
<b>c. school/education</b>		
<b>d. neighbourhood construction</b>		
Nationally		
<b>a. political representation</b>		
<b>b. political involvement</b>		
Employment outside the home		
<b>a. industry</b>		
<b>b. business</b>		
<b>c. medical/nursing</b>		
<b>d. law</b>		
<b>e. service industries</b>		

Source: The Oxfam Training Manual. Oxfam UK and Ireland. 1994.

## References

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L. Reiner: Bringing Women In: Women's Issues in International Development Programmes.

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**Gender in the School*****RATIONALE***

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**T**he purpose of this Unit is to sensitize you and the trainees to the problems which affect the education of girls. The Unit also tries to sensitize trainers/teachers to gender-sensitive methodologies and strategies, to enable them to tackle these problems.

***LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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**B**y the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- realize the magnitude of the problems affecting the education of girls;
- gain skills in identifying and utilizing strategies which help to increase educational opportunities for girls; and
- gain skills in the use of gender sensitive teaching methodologies which help to improve the access, retention, performance, progress and academic achievement of girls in schools.

***CONTENT***

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**T**his unit includes the following:

Topic 1. The Problem

Topic 2. Factors Affecting the Education of Girls

## **Topic 1.**

### **THE PROBLEM**

Despite an increase in the proportion of girls' enrolment, females still lag behind males in education in many countries of the Third World, particularly the African region. The literacy rates of women in many African countries are extremely low. The average illiteracy rate for African women in 1995 was estimated at 62 per cent, while that of men was 41 per cent. The situation varies from country to country, ranging from an illiteracy rate of over 80 per cent in Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan to only 10 per cent in Mauritius. (UNESCO/UNICEF: Educating Girls and Women in Africa. 1995, p. 25.)

In many Third World countries, the drop-out rates of girls tend to be high. The number of female students decreases at the higher secondary level and at the university level, because of their high drop-out rate. Available data show a gender gap in enrolment in favour of males at the tertiary level in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. (World Bank: Women in Higher Education. 1994, xi.)

Generally, the problem of female education is gigantic and poses a challenge to the task of achieving 'Education for All.' About 80 million girls have no access to primary education, 350 million women are illiterate, while 100 million children and adults do not complete their basic schooling. (UNESCO/UNICEF: Educating Girls and Women in Africa. 1995, p. 13.)

## **Topic 2.**

### **FACTORS AFFECTING THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS**

Many factors impede the education of girls. The following sub-topics discuss only a few of them.

#### **1. *Social, Cultural and Economic Factors***

Available data show that social and cultural factors impede girls' education in Third World countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, certain practices, such as initiation ceremonies, are sometimes considered more important than school attendance. This attitude is shared by both members of the community and the girls themselves. (UNESCO/UNICEF: Educating Girls and Women in Africa. 1995. p. 15.) Many other social-cultural factors pose obstacles which contribute to poor school attendance. These include household chores, early marriage, long distance to go to school, pregnancy, etc.

Poverty is another factor which negatively affects the education of women. Available data indicate that in some societies, parents still favour boys' education when there are limited resources for children's education.

### ***Activity 3.1: Determinants of Girl's Progress***

1. What factors negatively affect the education of girls in your country?
2. What factors negatively affect the education of boys in your country?
3. What measures should be taken to promote gender equity in education in your country?

## ***2. The School as a Gender-Socializing Force***

The culture of the school may appear to be *gender-neutral*. In fact, a high value is placed on actions, attitudes and behaviour that, in the wider society, are considered *masculine*. The school is a microcosm of the society in which it is located. The norms and values of the school, the school organization and hierarchy reflect those of the dominant culture.

Success at school is usually measured in terms of masculine behaviour and attributes, such as competitiveness, independence of thought, and active participation. Girls, who are trained from birth to be modest, docile and obedient, may find it difficult to behave in ways that conform to the masculine norms and values of the school. Not only is the school responsible for the cognitive development of pupils, but also for their social development, and the norms and values of the wider society are incorporated into the culture of the school. Girls are prepared for their adult social and family roles and are expected to behave in *feminine* ways when relating to peers and staff members. The school may, in fact, present two conflicting sets of values and norms for girl pupils to adhere to, the *masculine*, academic ones and the *feminine*, social ones.

