

GENDER *in* **Everyday Life**



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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is progressing well in its aim to achieve developed nation status in 2020. Vision 2020 as envisaged by the Honorable Tun Dr Mahathir has become a household word among the citizens in the country. Development efforts since independence have improved the quality of life of the population. Both men and women have been directly affected by development initiatives in the last 50 years. How will life in a developed nation be for Malaysians? Will life be the same? Better off? Worse off? How will the lives of men, women, girls, boys, older men and older women be?

It is widely accepted that development has often had different impacts on different people. One of issues of concern locally, as well as internationally, is gender inequality, which is a combination of the manifestation of the differential impact of development on men and women as well as inherited cultural norms and practices. The Millennium Declaration, building on the outcomes of the international conference of the 1990s, made a strong commitment to the right to development, to gender equality, to the eradication of the many dimensions of poverty, and to sustainable human development (UNDP, 2005). Gender equality is referred to as a situation where women and men, girls and boys, are not discriminated against in their access to opportunities for advancement. Can we achieve gender equality by 2020? This paper will focus on gender episodes in the everyday lives of Malaysians and highlight some of the critical challenges in achieving gender equality as we approach 2020. Since the family is the basic unit in Malaysian society, the discussion will highlight the gendered daily lives of individuals within the family and in the societal context. The paper will be divided into seven sections:

1. The meaning of gender
2. Theories on gender
3. Gender in the family

4. International development: From women to gender
5. Gendered way of life in Malaysia: Evidence from research
6. Towards achieving gender equality: Challenges
7. Conclusions

THE MEANING OF GENDER

Gender and sex are two words often used interchangeably in our everyday lives. Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. Sex is fixed and does not change over time, across countries and across cultures. Men in Malaysia have similar characteristics to men in any other countries. One cannot change one's sex (except through surgery) and one has to live with one's sex. Though the biological differences between men and women are minimal and insignificant compared to the similarities, these differences are often cited as the basis for unequal treatment. Biological differences become magnified or exaggerated to represent an ideology of sex differences and used to justify the unequal treatment of men and women. Marginalisation of women has often been seen as 'natural' and a fact of their biological nature. However these biological differences cannot explain why women have less access to power and have lower status than men.

To understand and challenge the cultural value placed on one's biological sex and the related unequal power hierarchies, we need the relational concept of 'gender'. Gender refers to the socially constructed or defined role differences between men and women, girls and boys. We are what society tells us of being men and women, girls and boys from different social groups, about our roles and responsibilities. Gender is in one's mind, spirit and soul and it is the gendered sense of one's being. Gender is often described as masculine and feminine. Collins Dictionary of Sociology (Jary & Jary, 1991: 254) defined gender as not biologically determined but socially and culturally defined. Gender is seen as culturally and historically relative, i.e. the meaning, interpretation and

expression of gender varies both within and between cultures, and is subject to historical modification. Gender differences between men and women are socially constructed norms regarding divisions of labor, power, responsibilities and rights between men and women (IWRAP, 1995).

The construction of gender determines what is expected, allowed and the values of men and women. The manifestation of gender differences can be found in the construction of what men and women do, how men and women relate to each other and how men and women perceive themselves. For example, transplanting paddy seedlings was a woman's role in Malaysia but this activity is prescribed as a man's role in Bangladesh. These differences also determine the nature and extent of disadvantage, disparity and discrimination. Gender means different things to different people and one's definition of gender will direct the way one looks at gender. In the case of Malaysia the word gender is often jokingly interpreted as "janda" (divorcee). Jokes aside, gender is often used to refer to women from all walks of life. Two common ways of looking at gender are the focus on **identity or roles**. Gender through identify lenses look at how that identity is formed and the implications of the formation of that identity. One might look at whether the identity is innate or constructed; if it is constructed then you look at how it is constructed both as an individual and as culture and how it influences your existence and how you view yourself.

Gender from the role perspective focuses on the roles prescribed to boys and girls and men and women in a society. Reiter (1975) defined gender roles as the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed needs are satisfied. Social factors such as class, age and ethnicity also shape the specific meaning, expression and experience of gender and gender cannot be equated in any simplistic way with sex or sexuality. Gender identities and expectations of the roles and responsibilities of men and women are therefore changeable between and within cultures. Gender stereotyping is the perception of others'

roles, especially individuals outside our group. The stereotype accorded to men and women often leads to imbalance in power.

Gender and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent. Use of the term gender rather than sex, signals an awareness of the cultural specificity of gender identities, roles and relations. It also recognises gender inequality as the outcome of social processes, which can be challenged, rather than as a biological given. For this reason, its use can generate considerable opposition, particularly from conservative, religious and cultural groups but also in mainstream development institutions (Reeves and Baden, 2000).

The two concepts are closely inter-linked. In Islam, we acknowledge that men and women are made by Allah to be different. Men and women are ordained by Allah with special attributes, roles and responsibilities, that complement one another. There are also biological differences. If women are different from men in this area, then it becomes impossible to treat them in exactly the same way. For example, when a working woman gives birth, she may have to take time off to nurse the baby and to recover her health. In this instance, women cannot be treated exactly the same as men: but it also does not mean that women no longer have a right to equality. To be different does not necessarily mean to be unequal. Both men and women should be given equal opportunities for development. No one should be deprived of opportunities based on gender.

THEORIES ON GENDER

Risman (1998) identified four strands of research on gender, one of which involves the combination of the gender structure and use of gender approaches. On the other hand, Bandura (1999), proposes three dimensions of looking at gender theories, one dimension concerns the relative emphasis placed on biological, psychological and socio structural determinants, the second dimension concerns

the nature of the transmission models and the last dimension concerns the temporal scope of theoretical analyses. In **Biologically-oriented theories**, gender differences arising from the differential biological roles played by males and females in reproduction underlie gender-role development and differentiation (Buss, 1985; Trivers, 1972). **Psychologically-oriented theories** on the other hand tend to emphasize intra-psychic processes governing gender development (Freud, 1905/1930; Kohlberg, 1966), while **sociological theories** focus on socio structural determinants of gender-role development and functioning (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Eagly, 1987a; Epstein, 1988).

The second group of theories concerns the nature of the transmission models. The **psychological theories** typically emphasize the cognitive construction of gender conceptions and styles of behavior within the familial transmission model. For example, Freud emphasised on the adoption of gender roles within the family through the process of identification. **Behavioristic theories** on the other hand have accorded prominence to parents in shaping and regulating gender-linked conduct. In theories favoring biological determinants, familial genes are posited as the transmission agent of gender differentiation across generations (Rowe, 1994). In contrast, **sociologically-oriented theories** emphasize the social construction of gender roles mainly at the institutional level (Lorber, 1994). From this dimension, gender conceptions and role behavior are the products of a broad network of social influences operating both within the family and in the many societal systems encountered in everyday life. Thus, it favors a multifaceted social transmission model rather than mainly a familial transmission model. **Social cognitive theory** of gender-role development and functioning integrates psychological and socio structural determinants within a unified conceptual framework (Bandura, 1986; 1997).

