

## LECTURE NOTES

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# *Gender Issues*

*For Health Extension Workers*



**Ethiopia Public Health  
Training Initiative**

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In collaboration with the Ethiopia Public Health Training Initiative, The Carter Center,  
the Ethiopia Ministry of Health, and the Ethiopia Ministry of Education

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## Acknowledgments

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Essentially, it required the consolidation and merging of existing in depth training materials, examination of Health Extension Package manuals and the Curriculum.

Recognizing the importance of and the need for the preparation of the lecture note for the Training of Health Extension workers THE CARTER CENTER (TCC) ETHIOPIA PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING INITIATIVE (EPHTI) facilitated the task for Jimma University to write the lecture note in consultation with the Health Extension Coordinating Office of the Federal Ministry of Health.

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## Abbreviations/ Acronyms

- EHW- Extension Health Workers
- ICPD-International conference on population and Development.
- PTSD-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- VAW- Violence Against Women
- APH- Ante partum haemorrhage
- STIs-Sexually Transmitted Infections
- FGM-Female Genital Mutilation.
- HTP-Harmful Traditional Practices.
- TBA-Traditional Birth Attendants
- RH-Reproductive Health
- PID-Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

## Introduction

The presence of dynamic interaction between gender, health and development, create a growing concern by national and international governments and communities. Gender based discriminations and violence are to stay unless there is long term commitment and shared action among various sectors including at the community level. Thus it is timely and no wonders for making the gender issues information available at the grass-roots level where the Health Extension Workers will be posted.

The gender issues depicted here are not only the review of literatures but also the result of observations of Gender based issues in real situations and continuing effort for better ways of addressing it at the grassroots level.

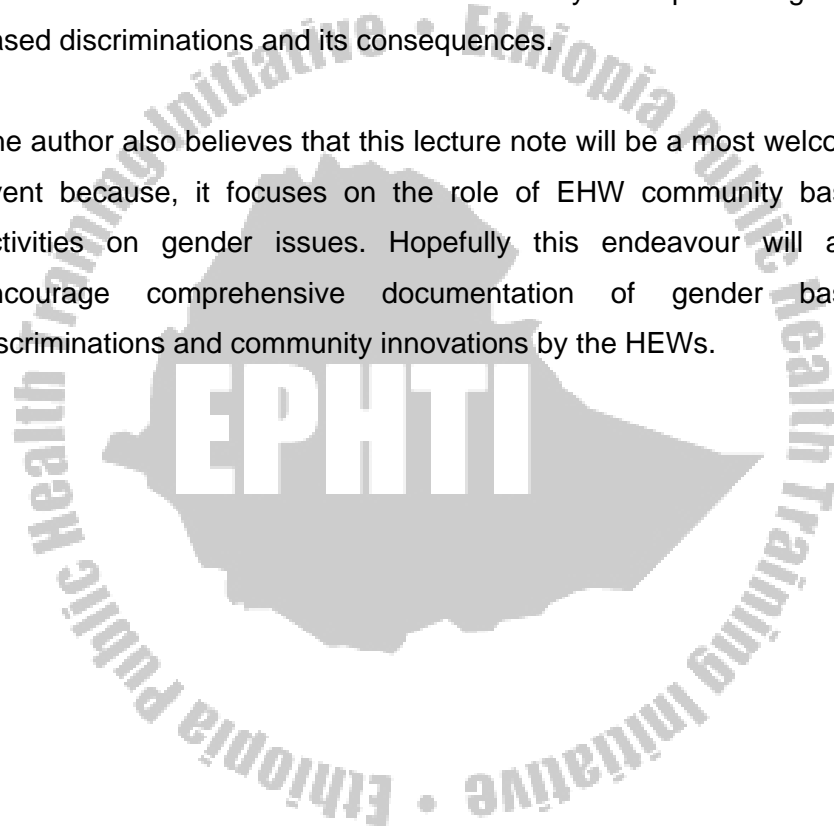
In this lecture note the author tries to highlight gender Issues including gender discriminations and hope that it will help the Health Extension Workers (HEW) to aware and initiate the community to standby the elimination of gender based discrimination. Since most of the Ethiopian communities are residing in the rural areas this material will provide better information to bring an attitudinal change at the community level.

## Gender Issues

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This lecture note is well written, readable and easily understandable. The author also believes that if communities are aware of the problem and its impact, organized communities can make a difference. Hopefully this material will guide and inspire the HEW to create gender issues awareness in the community and prevent gender based discriminations and its consequences.

