



Feminisation of Migration

<i>Title</i>	Gender and Foreign Domestic Workers
<i>Target Audience</i>	Foreign domestic workers, women, government officials, NGO workers
<i>Objectives</i>	1. To demonstrate that “gender” is a social construction that engenders identity based discrimination against foreign domestic workers.
<i>Materials</i>	1. Crayons 2. Bond paper 3. Colored pens 4. Whiteboard 5. Broad sheets 6. Masking tape 7. Marker pens 8. Drawing of a female and male.
<i>Time Needed</i>	Minimum of two hours and maximum of four.
<i>Activity</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Divide the participants into two equal groups2. Construct two columns on the board or broad sheet with enough space for everyone in each group to write on.3. Mechanics of the activity are as follows:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) The first group will list nouns, verbs, and adjectives associated with women while the second group will list nouns, verbs, and adjectives associated with men.b) Each group should have a marker pen and each participant should have a turn to write his/her answer.c) At the sound of “GO,” player 1 runs to the board or broad, writes her/his answer and runs back to her/his team, passes the pen to player 2 repeats what player 1 did but with a different answer, then down to # 3 and so on down the line. Answers should not be repeated. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• End the relay game when everyone has participated. Give them recognition for the work done through a cheer or a clap.• Ask each group to read together what they have written.



Discussion

4. Ask the participants the following questions:
- What do you notice about the words associated with Women? Men? What are the similarities and differences?
 - Are these positive or negative words? Explain your answer.
 - Suppose we changed the MEN/WOMEN heading on the two columns into WOMEN/MEN. Are there words that do not fit in? Explain your answer.
 - Which words apply to both men and women?
 - Which words apply only to men? Women? What does this signify?

What is sex and gender?

SEX Biologically determined; it is something fixed male & female

GENDER Socially determined; it is a variable concept, meaning its construction varies over time and across cultures; since it is a social construct, it can be changed.

Male – Masculine
Female – Feminine

Where does gender come from?

- Gender roles assigned to men and women have been dictated by society, hence, gender stereotyping.
- This gender stereotyping is acquired through the socialisation/gendering process.

What are gender stereotypes? Gender stereotyping?

GENDER STEREOTYPES The ascribed traits characteristics, attributes and roles relegated to men and to women. The assumption behind stereotypes is that these ascribed attributes of men apply to all men and those to women apply to all women in a given society.

GENDER STEREOTYPING The tendency of a given culture to ascribe particular traits, characteristics and roles distinctly to a man and/or woman. Individuals are then judged according to their group's identity.

- Men and women are conditioned to act out roles in their behaviour and thinking which are determined by society as appropriate for feminine and masculine roles and characteristics. From their childhood to their adult years women are taught how to be feminine and men, how to be masculine. This is called the SOCIALISATION process.
- The socialisation of men and women is strongly influenced by cultural institutions such as family, education, religion, and the media.
- It is important that women and men realise that their stereotyped roles/characteristics and/or the fictitious idea of femininity and masculinity are assigned by society and therefore it can be challenged and “undone”.
- Implications of such stereotypes to foreign domestic workers:
 - i. Led to the sexual/gender division of labour (production-reproduction divide)
 - ii. Double burden of women – division of production-reproduction sphere has doubled the burden of women participating in productive activities. Aside from engaging in full time productive work (as in the case of foreign domestic workers), housework and child care remain their responsibility.
 - iii. Women lose their identity and capacity for full human development – stereotyped roles discriminate women from equal participation in the productive spheres.
 - iv. Women as well as men are victims of such stereotypes – men who want or are engaged in traditionally female roles are negatively deemed “henpecked”, “effeminate”, “wimp”, “mama’s boy” and while on the positive side they are considered “extraordinary”, “the ideal & perfect husband,” “a saint,” and “a good catch.” Women who are engaged in traditionally male roles are looked upon on the negative side as “boyish,” “lesbians,” “exceptions to the rule,” “bitches,” “women with strong personalities (as if it’s not right for women to have strong personalities),” “stiff”, “not a good mom/wife (if they are working mothers and something bad happens to the family)”, “supermom” or “superwoman” (but with a double edged meaning).

Conclusion

Foreign domestic workers should free themselves from such stereotyped roles/characteristics – since this stereotyping has created injustice against women. It is only by freeing themselves from such stereotyped roles and introducing changes that women can enjoy their right to full human development. Women have common experiences in role stereotyping in varying levels and forms: vis-à-vis men, women are in an inferior situation and subordinate position. Therefore, to correct this inequality between men and women in most societies, there is a need to visualise change and organise women towards realising this vision of change.