The third dimension concerns the temporal scope of theoretical analyses. Most psychological theories treat gender development as primarily a phenomenon of early childhood rather than one that operates throughout the

life course (Bandura, 1999). In reality, rules of gender-role conduct vary to some degree across social contexts, at different life stages as well as with socio-cultural and technological changes. Gender role development and functioning are not confined to childhood but are negotiated throughout the life course.

Socio cognitive theory, a life-course perspective, emphasizes that the analysis of the socio cognitive determinants of gender orientations will span the entire age range. The process of identification is depicted as one in which children undertake wholesale adoption of the characteristics and qualities of the same-sex parent. According to the **Cognitive Developmental Theory**, gender identity is postulated as the basic organizer and regulator of children's gender learning (Kohlberg, 1966). Children develop stereotypic conceptions of gender from what they see and hear around them. Once they achieve gender constancy -- the belief that their own gender is fixed and irreversible -- they positively value their gender identity and seek to behave only in ways that are congruent with that conception. Individuals attempt to behave in ways that are consistent with their self-conception. Much of children's conduct is designed to confirm their gender identity. Kohlberg (1966) defined gender constancy as the realization that one's sex is a permanent attribute tied to underlying biological properties and does not depend on superficial characteristics such as hair length, style of clothing, or choice of play activities.

The three dimensions explained above focus on how gender identity, ideology, roles and gender stereotype are developed and manifested in the daily lives of boys and girls, men and women. Understanding these concepts can enable researchers to explain why people behave the way they do. Gender ideology, stereotype and roles have been identified as the root of gender inequality, discrimination and suppression in society.

This paper focuses on the social learning theory which was used to explain gender role theory and gender schema theory. The Gender roles (socialization) theory explains how one's gender ideology and behaviour is shaped while gender schema theory explains the formation of the gender stereotype.

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura (1999) has become perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development. His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. Known as observational learning (or modeling), this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors including gender based behaviour. The basic social learning concepts put forward by Bandura is that people can learn through observation. Three basic models of observational learning are a live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior; a verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behavior; and finally a symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs or in online media. Bandura noted that external, environmental reinforcement was not the only factor influencing learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. This theory was later expanded to explain the formation of gender ideology and gender roles.

Gender Role Socialization

A social constructionist approach (advocated by Bem & Coltrane) views gender acquisition as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The most important insight from research on gender socialization is that because boys and girls are treated differently and put into different learning environments, they develop different needs, wants, desires, skills, and temperaments; in short they become different types of people—men and women—who hardly question why they are different or how they ended up that way. The basic underlying model is that of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Because people think boys and girls are supposed to be different, they treat them differently and give them different opportunities for development. This differential treatment promotes certain behaviours and self

images that recreate the preconceived cultural stereotypes of gender. The process repeats itself over and over in an unending spiral across generations, so that although gender stereotypes are being constantly re-created and modified, they seem natural and impervious to change. (Coltrane, p. 114).

Children learn about gender and how to “do gender” because it is central to the way we organize society. Children “learn culturally appropriate ways of thinking and being as they follow routine rituals and respond to the everyday demands of the world in which they live. Gender socialization turns children into “cultural natives,” who know their culture’s reality without realizing that other realities are possible.

Our mental map of us being male and female is often manifested in our daily way of life, in the family, community as well as the work place. The distinct roles and behaviours of men and women in a given culture, dictated by that culture’s gender norms and values, give rise to **gender differences**. Gender differences are a result of gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are related to cognitive processes because we have different expectations for female and male behaviour and the traditional gender roles help to sustain gender stereotypes, such as that males are supposed to be adventurous, assertive aggressive, independent and task-oriented, whereas females are seen as more sensitive, gentle, dependent, emotional and people-oriented (Crespi, 2007). The different roles and expectations lead to gender polarization. Gender polarization often creates an artificial gap between women and men and gender roles that are very difficult to change in time (Crespi, 2007).

Alice Eagly (1987) offers an explanation of gender development based on socialization which distinguishes the communal and agentic dimensions of gender-stereotypes. The communal role is characterized by attributes, such as nurturance and emotional expressiveness, commonly associated with domestic activities, and thus, with women. The agentic role is characterized by attributes such as assertiveness and independence, commonly associated with public

activities, and thus, with men. Behaviour is strongly influenced by gender roles when cultures endorse gender stereotypes (Eagly, 1987).

Gender norms and values, however, also give rise to **gender inequalities** - that is, differences between men and women which systematically empower one group to the detriment of the other. Gender inequality is deeply rooted in entrenched attitudes, societal institutions, and market forces, and so political commitment at the highest international and national levels is essential. The fact that, throughout the world, women on average have lower cash incomes than men is an example of gender inequality (WHO, 2008).

Gender Schema Theory

Bem and Markus and her associates have proposed the social psychological approaches centered mainly on individual differences in gender schematic processing of information (Bem, 1981; Markus, Crane, Bernstein, & Siladi, 1982). Based on this theory, the mastery of gender identity, the ability of children to label themselves and others as males or females, is considered necessary for gender schema development to begin (Martin & Halverson, 1981). The gender schema expands to include knowledge of activities and interests, personality and social attributes, and scripts about gender-linked activities (Levy & Fivush, 1993; Martin & Halverson, 1981). Once the schema is developed, children will want to be like others of their own sex, which is known as gender-label matching.

Long before children have attained gender constancy, they prefer to play with toys traditionally associated with their gender (Carter & Levy, 1988; Emmerich & Shepard, 1984; Levy & Carter, 1989; Lobel & Menashri, 1993; Marcus & Overton, 1978; Martin & Little, 1990), to model their behavior after same-sex models (Bussey & Bandura, 1984), and to reward peers for gender-appropriate behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1992; Lamb & Roopnarine, 1979). Moreover, growing awareness of gender constancy does not increase children's preferences for same-gender roles and activities (Marcus & Overton, 1978; Smetana & Letourneau, 1984).

The social psychological approaches advanced by Bem and Markus and her associates have centered mainly on individual differences in gender schematic processing of information (Bem, 1981; Markus, Crane, Bernstein, & Siladi, 1982). Martin and Halverson's (1981) approach emphasizes the developmental aspects of schema development and functioning. The mastery of gender identity i.e. the ability of children to label themselves and others as males or females, is considered necessary for gender schema development to begin (Martin & Halverson, 1981). The schema expands to include knowledge of activities and interests, personality and social attributes, and scripts about gender-linked activities (Levy & Fivush, 1993; Martin, 1995; Martin & Halverson, 1981). In interaction with the environment, gender labeling and preference may both be products of parental influence. Gender schema theory predicts that the more elaborate the gender knowledge children possess, the more strongly they show gender-linked preferences. This is a useful framework for examining the cognitive processing of gender information once gender schemas are developed. In particular, it has shed light on how gender-schematic processing affects attention, organization and memory of gender-related information (Carter & Levy, 1988; Ruble & Martin, 1998).

Geis (1993) documented the social construction and perpetuation of stereotypic gender differentiation. Gender stereotypes shape the perception, evaluation and treatment of males and females in selectively gendered ways that beget the very patterns of behavior that confirm the initial stereotypes. Many gender differences in social behavior are viewed as products of division of labor between the sexes that get replicated through socio structural practices governed by disparate gender status and power (Eagly, 1987). Knowledge of gender stereotypes, which are generalized preconceptions about the attributes of males and females, is similarly unrelated to gender-linked conduct (Huston, 1983; Martin, 1993; Signorella, 1987).