The author also believes that this lecture note will be a most welcome event because, it focuses on the role of EHW community based activities on gender issues. Hopefully this endeavour will also encourage comprehensive documentation of gender based discriminations and community innovations by the HEWs.



## UNIT ONE

### The Status of Ethiopian Women.

Learning Objectives: at the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Discuss the status of the majority of women in the world and Ethiopian women
- Identify the traditional role of women.
- Identify Ethiopian women who played a great role historically and are inspirational figures for the country.

The status of women is the position women have as a group, in different fields of societies. It is known that most women in the world are the poorest of poor. They are excluded from access to and control over the resources (money, land, time, information, technology, health, materials... etc).

The economic, social and political status of women has direct bearings on the level of fertility in any society. Where women's roles are exclusively defined in terms of house hold management and matrimonial duties as in the case of Ethiopia they are subjected to the expectation that they replenish the race by bearing a large number of children and assume full responsibility for maintaining them almost single handedly. Since women are by and large economically



dependent on men, the decision to have children and to decide on properties is totally rested in the hand of husbands.

Nevertheless, Ethiopian women have been playing a great role down the systems, but, the reality is that in Ethiopia there are few historical sources available to help us understand the role of women from gender perspective, the social, economic and political context. The historical record available so far tells us the position of women in feudal system as over exploited sex object and very often expressed in the context of male dominance in socio economic and political environment.

Both culture and religion also played significant role in limiting the positive roles that women could have played and also affects the lives of women negatively. Backward tradition such as forcing women to marry early, female genital mutilation (body tattooing for beauty as sex objects) have impeded their progress

In spite of their operation, Ethiopian women play significant role in the socio-economic development of their country. They form half of the Ethiopian population. They also form the backbone of the rural peasant family's subsistent economy. There is a theory of those few who succeeded have become inspiring models, such as, Empress Taitu, the wife of emperor Minilik, who was extremely intelligent women played a very significant role in the defeat of the colonial

power of Italian at the battle of Adewa. With all such big political and socioeconomic contribution the role played by women is not appreciated, or valued.

Another feature defining low status of women in this country is, the fact that women's participation in income generating labour force is low. Even when they are employed they are found in non-professional and dead end type of jobs.

As mentioned above, women's population comprises half of the total population of the country; socioeconomic development will remain a dream without the full participation of these parties.

In order to bring a sustainable development we need to remove the gender bias that creates an unnecessary bottleneck to the development, and redefine development to cater for both sexes.

In the current Ethiopian government policy, there are some encouraging initiatives towards gender issues. The government has enacted and issued The National Women's policy in 1993. It is one of the many developmental policies that the government has issued to improve the living standards of the population at large. This policy ensures equality between men and women. An organizational structure has also been established in the prime ministers office as the women's Affairs Office and in every sector ministers at a

department level, with the responsibility and mandate to facilitate, follow and monitor the implementation of this policy.

This also needs further follow up, supportive top-down political environment, committing time and ensuring gender integration at all levels.



## UNIT TWO

### Gender and Sex

Learning Objectives: at the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- ◆ Define sex and gender
- ◆ Compare and contrast Gender and sex
- ◆ List the common gender biases
- ◆ Identify the consequences of gender bias.

There are two types of differences between men and women: Gender and sex.

**Sex can be defined as:** it is a biological and genetical differences between men and women, it is also:

- The physical and biological differences.
- Refers whether people are born either female or male
- It is natural and is biologically determined.
- It can not be changed

Example:

- ◆ Women can be pregnant and give birth.
- ◆ A man can make woman pregnant.

**Gender can be defined as:** it is a description of roles, activities and responsibilities assigned to men and women in a given society, culture, community or time. It also:

- Refers the expectations of people from some one, because either they are female or male.
- Men and women are expected to perform the fixed roles assigned to them by the society.
- Is socially prescribed roles, and behaviours expected from men and women and in this prescription women assume lower status
- It is a learned process and can be changed

Example:

- She will be a great cook!
- He will be a great Dr!

**Examples of Gender bias.**

**Boys:**

- ◆ Brought up to achieve.
- ◆ You will be a doctor
- ◆ Primarily Job, secondary marriage
- ◆ He has to get job before marriage

**Girls:**

- ◆ Brought up to conform
- ◆ Learn how to cook
- ◆ Primarily marriage secondary job
- ◆ She has to marry and bear children earlier

As a consequence of this social approval boys become more independent and more reliant upon internal standards of excellence in achievement situation. While girls do not expect to achieve, they underestimate their academic abilities. Generally, girls socialize to be more dependants, more conformist and more vulnerable to interpersonal rejection than boys.

