

Feminism and gender

Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants would:

1. Be able to differentiate between the terms, sex and gender
2. Know how culture promotes gender stereotypes
3. Explore practical tools for addressing gender issues in facilitating sexual and reproductive health education with adolescents.
4. Share experiences and methodologies in addressing gender and sexual and reproductive health.

Sex and Gender

What do they mean? In groups of 3-5 people, each group to point out similarities and differences, then technical information.

Participants to brainstorm on what comes to mind

| Sex | Gender |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| e.g pleasure, taboo, intercourse | Take down participants' definitions, e.g. male, female, social values, etc |

Technical Information:

Sex: Sex refers to biological/physiological attributes that identify a person as male or female.

- * It refers to the type of genital organs; penis, testicles for males; vagina, womb for females.
- * Type of predominant hormones circulating in the body: oestrogen, testosterone
- * Ability to produce sperms or ova (eggs)
- * Ability to give birth and breast-feed children.

Gender: Gender refers to widely shared ideas and expectations, norms practices, concerning women and men. These include ideas about "typically" female or feminine and male or masculine characteristics, and abilities and commonly shared expectations about how women and men should behave in various situations.

These ideas and expectations are learned from family, friends, opinion leaders, religious and cultural institutions, schools, the workplace, advertising and the media. They reflect and influence the different roles,

By
Bene Madunagu

social status, economic and political power of women and men in the society.

Culture and gender:

Gender stereotypes get promoted by culture. The exercise below is intended for participants to identify how gender stereotypes are promoted in various

cultures.

Game: 2 colours of cards; one set of colour contains a stem of an expression. The other set of colour contains the remaining part of the expression (popular proverbs from different cultures).

Another method: Matching exercise, either on a flipchart or as handouts. The sayings are divided into two halves for them to match. Each correct pair should try to explain the meaning.

Match the proverbs and sayings:

The Gender Stereotypes Game

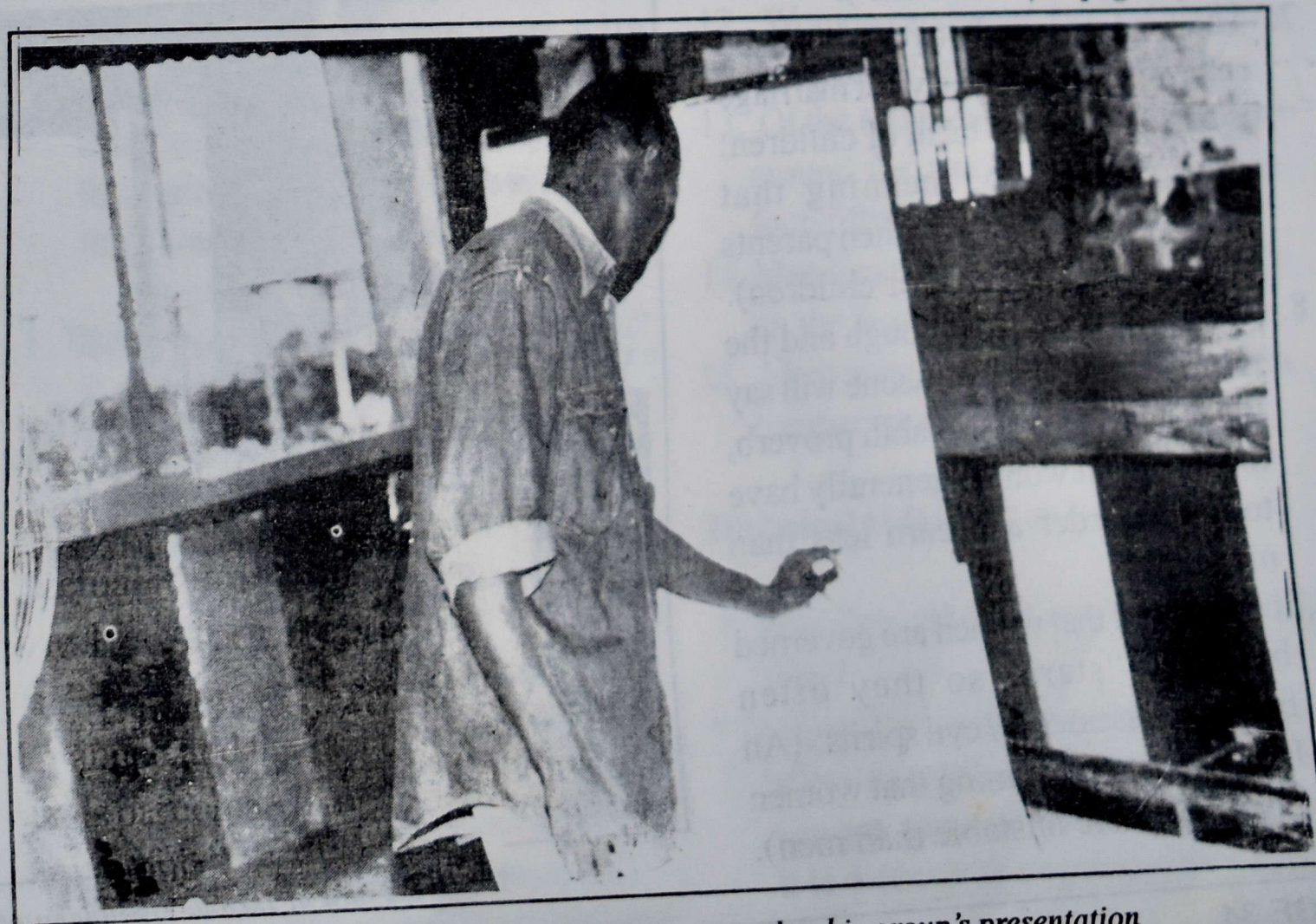
On one card

1. Men are gold
2. Husbands of ugly women
3. Men are like cars
4. Husbands who help their wives
5. Women are like
6. A house without an owner is like
7. He who listens to women
8. The kind of love between a husband and wife in the early days of marriage
9. If the hours are long enough, and the pay is short enough, someone will say
10. A woman's place is in
11. It is believed that women are governed by weak "stars" so
12. A boy who is a coward
13. Strong winds and ugly women
14. In the hands of women rests

On another colour

- * they often become possessed by evil spirits
- * are called slave of the wife
- * women are cloths
- * always wake scared
- * the kitchen
- * an antelope's dung
- * a woman without a husband
- * suffers from famine at harvest time
- * only break twigs
- * the dignity of the house
- * women are like parking places
- * is absent after the birth of children
- * should wear bangles on his hand
- * It's women's work

(On page 34)



Seminar participant, Okoi Ofem, makes his group's presentation

(From page 33)

Technical Information

1. Men are gold, women are cloth (This is a Cambodian proverb, meaning that women, like a white cloth, are easily soiled by sex, while men can have repeated sexual encounters and be polished clean like gold each time).
2. Husbands of ugly women always wake scared: (This is a saying from Brazil, meaning that men think badly about women who are not beautiful).
3. Women are like an antelope's dung: (This is a proverb from Zambia, meaning that women are as plentiful as antelope's dung, so, if your wife misbehaves, throw her away and find another one).
4. He who listens to women suffers from famine at harvest time: (proverb from Zambia, meaning that one must not put weight on women's words. It might lead to trouble later on).
5. Men are like cars and women are like parking spaces (Asian proverb, meaning that men can choose their partners (parking spaces), while women have no choice - anyone can park in them as they are a fixed space).
6. Husbands who help their wives are called slave of the wife: (Indian proverb, meaning that men who help women are not 'real men').
7. The kind of love between husband and wife in the early days of marriage is absent after the birth of children: (Indian proverb, meaning that romantic love changes when parents have to take care of their children).
8. If the hours are long enough and the pay is short enough, someone will say it's women's work (Swahili proverb, meaning that women generally have to work harder and earn less than men).
9. It is believed that women are governed by weak "stars" so they often become possessed by evil spirits: (An Indian proverb, meaning that women tend to be more unstable than men).

Feminism and gender

10. A house without an owner is like a woman without a husband: (meaning, a woman alone is not complete as a human being).
11. A woman's place is in the kitchen: (meaning that women should stay at home and only do domestic work).
12. Strong winds and ugly women only break twigs (proverb from Brazil, meaning they both cause problems).
13. In the hands of women rests the dignity of the house (Indian proverb, meaning that what people think about a family depends on a woman's behaviour)
14. A boy who is a coward should wear bangles on his hand (Indian proverb, meaning that boys who are afraid, or who do not like violence are like women or girls).

Technical Information

Many proverbs carry negative meanings for women and girls and men and boys. Most have more negative sayings about women. The sayings are but social expectations regarding intelligence, abilities and behaviours of women, girls, men and boys. These social expectations are not based on sex - physical characteristics, but on ideas and

prejudices concerning girls and women in relation to boys and men. These are all gender biases and discrimination.