Since gender is a social construct, gender roles and ideology can be expected to change. Sullivan (2004) argued that small social and economic changes affecting the real-life circumstances of individuals on a day-to-day basis and that, accumulating slowly, practiced and contested in daily interaction, amount in the end to real, substantial, and substantive change. Willinger (1993) has distinguished two major theoretical starting points used for addressing changes in gender relations: sex stratification theory and cultural lag theory. Based on the sex stratification theory no meaningful change in gender relations can be conceived without a fundamental upheaval in structured gender inequality associated with patriarchal social relations. The second carries an implication of evolutionary progressive change occurring across social groups (Sullivan, 2004).

Changing gender make up of the society is happening. Most of the research on attitudes and values conducted in the 1980s found that there had been a movement toward a rejection of traditionally defined gender roles, particularly in the form of greater acceptance of non familial roles for women, among younger women with higher levels of education, and a rather less clear movement toward acceptance by men of a more familial role (Willinger, 1993). Scott et al. (1996) concluded that despite inter country and cross-time variations, "the ideology surrounding traditional gender roles is increasingly rejected, though there is evidence that the pace of change has slowed in the 1990s." It was observed that women have been much more prepared than men to reject traditional gender role attitudes. In Inglehart's (1997) study, for example, the emphasis is on intergenerational shifts in values, where the move toward gender equality is one. However, Scott et al. (1996) found that a significant proportion of change (40 to 60 percent) in Britain, the United States, and Germany, during the period in the 1970s, has been due to within-cohort changes.

In addition to the theories mentioned above, several other theories have been utilized by researchers to explain gender differences in economy and

decision making. In the **relative resource theory** (Brines, 1993) the division of labor in the home is determined by who controls the most resources. The spouse with more socioeconomic resources (normally the man) is expected to do less housework while the woman who controls less economic resources is expected to do more of the domestic work. The bargaining model on the other hand attempts to explain that the spouse with greater socioeconomic resources will have more power, or leverage, to bargain her or his way out of doing housework.

Gender as a System

There is increasing consensus among gender scholars that gender is not primarily an identity or role that is taught in childhood and enacted in family relations (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on the basis of that difference (Ferree, Lorber and Hess, 1999; Nakano Glenn 1999; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999; Risman 1998). According to Ridgeway and Correll (2004), gender involves cultural beliefs and distributions of resources at the macro level, patterns of behaviour and organizational practices at the interactional level, and selves and identities at the individual level. Gender as a system acts as a fundamental principle for organizing social relations in virtually all spheres of social life. Gender discriminations in the labour market and institutional supports for the family structure fall into the demand side of the processes that produce gender inequality. Gender differences in the behavioural choices made by women and men in the labour market and at home constitute the supply side of the problem. Understanding of gender differences can shed light to create better understanding of gender inequality. Although changing socioeconomic conditions and personal and collective resistance do gradually modify cultural beliefs about gender, the core structure of the beliefs is not easy to erode.

Much research on gender is needed, especially in Malaysia, to understand the socialization processes and the gender dynamics of a multi ethnic society. Due to the multi disciplinary and multi dimensional nature of gender, Ruble and Martin's (1998) proposed six content areas and four constructs of research focus on gender. The content areas are:

1. **Biological/categorical sex:** biological attributes (e.g. hormonal, or morphological distinctions), as well as physical and material attributes that need not have a clear biological basis (e.g., bodily features of one's gender such as clothing or hair style).
2. **Activities and interests:** toys, play and leisure activities, occupations and work, household roles, tasks.
3. **Personal-social attributes:** personality traits, social behaviors and abilities.
4. **Gender-based social relationships:** sex of peers, friends, lovers, preferred parent or attachment figure, and models (i.e., persons he or she wants to imitate or identify with).
5. **Styles and symbols:** nonverbal behaviours (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, body positions and movement), speech patterns (e.g., tempo, pitch), play styles, fantasy.
6. **Gender-related values:** evaluations of sex categories, valuing masculine and feminine attributes, gender-role attitudes, in-group favoritism and out-group derogation.

The four constructs are concepts or beliefs, identity or self perception, preferences and behavioural attachment. These content areas are combined with four constructs yielding 24 classes of issues potentially relevant to sex/gender-typing research. The constructs within this scheme are:

1. **Concepts or beliefs:** an individual's gender-related knowledge or knowledge structures (i.e., gender stereotypes). In the order of the aforementioned content areas, this construct refers to (a) gender labeling and constancy; (b) knowledge of gender-typed toys, activities, and so forth; (c) knowledge of gender-typed traits or role-behaviours; (d) beliefs about gender appropriate social relations; (e) awareness of gender-typed nonverbal behaviors and symbols; and (f) knowledge of different values attached to the sexes and to gender-related issues.
2. **Identity or self-perception:** an individual's perception of him- or herself as masculine or feminine or as possessing gender-typed attributes. Relevant topics are (a) inner sense of maleness or femaleness; (b) self perception of activities and interests; (c) perceptions of own traits, abilities, and behaviours; (d) perception of self as relating to others (peers, friends, parents, etc.); (e) self-perception of nonverbal, stylistic, and symbolic features; and (f) perception of self in terms of one's membership in positively or negatively valued social groups.
3. **Preferences:** an individual's desire to possess gender-related attributes. The topics falling into this construct category are (a) wish to be male or female; (b) preference for toys, activities, occupations; (c) preference for particular traits, abilities, and behaviors; (d) preference for particular others to relate with on the basis of gender; (e) preference for stylistic or symbolic objects; and (f) in-group or out-group biases, gender related attitudes, sexist prejudice
5. **Behavioral enactment:** an individual's pattern of gender-typed behavioral display. The topics exemplifying the content areas pertaining to this construct are (a) displaying gender-typed bodily attributes; (b) engaging in gender-typed play or leisure activities, occupations, or achievement tasks; (c) displaying gender-typed traits and abilities; (d) building, maintaining, or ending social relationships on the basis of gender; (e) displaying gender

typed stylistic or symbolic features and fantasy; and (f) discriminating against others on the basis of gender.

GENDER IN THE FAMILY

This section will attempt to integrate the theories explained earlier in the context of family. Since family is recognized as a basic unit in Malaysian society, the role of the family system in maintaining the gendered way of life is crucial. It is hoped that the focus on gender in the family can help shed some light on gender disparities as we aspire to achieve gender equality. Much has been done to address gender disparity in this region after Beijing but the disparity still persists including in Malaysia. Review of various United Nations' reports on gender and development in the Asian society revealed that not much attention is given to the family. Gender is a vital component of family organization and child development, yet it has rarely been the explicit focus of research or analysis (Hill, 2002). Family defined on a basis of kinship often comprising of men and women and as social institutions can be described as follows:

- have characteristic of groups;
- persists over time and space;
- includes distinct social practices;
- constrains and facilitates behavior/action;
- includes expectations, rule/norms;
- is constituted and reconstituted by embodied agents;
- is internalized as identities and selves;
- includes a legitimating ideology; is contradictory, rife with conflict; changes continuously;
- is organized by and permeated with power; and
- is mutually constituted at different levels of analysis (Zipp, Prohaska and Bemille (2004).