However, there is no difference in intellectual level given the same comparable incentives women's could do as well as men in any kind of mental activities. Human are the products of socialization they behave in a way society expects them to behave, ie, their upbringing dominates their life style. As indicated above women are brought up to conform and men to achieve. Moreover, the previous biased educational system favours men and disfavours women.

**Gender Awareness is important because:**

- ◆ Decision-making between couples is not carried out in a gender neutral environment. Biological and social factors do not function

separately but; there is a dynamic interaction among these factors and affecting women in all aspects of life.

- ◆ Gender issues function at household, community and national level adhered in society's social, cultural, economic and political system.
- ◆ Gender also affects even the Reproductive Health decision making, because women make choice within the context of their communities where gender roles, responsibilities and status are defined. Even the sectors' response is shaped by gender factor.
- ◆ Men are controlling over economic, political and reproductive life. Where as women are expected to be submissive, obedient, respectful, and vulnerable to abusive treatments.
- ◆ This division of role and expectation favours one sex and victimize the other counterpart. Obviously the party at the disadvantaged wing are women. As a result of gender based notion and discrimination women have been suffering in many societies including Ethiopia. One of these sufferings is gender based discriminations including violence which will be highlighted below.

## UNIT THREE

### Gender Based Discriminations

Learning Objectives: at the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Define violence against women
- Recognize different forms of gender based discrimination.
- Identify the different forms of Gender based violence
- List the features of gender discrimination in rural society
- Determine the short and long term consequences of FGM
- Recognise the effect of Gender based violence on health and development.
- Discuss Women's rights against gender based violence.
- Determine the preventive and curative measures of gender based violence.

#### **Gender Based Violence/Violence Against women Definition:**

The United Nations Declaration on Elimination of violence against women (1993) defined Violence Against Women (VAW) as:

"... any act of gender based violence that results in physical sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of



such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life" .

**Forms of Violence against women:**

1. Physical Violence:

Kicking, punching, choking, burning, stabbing, pouring boiled water, setting on fire, homicide, gun shot...etc.

2. Psychological violence / mental harm:

- Repeated verbal abuse
- Spitting on.
- Confinement and deprivation of physical, financial and personal resources.
- Constant humiliation.

3. Sexual Violence:

- Coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force.
- Rape (Forced unwelcome sex).
- Abduction

**The Burden and Magnitude of Violence Against Women**

Gender based violence to which women are the major victims is one of gravest obstacle to any country's socioeconomic development. Women

who are under violence can not use their creative mind and potentials.  
It is also a major public health problem and:

- ◆ It happens throughout the women's life cycle
- ◆ In Ethiopia too, it is practiced on a large scale.
- ◆ It is also undermining the human rights.
- ◆ Many, including pregnant women and adolescent girls, are subjected to severe and repeated attacks.
- ◆ VAW has been estimated as a serious cause of morbidity, mortality and incapacity among women.
- ◆ Victims of survivors reported that the ongoing psychological violence (emotional torture, with mental stress or living under terror is often unbearable than the physical brutality that can lead to suicidal attempts.
- ◆ Women under torture can not lend their productive mind, potential and not be effective in their life.

### **The Health consequences of Gender based Violence Against women**

#### **Physical Health**

- Physical Injury (Loss of vision, hearing, and disfiguring)
- Unwanted pregnancy
- STIs and HIV/AIDs
- Abortion

- APH (Ante partum haemorrhage)
- Chronic PID (pelvic inflammatory diseases)
- Irritable bowel / syndrome
- Self injurious behaviour (smoking, unprotected sex...etc)

### **Mental Health**

- Depression
- Fear
- Low self esteem
- Sexual dysfunction
- Poor appetite
- PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)

### **Fatal outcomes**

- Suicide
- Homicide
- Death

### **Harmful Traditional Practices**

In the Ethiopian traditional societies there are a number of harmful practices among others; Female genital mutilation, early marriage and abduction will be discussed here

### **Female genital Mutilation (FGM):**

Definition: Mutilation: "to cut off or damage an important part Of the body"

- ◆ FGM could be performed as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> week of life, a few days before marriage.
- ◆ In Ethiopia it is commonly practiced during infancy, childhood or before puberty.
- ◆ FGM- involves removal of parts or the whole of external Genitalia of a female.

### **Types of Female mutilation**

**Type I- Clitoridectomy:** it has two forms

- ❖ Dissection and removal of foreskin of clitoris
- ❖ Removal of the whole clitoris

### **Type II- Excision**

- Total removal of clitoris, partial or total removal of the labia minora with out closure of the vulva.