Check again the definitions and distinction between sex and gender and how gender influences early development and socialisation process and continues to influence people's social thinking, actions, norms and practices

Exercise: Participants to walk around the room for about one minute, then are asked to stop and pair up with the person next then each pair sits down with backs to one another.

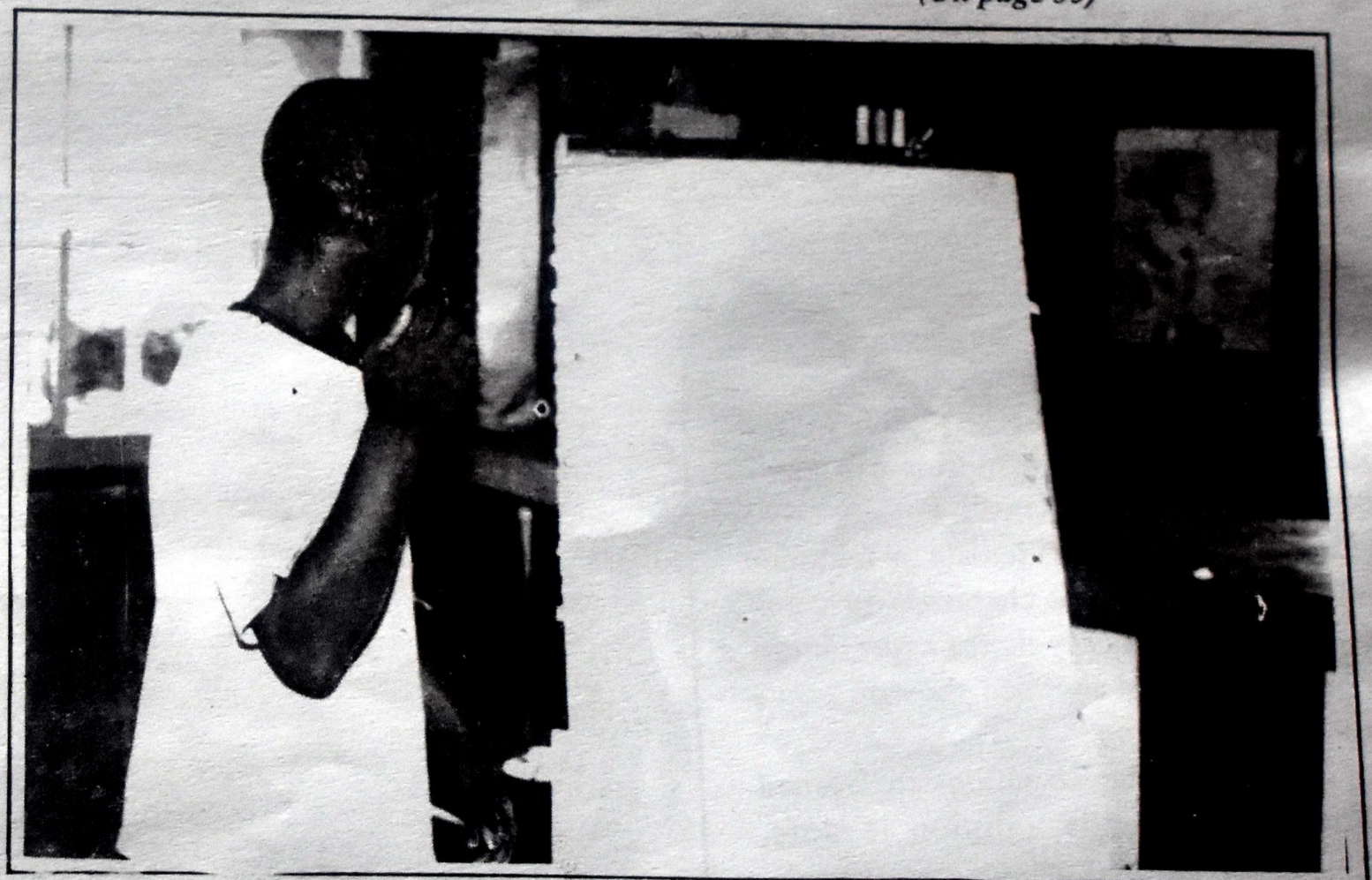
OR

Where there is no space to walk. They switch seats with people across the room and place the chairs back-to-back in pairs.