As an institution the family can be regarded as the foundation to the promotion of the gendered way of life and women especially perform their roles as expected by society. The interaction and interdependence of individuals, family and society in relation to the gendered way of life is shown in Figure 3.1.

Family members comprising men and women, boys and girls perform their respective roles based on how they socialize and what is expected to be performed. Children learn from their parents on how to behave as boys and girls through daily socialization and reinforcement. Being men/boys and women/girls in a family unit, one is expected to perform certain roles in daily life. Families throughout the world, perform tasks such as physical maintenance, socialization and education, control of social and sexual behavior, maintenance of family morale, motivation to perform roles inside and outside the family, the acquisition of mature family members (males and females) by the formation of sexual partnerships, the acquisition of new family members through procreation or adoption, and the launching of juvenile members from the family when mature (Mattessich and Hill, 1987). Husband and wife, daughters and sons have specific gender role expectations in society.

Historically, with the majority of the population in Malaysia living in rural areas, extended multi-generational family systems were considered as the ideal. The kinship system, which took various forms were a real form of social control. The traditional family structure was patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal, where the roles and responsibilities, control and distribution of resources were strictly determined by age and gender (Kashyap, 2003). Lerner (1986) notes in her historical analysis of gender relations that women's "subordination has been primarily expressed in the form of paternalistic dominance within the structure of the family". Despite modernization and changes in family living patterns, the gendered way of life has not changed. Total authority in most of the community in this region rests with the eldest male member of the family. Women are considered inferior to men, although their status increases with age, having

sons, and ascending to the head of the domestic household in older age. In certain cultures such as the Chinese culture, preference for a boy child remains the practice. Women are expected to continue having children until they get a boy.

The traditional way of viewing the role of men and women is passed on through generations as a result of gender socialization. Though in some countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines women are given equal opportunities in education, in cases where parents had limited resources, they will choose to give the opportunities to the boy child since “they are expected to be the head of the would be formed family”. Marriage is an important event and everyone has to marry (Kashyap, 2003). Marriages in the west are between two individuals. However marriages in these Asian Countries are economically and socially oriented and take place between two families rather than two individuals. By default men remain the head of households and only recently have women as head of the household been acknowledged.

Consistent with the analysis of the resilience of gender beliefs, current and longitudinal studies of gender stereotypes show that the core structure of these beliefs has not yet been dismantled by progress toward gender equity (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Descriptive beliefs about the attributes of the “typical” man or woman are still largely shared and largely unchanged since the 1970s (Fiske et al. 2002; Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo, and Lueptow 2001; Spence and Buckner 2000). Although changing socioeconomic conditions and personal and collective resistance do gradually modify cultural beliefs about gender, the core structures of the beliefs are not easy to erode. Women's involvement in the labor force has not been compensated with increase in men's involvement in domestic activities leaving women overloaded with work. Gender was found to be the most powerful determinant of a spouse's share of domestic work (Kroska, 2004) with women continuing to assume most of the tasks and time allotted to household work (Doucet, 2001)

The concept of males as the heads of households which reflect power relations between men and women leads to limitation to access to and control over resources. Economic dependence ties women's economic interests to men's, whereby women suffer greater harm from marital disruption and financial dependency (Holden & Smock 1991), and it is generally easier for men to find replacement partners (Bergmann 1986; England & Farkas 1986; Guttentag & Secord 1983). Grameen Bank and Indian studies show that wives surrender all their earnings to husbands who squander it on gambling and alcoholic drinks. The power awarded to the head of the household leads to decision about family planning being in the hands of men and in some cases abuse of power results in family violence, pushing daughters off into early marriage/prostitution. Being a somewhat traditional society, religion plays an important role in family life.

Religion plays an important role in gender disparity and often religion has been regarded as a stumbling block to gender equity. The problem of domestic violence in Muslim societies and struggles against it are comparable to those in other societies, because they raise common questions about the relationship among religion and culture, the state, and women's rights. Hajjar (2004) proposed that one way of engaging a comparative approach to domestic violence in Muslim societies is to highlight variations in the relationship between religion and the state which can be divided into three categories: (1) communalization: religious laws, institutions, and authorities are accorded semi-autonomy from the state; (2) nationalization: religious laws and jurisprudence are incorporated into or are influential over the state's legal regime; and (3) theocratization: the state bases its own authority on religious law and jurisprudence. The interpretation and state view on all three aspects will have strong influence on how domestic violence is addressed. The practice of domestic violence is more of a cultural than religious practice. In fact, one of the missions of The Prophet Muhammad (saw) was to eliminate violence.

Gender roles tend to be passed down from generation to generation and as such though the environment has changed the expectations and understanding of how men and women should behave is still unchanged. As such the idea of “doing gender” can be looked at as an active (re)construction of gender, located in daily interaction (Sullivan, 2004). The culture of patriarchy, male dominance and superiority over female inferiority is reflected in power relations especially in the family and passed down through generations. To make matters worse these cultures and beliefs are often translated into development programs and activities. The practice of families preferring sons to daughters, where fathers and sons are given the best food to eat, property is in hands of sons, sex selection during pregnancy and female infanticide have not disappeared in society and will continue since parents or adult family members are still practicing this.

Whatever wrong or right that is happening in society can be accorded to the family. Becker (1965), analyzing family as an economic unit, labeled family as a “small factory” that produces commodities such as children, health, leisure and many others. Risman (1989) also concluded that the household/family is a gender factory. Comprising of male and female members, the family has been acknowledged to be the key institution in the continuity of traditions in societies. Development that took place in the last several decades has impacted family unit and in some way families have also contributed to the changes in the systems outside the family systems. Increased educational opportunities for women has resulted in increased women’s participation in the public sphere but women’s roles in the home remains unchanged.

Since gender is a fundamental aspect of individual identity as well as an underlying element of social organization, women’s and men’s personal judgments on happiness provide valuable insights into how they judge their respective social positions. Despite diversity and overlap in men’s and women’s opportunities and outcomes, comparative income and education indicate that a gender hierarchy favoring men continues to exist (Kominski & Adams, 1994).

Male dominance in the wider society is pervasive enough that, even when individual women hold some relative advantages compared to their partners, gender inequalities continue to affect the ways in which men and women construct their intimate relationships in marriage, with men continuing to have greater marital power (Aldous and Ganey, 1999).

Families constitute one social organization that is important to both women and men, regardless of race. However, despite the present diversity within the two genders as to adult priorities, women, more often than men, have been reared to give major priority to family identities (Gerson, 1993; Thorne, 1992). Within existing social arrangements, women in paid employment as well as the decreasing number of full-time homemakers are still largely responsible for family duties associated with being a partner and parent (Hochschild, 1989). These roles take on greater salience within the hierarchies of identities that constitute the selves of most women. Expectations of others and women's own readiness to play the roles that are caught up in these identities indicate their importance (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

The theme on gender and the family is the asymmetry between husbands and wives on decision making, the division of household labor, child care, and control of finances, communication, and caring behavior. Moreover, male dominance in these areas seems only modestly affected by the women's economic standing, the time demands of each spouse, and both men and women's socialization and gender ideologies (Coltrane, 2000; Fox & Murry, 2000; Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001; Tichenor, 1999).