### **Type III- Infibulation (Excision + Stitching)**

- Clitoris, labia minora, and inner walls of labia majora are removed. Then the two labia are joined to close/seal except for urine and mensus.
- Reinfibulation: this is done if infibulation is not successful for the first time, or if the woman is divorced, widowed, or separated.

- Defibulation is done at marriage, during labor, or if there is an absolute need for pelvic examination.

**Origins:**

- When and where FGM started has not been determined.
- It has been widely practiced in Ethiopia
- It is believed that FGM was practiced in the ancient Egypt. History also shows the existence of FGM in the Pre-Islamic Arabia, ancient Rome and Tsarist Russia.
- In England, it had been practiced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Geographic Distribution:**

- Practiced all over the world but common in Africa and Asia.
- Female Genital mutilation is being practiced in many countries of Africa including Egypt, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Ivory Cost, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal...etc
- The most common type in Africa is Type II (Excision) which is being practiced in more than 20 countries. Type I is more practiced in Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Sudan & Nigeria.

- Infibulation is common in Djibouti, Eastern Red Sea areas of Ethiopia and Somalia.

**Scope of FGM in Ethiopia:**

It is practiced both by Muslims and Christians. About 90% of Ethiopians believed to undergo one of the 3 forms.

Infibulations is more common in Harari, Somali, Mensa, Saho, Bilen, Somalia, the Afar and some Oromos in Hararge.

Excision is more prevalent in Gurage, Tigrai, Oromos, Benshangul & Kunama. Clitoridectomy is practiced in Amharas, Muslims of Tigrai called Jeberti.

FGM of any form is uncommon in Gambella, some parts of Southern region, Dorzae, Konso, some parts of Wollega and Gojam.

**FGM and Religion:** Although it is practiced mainly in Muslim countries:

- ♦ FGM did not originate with the rise of Islam.
- ♦ Both Christians and Muslim in African Countries have their daughters mutilated. It is a misbelieve that female mutilation is an Islamic practice this is evidenced by the fact that:

- ◆ It is not widely practiced in all Islamic countries, e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
- ◆ It is being practiced both in Christians & Muslims
- ◆ It was practiced before Islam arrived to Africa

**Condition under which FGM is practiced:** it is usually done

- By individuals untrained for it under unhygienic condition with un-sterile instruments
- By untrained traditional birth attendants or healers.
- With instruments such as razor blade, and piece of glass or locally made materials.

**Consequences of FGM**

**1. Immediate Consequence are:**

- Haemorrhage and Shock
- Pain
- Infection and Septicaemia
- Tetanus
- Dislocations and Fractures
- Retention of urine
- Injury to surrounding tissues
- Delayed healing

## 2. Long Term effects include

- Ugly scar formation
- Labial fusion
- Narrowed vaginal opening
- PID (pelvic inflammatory diseases)
- Infertility and psychological and social problem.
- Dysmenorrhoea (difficult and / painful menstruation)
- Hematocolpos (collection of menstrual blood in the vaginal canal)
- Urinary tract infections
- Sexual problem
  - Dyspareunia (painful sexual intercourse)
  - Vaginal laceration
- Problems in childbirth.
- Fistula
- Acquiring HIV/AIDS

## Early Marriage

It is deep-rooted, widespread among Ethiopian Christians & Muslims. It is parent arranged marriage between two families. It has devastating effect on child, family and the community.



**Types of Marriage Arrangements:**

**1. Promissory marriage.**

1.1 **Child marriage:** Usually the girl is under the age of 10 Years. It may be of two types:

- 'Madego' - the girl is given to in-laws after wedding ceremony to serve until maturity. This is worse because of sexual and physical abuse.
- 'Meleles'- The girl does frequent visits to in-laws to serve till maturity.

**2. Early Adolescent marriage:** age of the girl is 10-15 years of age. After the ceremony the bride is taken to the groom's house. If she is not virgin, she will be returned to her parents the same night and the marriage is dissolved.

N.B. Legally early (child) marriage is banned by national and International laws but it is violated. However, in Ethiopia especially in the Northern part marriage could take place as early as 7 years.

**Causes of Early marriage are:**

- Security for the future- while parents are young
- Competition to find in-laws who has family status

- Conformity-conform to tradition/stigmatized "Kuma Kerech"
- Ensure virginity
- Fertility-many children, grandchildren means security
- Material benefit- access to livestock, land, dowry
- Others- marry before menses, fame of ceremony and service of son-in-law and fear of abduction.

**Health related Problems in early marriage are**

- Sexual abuse- vaginal & perineal tear
- Early pregnancy- child bearing & unwanted pregnancy
- Maternal morbidity (fistula) & mortality (Haemorrhage, obstructed labor etc.)