Subjects and knowledge in the schools are also gender-typed. Certain subjects are usually perceived as masculine, for example mathematics, the sciences, building, and metalwork, while others, such as typing and home economics, are generally perceived as feminine. In schools most girls are directed into subjects and activities that are typed as feminine, and are excluded from acquiring knowledge and skills considered masculine, which are more highly valued and which prepare boys for adult occupations that are highly rewarded. Learning and teaching materials, such as books, may also reproduce gender in the school, by depicting girls and women in stereotyped feminine roles, and with *feminine* characteristics and behaviour. In these ways, the school as a microcosm of society reproduces gender. The formal curriculum overtly, and the **hidden curriculum** covertly, prepare girls and boys for their adult occupational and social gender roles.

Schools may contribute in a number of ways to the continuation of sex inequalities in society. Highly valued skills and knowledge, from which girls are excluded in the school, are those which are highly rewarded in adult life. Women without these skills and knowledge are unable to compete with men for, and have less access to, employment and remain confined to a domestic environment and depend on men. Also, they remain outside the decision- and policy-making processes, and are unable to influence these in ways which would benefit girls and women. The whole cycle is

repeated when women, having been subject to discrimination in education themselves, are unable to present alternative role models for their daughters. In this way, gender inequalities in education are a contributory factor to the perpetuation of the social, economic and political inequalities between women and men in society.

### ***Activity 3.2: The School as a Socializing Force***

1. Discuss ways in which the school covertly prepares girls and boys for their adult occupational and social roles.
2. What role can guidance and counselling play in promoting gender equity in schools?
3. In what ways can teachers improve classroom management in order to promote gender equity in education?

### ***3. The Teacher as an Agent of Gender-Socialization***

Teachers, too, are members of the wider society in which the school is located. They have themselves been socialized into the dominant culture, and so bring with them assumptions about gender into the school and classroom. This means that they have different attitudes towards, and expectations of, male and female pupils which conform to gender-stereotypes in the wider society. Their assumptions about the social behaviour appropriate for girls and boys, the different aptitudes and abilities of girls and boys, may lead them to treat boys and girls in different ways. This leads to the further assumption that different levels and types of knowledge are necessary for girls and boys.

During interaction in the classroom, teacher expectations and attitudes are communicated to pupils. Since the child's identity in relation to the school, and her or his academic self-perception, are developed during interaction with teachers in the classroom, the teacher may have a profound influence on the performance of pupils. Girls who are labelled less able than boys in the highly valued subjects typed as masculine, may develop a negative self-image and become demotivated, which will cause them to perform poorly. In this way teachers may create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Teachers may be responsible for the reinforcement of primary gender socialization, discrimination against girls in school, and gender inequalities in education.

Studies indicate, for example, that teachers tend to reinforce sex-role stereotypes in other ways e.g.:

- rewarding girls and boys differently for their performance in certain subjects, e.g., they tend to reprimand boys more severely than girls for poor performance in the *hard* subjects such as mathematics and science (because they are expected to do better than girls).
- many teachers do not worry when girls talk less or contribute less to classroom

discussions because girls are expected to be quiet.

- use of sexist language and learning aids.
- directing more questions to boys, etc.

### ***What Role Can Schools Play in Promoting Gender Equity?***

Schools and teachers can make a profound contribution to the creation of a positive learning environment that motivates learning achievement in girls no less than in boys:

#### 1. Attitudes of teachers and other school authorities

In order for gender equity to be promoted in schools, the attitudes of teachers, headteachers, and other people who manage schools, must change. Teachers and heads of schools must first realize the disadvantaged position of girls in order to find solutions to the problem. Training in **gender sensitization** is, therefore, important.

#### 2. Adoption of gender-sensitive teaching methods

Teachers should use teaching methods which are sensitive to gender. Teachers should demonstrate that everyone in the classroom matters, and has the ability to perform well, irrespective of sex or status in society. Teachers should use language which does not discriminate against any of the sexes. They must also pay attention to boys and girls equally, e.g., by encouraging, in a flexible friendly manner, pupils of both sexes to ask questions, answer teachers' questions and participate generally in classroom discussions. Girls should be given the confidence they need to enable them to perform well in masculine subjects.

The assessment system, i.e., grades, comments, examination/test questions, must take into consideration the different needs of girls and boys. The comments which teachers make to pupils should encourage girls to be confident in their abilities to do better.