Gender inequalities and disparities such as poverty and feminization of poverty, female headed households, low literacy among women, violence against women, human trafficking of women, young girls and boys and HIV/AIDS are still of concern. The disparities occur due to several factors; all of which can be associated with the socio cultural practices of the community, and worsened by gender insensitive policies and programs. Though much effort have been

carried out to address gender disparity, much more needs to be done to achieve the Millenium Development goal of gender equality as we strive to achieve our vision of becoming a developed nation.

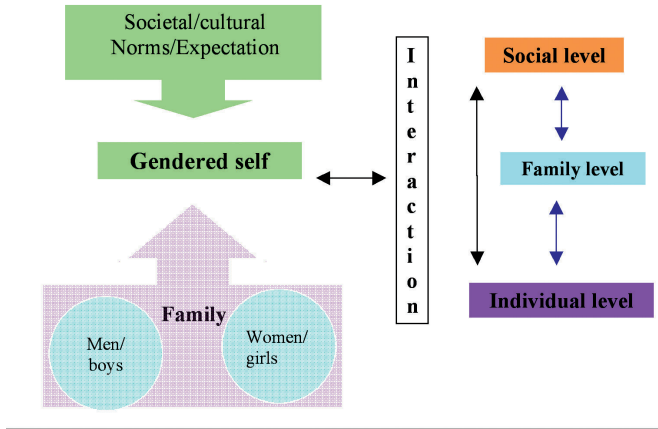


Figure 3.1 Gender in Everyday Life

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM WOMEN TO GENDER

Gender issues and concerns is an international concern. The movement to enhance the lives of women worldwide is in the agenda of the United Nation as well as all other international organization such as World Bank, World Health Organization, United Nation Development Programmes, and many others. The movement in the international arenas directly affects what is going on in Malaysia. Boserup (1970) challenged the assumptions that women will benefit from development. Focus on Women and Development (WAD) evolved from the fact that at the 1975 UN Women's World Conference in Mexico City. The feminist approaches of predominantly white women from the North aimed at gender equality were rejected by many women in the South who argued that

the development model itself lacked the perspective of developing countries. Out of this grew the DAWN Network, based in the South, which aimed to make the view of developing countries more widely known and influential (Sen and Grown, 1987). By 1990 WID, GAD and WAD views had largely converged (Rathgeber, 1990) but different approaches to gender and development continued to evolve.

The summary of approaches to development which have different impact on women worldwide is shown in Table 4.1. Since development programmes have been initiated by countries from the north, they often failed to consider the socio cultural dynamics of the community involved. The 1975 UN International Year for Women led to the establishment of women's ministries in many countries and the institutionalization of Women in Development (WID) policies in governments, donor agencies and NGOs with the aim of integrating women into economic development by focusing on income generation projects for women. Unfortunately the anti-poverty approach failed as most of its income-generation projects were only marginally successful, often because they were set up on the basis of a belief that women of the South had spare time available to undertake these projects and left women out of the mainstream development and treated women identically. By the 1980s WID advocates shifted from exposing the negative effects of development on women to showing that development efforts were losing out by ignoring women's actual or potential contributions.

The efficiency approach argued that, in the context of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), gender analysis made good economic sense. It was recognized that understanding men's and women's roles and responsibilities as part of the planning of development interventions improved project effectiveness. The efficiency approach was criticized for focusing on what women could do for development rather than on what development could do for women.

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach originated from academic criticism starting in the mid 1970s. Based on the concept of gender (the socially

acquired ideas of masculinity and femininity) and gender relations (the socially constructed pattern of relations between men and women) they analysed how development reshapes these power relations. Gender analysts explicitly see women as agents of change. They also criticize the WID approach for treating women as a homogeneous category and they emphasize the important influence of differences of class, age, marital status, religion and ethnicity or race on development outcomes. Proponents distinguished between 'practical' gender needs; items that would improve women's lives within their existing roles, and 'strategic' gender needs that seek to increase women's ability to take on new roles and to empower them (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1993). Gender analysts demanded a commitment to change in the structures of power in national and international agencies (Derbyshire 2002).

The empowerment approach, initially introduced in the 1980s, was regarded as a weapon for the weak, best wielded through grassroots and participatory activities (Parpart, 2002). However, empowerment has many meanings and by the mid 1990s some mainstream development agencies had begun to adopt the term as they saw empowerment as a means for enhancing efficiency and productivity without changing the status quo. The alternative development literature, on the other hand, looks to empowerment as a method of social transformation and achieving gender equality. Rowlands (1997) sees empowerment as a broad development process that enables people to gain self-confidence and self-esteem, thereby allowing both men and women to actively participate in development decision-making. The empowerment approach was also linked to the rise of participatory approaches to development and often meant working with women at the community level building organizational skills. The Gender and the Environment (GED) approach was based on eco-feminist views, especially those of Vandana Shiva (1989), which made an essentialist link between women and the environment and encouraged environmental programmes to focus on women's roles.

The Mainstreaming gender equality approach came into widespread use with the adoption of the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The 189 governments represented in Beijing, including Malaysia, unanimously affirmed that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality with men are matters of fundamental human rights and therefore a prerequisite for social justice. The twelve critical areas of concern identified were:

- enabling women to overcome poverty
- ensuring women's equal access to quality education and training
- ensuring women's equal access to health care
- eliminating violence against women
- protecting women from armed and other conflicts
- promoting women's economic self-reliance
- promoting women's participation in decision-making
- integrating gender equality dimensions into policy and planning
- promoting women's human rights
- enhancing the media's role in promoting gender equality
- integrating women in the ecologically sustainable development process
- eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child

Gender mainstreaming attempts to combine the strengths of the efficiency and empowerment approaches within the context of mainstream development. Mainstreaming gender equality believes that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects so that gender inequality is not perpetuated. It attempts to overcome the common problem of 'policy evaporation' as the implementation and impact of development projects fail to reflect policy commitments (Derbyshire 2002). It also helps to overcome the problems of male backlash against women when women-only projects are successful (Momsen, 2004). In the late 1990s donor-supported development shifted away from discrete project

interventions to general poverty elimination, which potentially provides an ideal context for gender mainstreaming. Attention is only just beginning to be paid to the gender dimensions of poverty alleviation (Narayan and Petesch 2002). (Momsel, 2004).

As we move into the 21st Century, the gender mainstreaming approach is facilitated by gender budgeting instruments. Gender budgeting focuses on the impact of every part of the budget on women and men; girls and boys. A gender-responsive budget (GRB) actively addresses gender gaps in budget allocations, particularly in key areas such as income, health, education, and development, and ensures that government resources are allocated where they are most needed for the benefit of all. Malaysia conducted a pilot project on gender budgeting in 2000 in four ministries, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Resource and Ministry of Rural Development (MWFCD, 2005).