Then: Each participant to close eyes and:

- a) Think of oneself in a beautiful place, perhaps with soft music that the person likes playing in the background or,
- b) Think about a person that he/she has really admired in his/her life
- c) Then think back to when you were young and try to remember when you

(On page 35)



It was the turn of Ikenna Madunagu of CIINSTRID/CMA to make the presentation for his group

Feminism and gender

(From page 34)

first realised that you were male or female - some event that made it obvious to you that boys and girls were different, or something that the admired person taught you about being male or female.

- d) Reflect on whether this experience had to do with something biological (e.g experiencing first menstruation or wet dreams) or comments or reactions from other people (e.g what boys and girls should or should not do).

- Then open eyes:** a) Was your memory a good or bad experience?
 b) Did the experience seem neither good nor bad? What age? By who? Parents teachers, etc. Each to think for two minutes on these.
 c) Ask partners to share their early memories
 d) Ask a few volunteers to discuss their experiences with the entire group (i) good (ii) bad (iii) neither good nor bad.

Facilitator to contribute from own life to prompt participants.

Process to identify experiences that had to do with (a) sex (e.g seeing boy or girl's genitals and realising the difference; first menstruation or wet dream) (b) gender, e.g. activities that boys or girls were forbidden to engage in.

Technical Information

How possibilities of development were limited by comments of what was only for girls or boys; therefore not to reinforce such messages when dealing with adolescents.

Gender not sex:

Understanding the difference between sex and gender and learning to recognize gender stereotypes.

Exercise: Flipchart in 3 columns

- a) Label first column women and leave the other 2 columns blank (participants to work in groups)
 b) Ask participants to identify personality traits, abilities and roles (attributes) often associated with women.

- c) Then label the 3rd column "Men," and ask participants to now make a list of personality traits, abilities and roles (attributes) associated with men. Check that there are positive and negative and sex attributes (e.g breasts, beard, penis, vagina, menopause, etc).
 d) Then reverse the headings of 1st and 3rd columns by writing "Man" above the first column and "Woman" above the third column.
 e) Go through the lists and get out those attributes that are NOT interchangeable and put in the middle column that is now labelled SEX. By asking which terms in each list CAN'T be reversed. Discuss all terms on the SEX column.

Technical Information

- * All terms in MAN and WOMAN columns are gender-referring to social, cultural expected roles. Sex therefore - biological or genetic.
- * Accepting gender stereotypes limits our potential to develop our full range of human capacities
- * Accepting stereotypes prevents us from determining our own interests and skills and discourages men from sharing roles assigned to women. This restricts women's opportunities.

GENDER GAME: Handouts with statements and questions regarding men and women. Individual work then group to discuss answers using the questions 1-6 below:

1. Did any of the statements surprise you? If so why?
2. Why did you think that gender roles differ among societies and historical periods?
3. How does age interact with gender to determine our social roles?
4. How do these gender-based roles influence men's and women's experience of sexuality?
5. What are some of the disadvantages of gender-based roles for women?
6. What are some of the disadvantages

of gender-based roles for men?

NOTE: The exercise could be a group work or a full-group brainstorming

GENDER GAME

STATEMENTS

Instructions: Indicate G for Gender, S for Sex or GS for both, against each statement

1. Women cry loudly while men hardly shed tears, even at funerals (g)
2. Men impregnate women and women cannot impregnate men (s)
3. Men's reproductive organs show signs/symptoms of STIs earlier than women's (s)
4. Men dig graves and women cook for the mourners (g)
5. Women carry water pots unsupported on their heads, men do not (g)
6. Women are not allowed to propose a marital relationship to a man (g)
7. Women give birth to children, men do not (s)
8. Girls are delicate or gentle, boys are tough (g)
9. Many women do not make decisions with independence and freedom, especially, regarding sexuality and couple relationships (g)
10. Man's voice changes with puberty, women's voice does not (s)
11. Women's risk for HIV infection is determined by their partners' sexual behaviour (s)
12. Women can breast feed babies men can bottle-feed babies (s and g)
13. Of the estimated 6-7 million persons around the world who inject drugs, four-fifths are men (g).
14. Men must have male children to carry on the family name (g)
15. Most people working in construction companies are men (g)

Technical Information

- * Was any marked inappropriately? Why?
- * Inequalities in the statements can also affect expression of sexuality. Where women are economically dependent it is difficult to negotiate safer sex. ●