**Social Impact of early marriage:**

- Denied education and own choices
- Illiterate mother more often raise illiterate child
- Increased rural to Urban migration
- Fistula patients, avoided by the husband and society
- Psychological trauma from the 1<sup>st</sup> sexual experience
- Many children (early pregnancy).
- Scarcity of resources

**Abduction:**

Definition: It is defined as unlawful kidnapping or carrying away a girl for marriage. In almost all case rape follows it. Parents tend to keep their daughters from school for fear of abduction. Abduction is a civil offence in Ethiopian law.

**Reasons given for abduction may be:**

- Fear of rejection by the bride's family
- Dowry is too high
- Presence of rival-another man may marry the girl
- Avoid wedding ceremony- for high cost
- Status Difference (e.g. man from upper family wouldn't stand before low class parents)
- Voluntary abduction, the girl agrees to go with the man
- False sense of power

**Process of Abduction**

- Prepare Collaborators to carry away the girl
- Find her alone (Usually walking to or from School, market, fetching water...etc)
- Make it as quiet as possible
- Then abductor sends for reconciliation to her family
- Compensation given to her family and marriage.  
If not, i.e. if her family rejects the abductor:
- Family report to police and conflict between families arise, or

- Abductor may force her to sign her consent for abduction

**Consequence of abduction:**

Psychological trauma

- Low self esteem
- Feel rejected
- Feel humiliated

**Reproductive Health Risk**

- Risk of STD and HIV /AIDs
- Unwanted pregnancy and abortion
- Vaginal and perineal tear from sexual intercourse (if the girl is young)
- Obstructed labor.

**Socio- economic**

- An abducted mother does not send her daughter to school for fear of abduction
- Weak family formed without love and affection, which leads to the formation of weak community.

**Preventive measures of HTP:**

- Educational sensitization campaign through different media
- Legislative measures for the HTP practitioners

- Alternative income generation schemes for HTP practitioners
- Promote girls Education
- Establish RH/anti HTP clubs in the schools
- Incorporate the issue in to the school curricula
- Train community workers and agents to eliminate HTP
- Create advocacy group against HTP
- Involve community organizations, Edir, opinion leaders, religious leaders...etc.

**Features of gender based discrimination in rural society**

In rural community society females are highly disadvantaged and dominated. The following are some of the features.

- ◆ In some cultures of our community, during monthly period (menstrual period) women have to stay out side their home for minimum of 7-10 days
- ◆ Nutritious food such as egg, meat, and milk...are given to husbands and boys, but mothers and girls are allowed to eat only left over food.
- ◆ Boys are allowed to go to school while girls are initiated to learn how to cook, how to give care for children and how to be a good wife.
- ◆ Sleeping hours for a female is lesser than a male, it is culturally forbidden to go to bed before the rest of the family members. Early

in the morning she is the one who wake first and prepares food for the family. In addition to the above burdens, she has to go to farm to help her husband.

There is also this proverb to perpetuate such a wrong idea i.e. '**The best woman is the early to rise and the last to go to bed**'

- ◆ Women in rural area have no power to decide any thing concerning their family, property, no discussion and participation to any topic in her families; women are considered as a simple sex objects.
- ◆ Women and girls are generally expected to do household chores.
- ◆ Men are raised to be strong, aggressive, superior and dominating while women are raised to be submissive.
- ◆ Men have a right to correct women's behaviour.
- ◆ Battering is an appropriate way to discipline women and children.

#### **Ethiopian Women and Education.**

There is a clear disparity in the field of education between the two sexes. It is illustrated by the gap existing in the enrolment at all educational levels in our country. The gap between the number of male and female teachers is also tremendous. The number of female teachers and students are reduced significantly as one moves from lower to higher level of education

The previous Ethiopian curriculum by itself did not encourage female students. All textbooks were sex biased. The number of repeaters

and dropouts is higher among girls than boys. Illiteracy is high among women. These all contributed to women's less employment and high economic dependency.

As mentioned earlier the existing educational curriculum of Ethiopia has been shown encouraging beginnings. Above others, it strongly supports the females' enrolment to schools and affirmative action has been started to support them and succeed in their academic endeavours.

### **Some Conventions /Women's Rights**

- Violence against women is first and foremost a question of Inequality and by extension, a denial of human rights.

" ... No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment"

\* The universal declaration of human rights (1948) states:

" ... Every one has the right to life, liberty, and security of Person " (Article, 3)

- The world conference on human right (1993) confirmed women's rights as human rights and gender based violence as being incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person.