Table 4.1 Approaches to Development: From Women to Gender

ISSUES	WELFARE	EQUITY	ANTI-POVERTY	EFFICIENCY	EMPOWERMENT
Origins	Earliest approach: -residual model of social welfare under colonial administration/modernisation/accelerated growth economic development model	Original WID approach: -failure of modernisation development policy- influence of Boserup and First World feminists on Percy Amendment. -declaration of UN Decade for Women.	Second WID approach: -toned down equity because of criticism -linked to economy Redistribution with Growth and Basic Needs	3 rd and now predominant WID approach: -deterioration in world -Third World -policies of economic stabilisation and adjustment rely on women's economic contribution to development	Most recent approach: -arose out of failure of equity approach -Women's feminist writings and grassroots organisations.
Period most Popular	1950-70: but still widely used.	1975-86: attempts to adopt it during and since Women's Decade.	1970s onwards: still limited popularity.	Post 1980s: now most popular approach.	1975 onwards: accelerated during 1980s, still limited popularity

Purpose	To bring women into development as better mothers: this is seen as their most important role in development.	To gain equity for women in the development process: women seen as active participants in development.	To ensure poor women increase their productivity: women's poverty seen as problem of underdevelopment not of subordination.	To measure development is more efficient and more effective: women's economic participation seen as associated with equity.	To empower women through greater self-reliance: women's subordination not only seen as problem of men but also of colonial and neocolonial oppression.
Needs of women met and roles reorganised	To meet PGN* in reproductive role, relating particularly to food aid, malnutrition and family planning.	To meet SGN** in terms of triple role-directly through state top down intervention giving political and economic autonomy by reducing inequality with men.	To meet PGN in productive role, to earn an income particularly in small-scale income generating projects.	To meet PGN in context of declining social services by relying on all 3 roles of women and elasticity of women's time.	To reach SGN in terms of triple role-indirectly through bottom up mobilisation around PGN as means to confront oppression.

<p>Comment</p>	<p>Women seen as passive beneficiaries of development with focus on reproductive role. Non-challenging therefore still widely popular especially with government and traditional NGOs.</p>	<p>In identifying subordinate position of women in terms of relationship to men, challenged, criticised as Western feminism, considered threatening and not popular with government.</p>	<p>Poor women isolated as separate category with tendency only to recognise productive role; reluctance of government to give limited aid to women means popularity still at small-scale NGO level.</p>	<p>Women seen entirely in terms of delivery capacity and ability to extend working day. Most popular approach both with governments and multilateral agencies.</p>	<p>Potentially challenging with emphasis on Third World and women's self-reliance. Largely unsupported by governments and agencies. Avoidance of Western feminism criticism, means slow significant growth of underfinanced voluntary organisations.</p>
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Source: C. Moser (1993) *Gender Planning and Development*, Routledge

Despite the shift from women to gender, the focus remains on women since women have been mostly adversely affected by development and women tend to be at a disadvantage due to socio cultural practices in many cultures. The gender make up of society has not changed to provide an enabling environment for the empowerment of women and men. Today differences, inequality between men and women as well as discrimination and violence against women remain a concern. Despite all the efforts to integrate women in mainstream development the negative impact of development still persists. Women's position in the world today can be generalized as below:

- Of 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 per cent are women.
- Among the world's 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one.
- Adult women suffer more than men from malnutrition. Of adults suffering iron deficiency 458 million are women and 238 million are men; of those stunted by protein energy malnutrition, 450 million are women and 400 million are men.
- Each year at least half a million women die from complications due to pregnancy. In most poor countries pregnancy complications are the largest single cause of deaths among women in their reproductive years.
- Although women now represent 41 per cent of all workers in developing countries, their wages are 30-40 per cent less than those of men for comparable work.
- Women constitute less than one seventh of administrators and managers in developing countries.
- Women hold only 10 per cent of the seats in the world's parliaments and 6 per cent in national cabinets.

United Nation Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has identified four strategic areas of concerns as reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war. According to Caren et al (2005), in their millennium development project, there are seven interdependent priorities for the minimum necessary to empower women and alter the historical legacy of female disadvantage that remains in most societies of the world:

1. Strengthen opportunities for post primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education.
2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.
3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens.
4. Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights.
5. Eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings, and reducing occupational segregation.
6. Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies.
7. Combat violence against girls and women.

In addition to specific issues on women, the emergence of new issues such as ageing society, population decline, migration and refugees are becoming new challenges towards achieving gender equality. With regards to the ageing society, majority of older people (60+) are women. With increased constraints on social protection systems, women's work load, combining work inside and outside the family or household, escalates, which affects their health status, access to paid employment, political participation, and so on. Low fertility and migration patterns have resulted in a slow or negative population growth. Although smaller

families enhance women's opportunities around the world, low fertility in some countries is often the result of unfavourable conditions for women. Migration is an important factor in redistributing populations and dramatic changes in migration have occurred and there are gender differences in the reasons for migration, types of migration, as well as conditions in which women and men migrants live. Lastly in war torn countries, women and adolescent girls in refugee settings are especially vulnerable to sexual harassment, abuse and violence. Women have specific health needs due to their reproductive role and they often carry the heaviest burden of survival for themselves and their families in refugee situations.

The new emerging concerns and the twelve critical areas of concern; the persistent and increasing burden of poverty, unequal access to economic and technological resources, the impact of environment on women; the social development aspects - such as health, education and training, violation of human rights, violence against women, women and the media; legal and political aspects - of wars and the sharing of power at all levels have yet to be overcome. These issues reflect the problems that women all over the world are experiencing today, problems which are largely due to the unequal relationship between man and woman that gives rise to prejudices based on gender. They are the manifestation of women's subordination, lack of education and skills and lack of voice in decision-making. They also reflect the fact that women are the weaker sex, the victims of development due to the practices and manifestation of inequalities.

The progress so far achieved in empowering women is highly uneven, with the weaker economies, especially the least developed countries and the economies in transition, falling significantly behind (ESCAPE, 1999). The Jakarta Declaration on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness has called upon governments and partners to implement gender-responsive planning and performance-based monitoring with harmonized, gender indicators, through improved collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and other relevant

information (UNIFEM 2007: 6). The next section will highlight Malaysia's position in gender related indicators.

Gender Gap in Malaysia

Malaysia is a signatory to several international commitments and conventions such as the Convention on the elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). At the international level, several indexes have been developed to measure gender equality/inequality as part of efforts to monitor the progress toward human development and gender equality. Table 5.1 shows the components of the indexes and Malaysia's achievement in the stated indicators: Gender development index GEM (UNDP), Gender Equity Index (GEI, Social Watch), Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum) and lastly the Social Institution and Gender Index (SIGI, OECD Development Centre). The description of the index is shown at the top of the table while Malaysia's ranking is shown next to the description. On the overall the data presented revealed that regardless of how the indexes were measured, a gap still exists. Using 29 indicators, Malaysia ranked 65 out of 177 countries in the Gender Empowerment Index. As for the gender equality index, Malaysia scored 58 out of 100 representing equality status. On the overall, gender equality in education was much better while gender equality in economic activities and empowerment is a challenge. The index for education was 98.7, economic activities was 46.1 and the empowerment index was 29.1.

Looking at the gender gap index produced by the World Economic Forum, Malaysia scored 0.664 (zero representing inequality and one equality) and ranked 92 out of 128 countries. Figure 4.1 shows the gender gap trends for Malaysia (2000-2007). The five Nordic countries; Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Denmark attained the highest gender gap index while Philippines and

Sri Lanka remained distinctive for being the only Asian countries in the top 20 rankings.