The teacher should also use methods which promote gender sensitivity, not only in her/his classroom, but in the entire school. Pupils can be assigned projects which enable them to study gender differences in the classroom, and in the school, e.g., pupils could carry out projects on the following issues:

- Distribution of power between the sexes in the school hierarchy.
- Who gets teachers attention in the classroom - girls or boys?
- Who (girls or boys) contribute most to classroom discussions?
- Language use by teacher in the classroom.
- Sexism in instructional and illustration materials.
- Aspects of sexism in the school on any topic chosen by the student.
- Role-playing on relevant themes.
- Case studies on relevant themes.

- Classroom debates/discussions on gender issues.
- Creation of non-sexist learning environment.

### 3. Creation of a non-sexist learning environment

In addition to gender sensitivity in teaching methods, the school should work out other strategies to create a non-sexist learning environment. The school should:

- ensure equity in enrolments.
- take measures to eliminate other factors which lead to the poor progress of girls, e.g., teachers could sensitize parents to problems which cause poor progress, like unfair division of labour between boys and girls in the family, etc.
- initiate debate on gender issues at staff meetings.
- develop non-sexist learning aids for use by teachers.
- initiate specific policy issues on gender equity in education and press for their adoption by the policy makers.
- identify other areas in which change is required.
- work out measures to promote gender sensitivity in guidance and counselling.

#### ***Activity 3.3: Group Discussion Topic: What the Teacher Can Do***

- Form three groups to discuss the following questions for ten minutes. Each group should take one question, and then report back to the group as a whole.
- Discuss the possible actions that you, as a teacher, could take:
  - in the classroom;
  - in the school;
  - in your professional organization.
- After your discussion, check how many of the points listed below have been raised.

In the classroom the teacher can:

- examine her or his attitudes and assumptions about gender;
- evaluate his or her actions and behaviour towards girls and boys in the classroom;
- consciously avoid the labelling of pupils on the basis of sex;
- avoid typifying subjects and knowledge as *masculine* or *feminine*;

- foster the development of positive self-image and self-confidence in girls;
- motivate girls to achieve by increasing the expectations of girls, and taking time to help girls overcome problems arising from gender-socialization;
- increase gender awareness in the pupils by discussing the issue of gender in the classroom.

In the school the teacher can:

- initiate debate on gender issues at staff meetings;
- identify areas in which change is necessary;
- develop non-sexist learning aids for use in his or her subject;
- meet the parents of girls to counsel and advise them about the ways in which they can help their daughters succeed.

In the professional organization, the teacher can:

- introduce the issue of gender equity for discussion;
- press for the adoption of a specific policy of gender equity in education by the organization;
- encourage the organization to press for the adoption of policies and measures at government level aimed at achieving gender equity.

### ***Activity 3.4: Readings***

1. Go through Reading 3.1, Classroom Interaction, on pages 76 and 77.
2. Go through Reading 3.2, Illustrations, on pages 78 and 79.
3. Look at illustrations, pictures, etc. in your classroom, or bring some advertisements from your local newspaper, and determine with the group their implications in terms of gender.

### ***Activity 3.5: Breaking Down Gender Stereotypes***

#### Part 1

Some suggested group activities and projects for breaking down gender stereotypes are:

1. Class magazine
  - a) Involve the pupils in producing a class magazine. Appoint a **girl** as editor.
  - b) Appoint **girls** to write about sport, class news, motor cars and other topics usually associated with boys.

- c) Appoint **boys** to write about fashion, recipes, nutrition and health, and other topics usually associated with girls
2. History project
- a) Famous Women in Our Society. The pupils should do research and write stories about prominent and famous women in their country, region and community.
3. Practical and handicraft projects
- a) Sewing  
Involve **all** the children in sewing small items for use at home.
- b) Woodwork  
Involve **all** the children in the making of small articles for use in the home.
4. Drama
- a) Divide the class into groups of girls and boys. Let them act out short scenes in which: **girls** play the parts of doctors, detectives and explorers, and **boys** the parts of nurses, detectives' assistants and explorers' assistants.

#### Part 2

Working individually, write down your answers to the following questions:

1. Do you find the suggestions helpful?
2. Are you already undertaking some of them? Which?
3. What other activities of a similar type can you suggest? Suggest at least two.
4. Discuss your findings with the rest of the group.

