

**MODULE 2
BASIC CONCEPTS OF GENDER**

**Session 1: Sex and Gender, and How They Differ
NOTES/ REFERENCES FOR POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS**

**Excerpts from:
A Gender Approach to the Advancement of Women
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SEX AND DEVELOPMENT

Women, defined by their sex, are a major target group for development policy and planning because sex-disaggregated data show that women and men have different levels of participation in development, and are affected differently by development programs and policies. However, most of these differences are the result of the effect of gender rather than sex.

Gender roles for both women and men have been classified into three main types- reproductive (domestic/family), productive, and community roles.

	Reproductive	Productive	Community
Women	Primary Role Mother Housewife	Often assumed to have none or as Supplementary Producer/earner only	Community Management or Voluntary service- Extension of Reproductive role, And often informal, Usually unpaid

Men	Father	Primary role: Breadwinner	Leadership Politics Defense-often Formalized and paid
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The gender roles considered appropriate for women and men differ among societies. For example, in some societies, all trading is considered to be a man's role, but in Cambodia and in many North African countries trading, especially small scale, is considered to be a woman's role.

Gender roles can also change over time in response to economic and social change. Ms Gro Bruntland noted that when she first became leader of her country many Norwegians were shocked that a woman could be a Prime Minister. In 1995, after she had been in office for fifteen years, children would ask in surprise "Could a man be a Prime Minister?"

Women's multiple roles tend to be simultaneous: Because women's primary role, particularly that of mother, is a 24 hour per day role, women typically perform more than one role at a time. Thus, although they may work in the paid workforce alongside men, women continue to bear the responsibility for their wife and mother roles. If the child falls ill, or there is a domestic problem at home, the working woman will still be expected to deal with it.

Men's multiple roles tend to be sequential: By contrast, although this is slowly changing in some societies and in particular social strata, most men can leave such matters to their wives. Except in serious emergencies when men are at work (in their primary work?) they are "too busy" and the role is "too important" to be interrupted by their concerns as husband or fathers.

Gender roles affect needs: Women and men experience development and modernization differently because of their specific roles. For examples, because it is women who are the primary

caregivers for children, women have particular needs for easy access to schools and health care. As housewives, women need access to water and as mothers need access to clean drinking water to protect their families' health. By contrast, men are likely to place higher priority on access to markets and facilities related to their primary income-earning role.

This distinction has been found useful because it emphasizes an important difference between short-and long-term strategies, as well as the fundamental inequity of existing gender roles or as designed to change them.

Gender stereotypes also affect expectations; both our own and those that others hold about us. Women tend to be negatively affected by expectations of both kinds. They are typically socialized from childhood to believe that they “can’t do” - that is, are not capable of certain things. Such beliefs may relate to quite minor things, such as speaking in public or traveling alone, or they may relate to certain occupations or operating machinery. Both kinds of beliefs deprive women of self-confidence and restrict their choices. Other people’s similar stereotyped beliefs reinforce the impact. In addition, expectations based on stereotypes tend to make women invisible even when they are engaged in non-traditional activities or occupations. For example, although data show that many farmers are women, department of agriculture officials continue to assume that their programmes and services are targeting men. Many policy-makers continue to assume that the majority of women are “just” housewives and mothers, although statistics show that a high and increasing proportion are also in the labor force. Similar expectations cause development agencies to continue to assume that poor women will have time to participate in new programmes such as income generation projects despite the fact that the time allocation surveys show that poor women are already overburdened with work.

Role conflict affects women’s participation in development activities in relation to both the time and place of the activities. For example, men will find it much easier to attend training courses or take further education outside of working hours than women because many

working women have to hurry home to take care of their children and the housework. Women will also be handicapped when activities take place far from the home, where most of their childcare and housework responsibilities are located. For example, many rural women may not be able to attend a training course for an income generation project that is to be held in a nearby town unless provision has been made for childcare.

Juan dela Cruz goes to the Doctor

From the compilation of anecdotes by Fr. Percy J. Bacani(?)

Doctor: What is your job?

Juan: I am a farmer

Doctor: Have you any children?

Juan: God has been good to me. I have 7 children.

Doctor: Does your wife work?

Juan: No, she stays home.

Doctor: I see. How does she spend her day?

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

Doctor: You come home at midday?

Juan: No, she brings the meal to my place.

Doctor: And after that?

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

Doctor: What do you do?

Juan: I must go and discuss business and drink with the men in the village.

Doctor: And after that?

Juan: I go home to supper which my wife prepared.

Doctor: Does she go to bed after supper?

Juan: No, I do. She has many things to do around the house until 9 or 10:00 p.m.

Doctor: But I thought you said your wife doesn't work.

Juan: Of course she doesn't work. She stays home.

Gender and Disaster

Excerpt from:

Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Reduction

A Paper prepared by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) March 2002 Geneva, Switzerland

Women as Actors of Change

Although women's social, economic and political position in many societies makes them more vulnerable to natural hazards, they are not helpless victims. Women are important agents for change and need to be further strengthened as such. Recognising and mobilising their skills and capacities as social force and channeling it to enhance efforts to protect their safety and that of their communities and dependants is a major task in any disaster reduction strategy. By and large, for example, African women are the backbone of the rural subsistence economy: it is their productive work that sustains families and communities. Securing food, water and fuel are key community concerns, especially in rural areas where natural disasters are more likely to devastate the very basis of people's livelihoods, since they depend more on the natural resource base for all aspects of life. Women's work in agriculture is often seen as an extension of their domestic responsibilities, rather than a separate economic activity. Distinguishing women's agricultural work from other types of labour puts them in an economic category, which means that her participation in agriculture can be recognized in national labour statistics¹. Legitimizing women's labour in this way makes it easier to advocate for training and education programs for women agricultural workers, essential if women are to become environmentally sound farmers and thus engaged in vulnerability reduction to natural hazards.