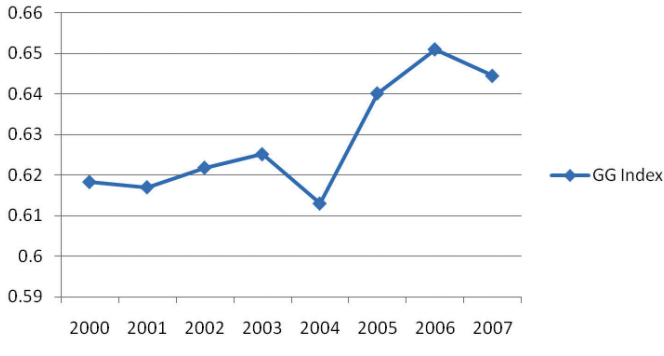


Figure 4.1 Gender Gap Index Malaysia

The Social Institution and Gender Index (SIGI) is a more comprehensive index which takes into account 12 single indicators grouped into four dimensions. Malaysia is doing well in most of the 12 indicators with an overall score of .243 (0 = equality and 1= inequality).

Table 4.1 International Indexes and Malaysian Achievement in each Indicators

	GDI (UNDP)	GEM (UNDP)	GEI (Social Watch)	Gap Index (World Economic Forum)	Gender SIGI (OECD Development Centre)
Focus	Human Development Four single indicators of human development grouped into three dimensions	Empowerment Four single indicators of economic and political empowerment grouped into three dimensions	Socio-economic opportunities Ten single indicators grouped into three dimensions	Multidimensional Fourteen single indicators grouped into four dimensions	Social institutions Twelve single indicators grouped into four dimensions
	Rank/ score	Rank/ Score	Rank/ Score	Rank/ Score	Rank/ Score

Achievements	A long and healthy life	Political participation and decision-making	Education	Economic participation and opportunity	Family code
	Life expectancy ratio	Percentage of seats in parliament held by women	Literacy ratio	Labor force participation	Early marriage
	1.05	13.1	98.3	0.57	5
Knowledge					
Economic participation and decision-making					
Literacy ratio	0.93	Female legislators, senior officials and managers	Primary, secondary	Wage equality	Polygamy
				0.8	0.7
				0.36	1
School gross enrolment ratio	74.3	Female professional and technical worker	tertiary net enrolment ratio	Estimated earned income	Parental authority
				0.3	0.7

A decent standard of living	Power over economic resources	Economic participation	Female professional and technical workers	0.67
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated earned income Ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in non-agricultural paid employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female professional and technical workers 	0.29
	0.36	0.36	Political empowerment	0.056
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated earned income ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in non-agricultural paid employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in parliament 	Physical integrity
	36.3	36.3	0.1	0.3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated earned income ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in non-agricultural paid employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female genital mutilation
	Empowerment	Violence against women	0.1	0.42
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women at ministerial level 	0.15
	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women at ministerial level 	Ownership rights	0.07	0.07

• Female legislators, senior officials and managers	0.3	• access to land	0
• Female professional and technical workers	0.67	• access to bank loans	0.2
• Female professional and technical workers	0.67	• vaccess to property other than land	0
<i>Civil liberties</i>			
		• restriction to freedom of dress	0
		• Freedom of movement	0

Concern and focus on Gender is not new in Malaysia. Wazir (2006) in her keynote address on Asia-Pacific Childhoods In An Age Of Globalisation summarized that writings on gender in Malaysia to include: Men and Women in Malay Society (Michael Swift 1965); House keeping Among Malay Peasants (Rosemary Firth 1966); The Organization of Gender Relations in Rural Malay Community (PH.D thesis. Ng Choon Sim 1985); Gender ideology and the Public Lives of Malay Women in Peninsular Malaysia (PH.D thesis. Noraini Abdullah 1984); Gender, Culture and Religion: Equal Before God, Unequal before Man (Norani Othman dan Cecilia Ng (eds.)); Women and Culture: Between Malay Adat and Islam (Wazir Jahan Karim 1992) and 'Male' and 'Female' in Developing Southeast Asia (Wazir Jahan Karim 1995) and many more. Since gender is a cultural construct, as long as the cultural practices are in place the traditional gendered way of life will remain. The consequences of traditional gender based influences is seen in daily practices and decisions made at all levels, from within the family, community, at the work place, and especially at national planning and policy making levels.

The cultural norms of what is right and appropriate for men and women has been entrenched in the minds of our forefathers for decades - it is embedded in our psyche; it controls our thinking, our actions and behavior. It exists in the minds of every individual in society from the layman to the highest echelons of our governmental structures. We are concerned because the consequences can have devastating effects on men, women and girl children as we strive to achieve family and national development goals. Researchers and development practitioners have observed that gender and sexual division of labor have produced a number of negative consequences such as:

- An unequal and increasing burden of work load for women who are involved in both the productive activities in the home and the work place.

- Inhibit men's and son's participation in carrying out family maintenance, child raising and domestic tasks and activities which society considers as women's responsibilities.
- Women are looked upon as marginal workers, who are hired when shortage of labor occurs, and first to be fired when recession sets in.
- Unequal access to productive resources such as land, credit, technology and skills training.

GENDER IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Population

This section will highlight the gender gap and gendered practices in everyday life. The gendered way of life, derived from data collected throughout past years, mainly on the economics activities of the family, will be highlighted. This section begins with the demographic profile of the Malaysia population followed by educational attainment, economic activities, health, and social political factors.

Table 5.1 shows the population of Malaysia (2007) by sex. The table clearly shows that except for Kedah, Perlis and Pulau Pinang men outnumbered women. Compared to the population in 2000, Kedah, Kelantan and Perlis were the three states with more women compared to men. Such a trend could be due to migration of men to states with better employment opportunities. Looking at the age distribution of the Malaysian population, the data shows that there are more females in the older age groups of 65 and older compared to males (Figure 5.1). For the age group of 65-69 there were only 3% more women compared to men but the difference becomes much bigger for older age groups (16.7% for age 70-74 and 28.1% the 75 and older age group). Since women have longer life expectancy compared to men and culturally women tend to marry older men, we can expect more widows among the older population. Such trends are already

Gender in Everyday Life

reflected in the 2000 census whereby the percentage difference increases in the older age groups. The consequences of these demographic changes interact in different ways with the many components of women and men's lives: their families, their health, their education, their economic participation, and their rights.