- The ICPD (International conference on population and development), review, called countries to promote the human rights of women and girls with policies including 'zero tolerance of violence against girls and women' and the promotion of male responsibility towards it.

**Access to preventive and curative measures for Gender based Discriminations:**

- ◆ Conduct public awareness raising through community drama and small group discussions on violence.
- ◆ Involve men in changing attitudes and behaviour that promotes elimination of violence within the family and outside the home.
- ◆ Recognize international and national conventions on women's rights
- ◆ Create a culture of non-violence and essentially become peacekeepers in getting rid of cultural institutions, beliefs, practices, traditions, and norms that undermine women's empowerment and tolerate women and child abuse.
- ◆ Community elders and religious leaders should be encouraged to re-examine doctrines and cultural practices that lead to the subordination of women and violation of their rights.
- ◆ Establish support groups where battered women can share experiences.
- ◆ Local community involvement in reporting and discouraging violent husbands.



- ◆ Women's police stations provide more concerned and committed response.
- ◆ Teach communities on non-violent parenting and conflict resolution.
- ◆ Refer the victims of violence to the nearest health center/hospital.
- ◆ Legal literacy programs and free legal advice for victims to Press charges
- ◆ Sensitivity training for police officers, communities and other stakeholders for dealing with victims and preventing violent incidents.
- ◆ Encourage men's responsibility on sexual, Reproductive Health
- ◆ Increase the earning capacity of women.
- ◆ Strong commitment for women to an activity or career other than wife, mother, cleaner, Kitchen manager... etc.
- ◆ Improve the status of women in terms of: Health, education, employment, fertility control and value the role women play both in family and society.
- ◆ Ensure women to have access to resources. Access means for example to farm on someone's land and control means owning the land, able to decide how that land is used. Women may have access to resources but they may lack control over it and they have little say when decision needs to be made or when resources are threatened.

What else the Extension Health Workers help the women victims of gender discriminations?.

## UNIT FOUR

### Gender, Health and Development

Learning Objectives: at the end of this Unit students will be able to:

- Define women empowerment, equality and equity
- Describe the different ways of empowering women
- Identify the advantages of women's education and employment.
- Elaborate the relevance of gender issues to health and development.
- Define Gender sensitivity
- Explain why do we need to be gender sensitive
- Discuss Gender equality and equity.
- Define gender mainstreaming.
- Explain the meaning of gender mainstreaming to women.

**Development is defined as:**

- × The improvement of people's wellbeing
- × Better life and sustained capacity for better life
- × Enable people to take charge of their own lives and escape from poverty.
- × Involves in all aspects of a person's life as well as the economic, social and political setting in which he/she lives.

Development in the third world is not merely about increased productivity and welfare but also it is about meeting the needs that women are most in need, about increased participation and equality. Development is therefore also concerned with enabling people to take part of their own lives, escape from poverty, which arises not from lack of productivity but rather from oppression and exploitation

In these situations the central priority issue for women is making them empowered through education and employment so that they will have equal place with men in all developmental processes. Then the issue of productivity and effectiveness will come later. The issue of gender and development is important because women constitute half of the world's population and a centre to the economic as well as to the social well-being of societies. Ignoring half of the population in development does not bring full, effective and efficient development at all.

### **Gender and Health:**

The World Health Organization defines health in such a way that health is: "A state of complete social, psychological and physical wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Implicit within this definition is the notion that health is not purely a physical phenomenon, but influenced by socio-cultural, economic and psychological factors. The social understandings of health offer a

gendered way of analyzing the influences of socio-economic relations on health and stimulate thinking about the broader socio-political intervention that may be needed to improve the over all health situation.

### **Women Empowerment**

Definition: Empowerment is an approach that aims at strengthening and broadening the power base of women in order to achieve greater self-reliance; emphasizes women's access to decision making.

Empowering women means changing the conditions of their lives and equalizing opportunities between men and women. Women should be empowered, within their families, communities and workplaces, so as to eliminate gender based violence. When women are able to control their lives, free of gender based violence and participate in the decision making processes, they will be in a position to maximize their potentials as human beings. Their empowerment benefits not only them but also the society as a whole.

### **Measures of Women Empowerment:**

- ◆ Eliminate laws that discriminate against women.
- ◆ Implement laws and policies that uphold women's rights.
- ◆ Educate women about their rights and responsibilities.
- ◆ Strengthen women's participation in decision-making within their families, communities, workplaces and the society as a whole.