## Summary

Schools contribute in a number of ways to the continuation of sex inequalities in society. This may be through gender inequalities in education, such as the measurement of success in schools in terms of *masculine* behaviour and attributes, (i.e., competitiveness, independence of thought and active participation) and the gender-typifying of subjects and knowledge, (i.e., subjects such as mathematics and science are considered as *masculine*, while subjects such as typing and home economics are considered as *feminine*). Learning and teaching materials also reproduce gender by depicting girls and women in stereotyped *feminine* roles.

Through attitudes and differing expectations from their male and female students, teachers may be responsible for the reinforcement of sex-role stereotypes.

In these ways, gender inequalities in education are contributory factors to the perpetuation of social, economic and political inequalities between women and men.

What role, then, can schools and teachers play in promoting gender equity? They can make a contribution to the creation of a positive learning environment that motivates learning achievement in girls as well as boys. They can do this through the following:

1. Change in the attitudes of teachers and other school authorities;
2. Adoption of gender-sensitive teaching methods; and
3. Creation of a non-sexist learning environment

Being aware of the ways in which schools and teachers themselves reproduce gender and discriminate against girls, teachers can take positive action to redress the situation.

# Readings

## Reading 3.1 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Classroom setting and dynamics must be addressed by teachers, in order to create a learning environment for girls and boys. Often these dynamics are so common that they are easily overlooked, or they are not readily apparent without carrying out an analysis.

- (i) The following questions help to make visible what may not be seen by the casual observer:
- Who (girl, boy) is answering questions?
  - Who is asking questions?
  - Who needs to be probed before giving an answer?
  - What is the reaction of the class to a wrong/right answer by a girl/boy?
  - To whom are most questions asked?
  - Who appears to expect questions?
  - Who does not appear to expect questions?
  - Who answers or offers to answer difficult questions ?
  - What are the teachers' expectations of the female students? Of the male students?
  - How often does the teacher direct questions to girls? To boys?
  - What kinds of questions are directed to girls? To boys?
- (ii) Sitting arrangements can be important in the conduct of the students within a learning environment. The following questions could be illuminating:
- Is the sitting arrangement spontaneous?
  - Who sits where, i.e., front, back, middle and why?
  - Who sits with whom?
  - Is the class (individual boys/girls) happy with the arrangement?

(iii) Teachers' behaviour should be analyzed to establish the incidence and influence of the hidden curriculum.

- Of whom does the teacher ask questions?
- To whom are most of the jokes and anecdotes directed?
- What forms of punishment and rewards does the teacher set for boys and girls?
- For what does the teacher frequently punish/reward boys and girls?
- What time does the teacher give girls and boys to answer questions?
- What comments does the teacher give for girls' and boys' wrong/right answers?
- What tasks does the teacher give to boys and girls?
- What situations (questions, etc.) does the teacher knowingly or unknowingly use to call attention to the gender of the students?

(iv) Another important area to consider is the dress of boys and girls:

- What are girls and boys dressed in?
- How free are they when:
  - sitting in class?
  - playing in the field? and
  - walking home?

## Reading 3.2

### ILLUSTRATIONS

The second component involves looking at illustrations, pictures, cartoons, etc. A similar qualitative and quantitative analysis, as in Section One (1), is here applied to illustrations to determine the implications in terms of gender.

It is important that the activities of males and females must be recorded both in numbers and types. Crucial questions asked include:

- What are women, men, girls and boys doing?
- How often are they doing these activities?
- Is there any stereotyping?
- Who is doing the activity?
- Who is watching or helping?
- Which activities enhance the visibility and status of the actor or actress?
- Which activities demean the actor or actress?
- What is the hierarchy of activities?

In terms of the power, status or prestige they bestow on the actor/actress, who is performing these activities?

An analysis of the technology, or lack of it, used by the actors/actresses yields interesting gender disaggregated information. Questions such as the following are important:

- Who uses what technology?
- What does the use of the technology tell us about the actor/actress?
- Does the user (male/female) apply the technology well?

Attention should also be paid to the sizes of girls, boys, men and women depicted in the pictures. Other important categories of analysis include dress, colours, position, expressions and hairstyles. The following questions may be asked:

- What are the sizes of men, women, girls and boys?
- Is there any pattern we can see?
- How are they dressed?
- What colours are given to what gender and why?
- Does the manner of dress reflect on activities, power or relative importance of the character?
- What other features such as hairstyles, etc., are noticeable and what impression of the character do they suggest to the observer?

The number of activities should be categorized and counted by gender, and see if they tell a story.

## References

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