- ◆ Increase their access to education and training opportunities.
- ◆ Increase their access to and control over economic resources particularly employment opportunities and credit assistances.
- ◆ Increase women's access to health information and women's control over their own bodies.
- ◆ Improve women's self-esteem and sense of personal power.
- ◆ Incorporate a provision of human rights education and information regarding domestic violence.
- ◆ Organise men towards elimination of gender based violence.
- ◆ Encourage men to be more involved in household management and child-rearing.
- ◆ Provide support mechanisms for families, especially on how to raise sons in non violent atmosphere and how to be respectful of women.
- ◆ Provide support mechanisms and protective measures for women in abusive relationships.

### **Women's education and employment:**

Women's education and employment tends to be a Promising catalyst for the country's overall socioeconomic development, besides it:

- ◆ Postpones marriage and child bearing
- ◆ Reduces the overall exposure to pregnancy
- ◆ Initiates women to have higher aspiration for their children.
- ◆ It shapes women's value → favour small family size.  
ie "Small, happy, prosperous family"
- ◆ Reduces producing children as an economic benefit.

- ◆ Enhances women's economic independence, self reliance and self esteem.
- ◆ Helps women to have better access to information and to Family planning services.
- ◆ Increases the country's socioeconomic development.

As a typical patriarchal societies, in Ethiopia men tend to control over: socioeconomic, political and reproductive aspects of life and most women are:

- Deprived of autonomy
- Tightened by male domination.
- Hold subordinate position,
- Have limited access to Reproductive Health information. Even women in most societies including ours tend to hold the same discriminatory views about themselves which in turn leads to:
  - Illiteracy and economic dependency
  - Low status of women
  - Lack of Reproductive Health information and rights
  - Low literacy and employment level
  - Become victim of harmful traditional practices.
  - Poor Socioeconomic development for the country

**Gender sensitivity**

**Definition:** Gender sensitivity is the ability to recognize gender issues and especially the ability to recognize both men's and women's different perceptions, interests and expectations arising from their different social and economic roles, responsibilities and constraints.

**Gender sensitivity/ awareness need the recognition that:**

- ◆ Women have different and special needs.
- ◆ Women have been at a disadvantage relative to men to control over the resources, welfare...etc
- ◆ Development entails working towards increased, equity, equality and empowerment.

**Gender equity:**

Definition: means a fair share of benefits and responsibilities; equality aims to give women equal treatment under the law, equal access to education and equal remuneration for work.

**Gender Equality:**

Definition: Equality between men and women consists of equal enjoyment by men and women of opportunities, resource and rewards. A crucial element of equality is the empowerment of women to influence and share decision making about societal priorities and development directions.

- ◆ Gender equality has been identified as an issue because equality does not exist now.
- ◆ There is an imbalance in the relative positions of women and men that is reflected in a pattern of male dominance over social and economic resources.
- ◆ Since women are now generally at a disadvantage or excluded in relation to social and economic resources, decision making, efforts to identify and redress imbalances have focussed on women: enabling them to have the same opportunities as men.
- ◆ One big mistake observed is, gender problem is seen as women's problem which implies that women are **deficient** in some way. However, the problem is not women and what they lack but the social institutions and practices that continue to create a **disadvantage** for women.
- ◆ Social attitude place less value on women and the work they do and discriminatory practices result **inequitable** access to resources (land, health services, education, decision making, positions...etc).
- ◆ Other common mistake is gender is, often overlooked as an aspect of men's social identity. But the lives of men and women are strongly influenced by gender; cultural norms about masculinity and expectation of men as leaders, lovers, decision-makers ...etc shape high demands on men and their behaviour for example: men are



expected to be aggressive, defend the nation or community by force of arms...etc.

- ◆ Thus it is necessary to consider the possibility of integrating the two parties and social reconstruction in a way that there could be constructive support that seeks to find new solutions with the participation of women and men and this can be one of the best opportunities for positive social change.

### **Gender mainstreaming**

**Definition:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men by any planned action, including legislation, policies, programs and projects in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making **women's as well as men's concern** and experiences as integral dimension of the design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and societal spheres so that women can benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UN).

It also means forging about the conceptual and practical development and gender equality. It also includes:

- ◆ Gender equality goals influence economic and social policies and resource delivery programs.

- ◆ Concepts that gender equality be integrated into mainstream decision making criteria process and are pursued from the center.
- ◆ Increased involvement of women in decision making process.
- ◆ Ideas and practices in the mainstreaming allocation of social resources and opportunities.

One of the aim is to introduce women's concerns related to their position (strategic interest) in mainstream development agendas so as to transform the agenda. Ex: one of the ways of ensuring that gender equality concerns are integrated in agriculture is to make sure that extension services address both men and women, that technological packages are appropriate for both men and women's role in agriculture. However, the issue might be making sure that women have control over the land and not as wives or dependents on men. Advocacy for women's land rights would set the agenda for change of mainstream programmes addressing gender equality in agriculture.

### **Narrowing the Gender gap in an organization:**

A gender mainstreaming approach requires that the organization itself subscribes to gender equality norms. Thus one of the ways of ensuring the integration of gender equality concerns in organizational practices is by closing the gender gap among personnel. Affirmative action programs to recruit and retain women workers, programs to

build their skills, mechanisms to eliminate sexual harassment are part and parcel of the gender mainstreaming agenda.



## UNIT FIVE

### Assertiveness

Learning Objectives: at the end of this Unit students will be able to:

Define assertiveness

- Explain different assertive and non-assertive behaviours.
- Identify the components of Assertive Behaviours:
- List the benefits of assertive behaviour.

**Assertive behaviours can be defined as:**

- It implies to free one self from unnecessary and even unwarranted cultural and traditional shackles (Yilunta)
- The ability to say Yes/ No
- Stands for own right
- A direct honest and appropriate expression of personal feeling.

**Benefits Assertive behaviours**

- To be more effective in your work place and school
- To be more pleasing to work with
- To get outcomes that are of high quality solutions that is workable, procedure that could early be implemented.
- To have more of our need met.
- To have greater confidence in one self, including others.
- Helps to reduce anxiety and stress.
- Increased self-esteem, self confidence

- Increased self-awareness
- Understood by self and others
- Decreased anger and reduced conflict
- Fulfilled needs.

### **Non Assertive Behaviours**

- The type of behaviour where the person's right are violated.
- In this style of behaviour you are likely to hesitate, speak softly, look away, and avoid the issue.
- Agree regardless of your own feeling. Not express opinion
- Value your self below others
- Hurt yourself to avoid any chance of hurting others
- The person is typically denying self, and is inhibited from expressing actual feeling.
- Allows others to choose for her.

### **Aggressive Behaviours**

This is behaviour in which persons stand up for their legitimate right in such a way that the right of another person are violated.

- Speak loudly
- Speak past issue (accusing, blaming,)
- Hurt others to avoid hurting your self.

**Types of Assertiveness:**

**Basic Assertion:**

This is when one stands up for his/her own rights, beliefs, needs, and feelings in simple straight forward and in an honest manner.

**Empathic Assertion:**

Empathy means to put oneself in the other person's place to use the perspective used by the other person as much as possible.

- ↳ Empathy; Showing to others that you are aware of their problems that you are sensitive to their feelings and problems.
- ↳ The way you should be able to express your feelings is an assertive manner.

**Discrepancy Assertion:**

Identifying discrepancy or any incongruence.

**Negative feeling Assumption:**

Sometimes your assertiveness may be misunderstood.

**Response Assertion:**

Some reaction of your basic right, beliefs and feelings. simply say No when you do not like something or Yes when you like it.

**Components of Assertive Behaviours:**

- ↳ **Eye Contact;** Looking directly at another person when you are speaking to him/her is an effective way of declaring that you are sincere about what you are saying, and that it is directed to him/her.
- ↳ **Body Posture/language:** The weight of your message to others will be increased if you face the person stand or sit appropriately close to him/her, lean towards him/her, hold your head erect.
- ↳ **Gesture;** A message accreted with appropriate postures takes on an added emphasis. Too much gesturing can be destructive.
- ↳ **Facial Expression:** Even see some one trying to express anger while smiling or laughing. Effective assertion requires an expression that agrees with the message.

## Study questions

Say True or False without looking at the key first and then check against the key.

1. Violence only occurs in poor families.
2. Gender based violence is a private matter and no one should interfere.
3. Men must have authority over women.
4. Women could get pregnant and this is biologically determined and is not gender problem.
5. '**Cooking is the work of women**' and this notion is gender discrimination.
6. Gender issue is only a women's problem.
7. Unequal division of labour at home can reduce women's participation to the developmental activities.
8. Men and women should have equal access to resources
9. Men assume most of the decision making positions and this is one of the feature of gender discrimination.
10. The extension package health workers can help in reducing the gender gap in education like teaching the farmers to send their girl child to school.



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7. UNFPA (2001). Ending Violence Against Women: A human Rights and Heath Priority. UNFPA

**Annex:**

**Key for the study questions.**

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. False | 6. False |
| 2. False | 7. True  |
| 3. False | 8. True  |
| 4. True  | 9. True  |
| 5. True  | 10. True |