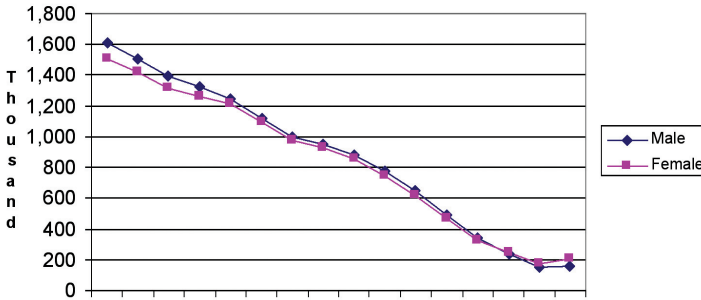


Figure 5.1 Malaysian Population by Sex, 2007

Table 5.1 Population of Malaysia by state and sex 2000 and 2007

State	2000		2007	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Johor	1,419.60	1,321.00	1,667.70	1,573.20
Kedah	819	830.7	955.4	963.3
Kelantan	655.3	657.7	782.9	777.7
Melaka	319.3	316.5	371.1	367.7
Negeri Sembilan	440	419.9	502.8	475.4
Pahang	675.4	613	777.7	705.9
Perak	1,029.60	1,021.60	1,162.50	1,152.00
Perlis	100.8	103.6	113.5	118.4
Pulau Pinang	654.1	659.4	750.3	768.1
Sabah	1,345.50	1,257.90	1,577.40	1,486.20
Sarawak	1,053.10	1,018.40	1,229.20	1,174.90

Jariah Masud

Selangor	2,143.00	2,045.90	2,536.10	2,425.50
Terengganu	458.3	440.5	548	519.9
WP Kuala Lumpur	700.4	679	813.6	790.8
WP Labuan	39.9	36.2	44.7	41.6
Malaysia	11,853.40	11,421.30	13,833.00	13,340.60

Gender in Education

Based on the index presented earlier, Malaysia has done well in achieving gender equality in education. Though the literacy gap was high in the 70s, there was no significant difference in the literacy rate of male and female in 2000. The expansion in educational services as well as parents' awareness of the importance of education enabled boys and girls to attend school. Public school enrollment figures are shown in Table 5.3. In line with the population, the table shows that there were more boys enrolled in primary school and lower secondary level but the trend reverses at upper secondary school level. This trend continues until tertiary levels. The highlighted cells in Table 5.3 show the number of boys and girls enrolled in various classes in these years. For example, students in standard 1 in 2000 will be in standard 2 in 2001 and in form 1 in 2006. The table clearly shows that the number declined especially among boys. The data available indicated that there were higher numbers of boys dropping out school at an early age compared to girls. In 2000, there were 261,715 boys and 247,614 girls enrolled in Standard 1 but the number of students enrolled in Standard 2 the following year was only 260,204 boys and 246,173 girls; a total of 1511 boys and 1441 girls were no longer enrolled in school.

In the year 2000, a total of 229,741 boys and 219,005 girls were enrolled in standard 5 but six years later (in 2006) there were only 174,204 boys and 184,260 girls enrolled in form 5. A total of 55,510 boys and 34,745 girls were no longer in school after six years. The increase in the number of children not

Gender in Everyday Life

enrolling in school can be explained by drop out cases and the data revealed that the number of boy students enrolled in public schools declined by 24% while the number for girls declined by only 16%.

Table 5.2 Literacy Rates of 15–24 Year Olds by Sex, Malaysia, 1970–2000 (%)

Year	Female	Male	Persons
1970	68.0	83.0	75.0
1981	89.9	94.0	91.9
1991	95.3	95.9	95.6
2000	97.3	97.2	97.2

Table 5.3 Number of Boys and Girls Enrolled in Public Schools Standard 1 to form 5, 2000–2006

Boys	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Std.1	261,715	260,341	265,295	264,506	264,353	253,240	254,211
Std 2	258,070	260,204	257,938	260,184	264,476	264,650	252,271
Std 3	250,540	257,064	258,175	258,863	260,157	264,610	263,479
Std 4	243,394	245,949	255,196	258,149	258,207	260,110	263,508
Std5	229,741	243,422	243,278	254,830	257,109	257,978	259,156
Std 6	245,840	225,457	239,850	241,683	253,319	256,564	256,466
Form 1	207,570	213,716	204,991	215,486	219,539	228,081	234,416
Form 2	204,904	200,272	207,757	198,657	211,266	214,145	222,216
Form 3	194,143	196,929	193,479	200,588	193,252	205,386	207,608
Form 4	167,035	179,914	182,118	181,013	190,843	183,259	194,515
Form 5	159,847	159,477	168,497	172,169	172,600	182,868	174,204
Girls							
Std.1	247,614	246,803	250,960	250,739	250,045	238,753	239,157
Std 2	244,152	246,173	244,581	246,859	250,579	250,639	238,091
Std 3	235,916	243,345	244,016	245,326	246,697	250,854	249,951
Std 4	228,795	233,193	241,836	244,131	245,010	246,919	250,093
Std5	219,005	230,784	231,278	241,041	243,451	244,828	245,994

Jariah Masud

Std 6	234,266	215,939	227,250	230,135	239,944	243,052	243,712
Form 1	200,516	209,036	197,397	209,000	211,909	220,703	224,419
Form 2	202,312	197,924	206,487	194,664	207,490	209,978	217,879
Form 3	199,102	199,612	195,197	203,904	193,324	205,794	207,108
Form 4	180,224	192,573	192,944	191,272	200,362	189,048	199,790
Form 5	184,804	175,190	186,809	188,323	187,106	196,298	184,260

Figure 5.2 shows the number of students enrolled in public schools in 2006. The data revealed that the number of boys exceeded the number of girls in primary school but the trend reversed in Forms four and five. The trend reversal occurred from 1995 (UNDP, 2000). Figure 5.3 shows that the number of boys and girls enrolled in Standard 1 and Standard 5 in 2000 and the enrollment in the subsequent years. At primary levels there were more boys compared to girls but looking at the number of students in Standard 5 who moved on to Form 5 the number declined drastically.

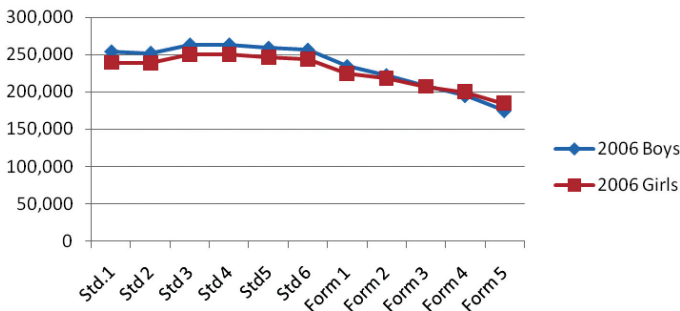


Figure 5.2 Enrolment in Primary and Secondary School by Sex, 2006

Figure 5.4 shows the number of children no longer in school for transition years; selected years of school, Standard 6 to Form 1 and Form 3 to Form 4. The figures clearly show that the number of boys no longer in school was much

higher compared to girls. The percentage of boys no longer in school in Form 1 ranges from 8-10 percent in 2000-2006 and 5-7% dropped out from Form 3 to Form 4. In contrast the number of girls enrolled in Form 1 and Form 4 dropped by only 2-3%.

When the enrollment numbers in 2005 and 2006 were compared, it was seen that the number of students enrolled in 2006 dropped by 39,194 for girls and 60,184 for boys. In general there were 107 girls compared to 164 boys who dropped out of school everyday in 2005. If we consider the number of school days (207) the figure becomes 189 for girls and 289 for boys. Dropping out of school at an early age has many future implications. With the overall increase in the educational attainment of the Malaysia population, more boys than girls will find it hard to compete in the labor market. Since the school system does not cater for drop outs and there is lack of availability of skill training for young persons these children will continue to lag behind in many aspects of life. They are also at risk of becoming involved with social ills in the community. The data also shows that for no examination classes, the drop out rate was much higher among Form one and Form two students compared to those in primary school and from Form four to Form five. Though no specific study has been conducted among the school dropouts, it can be speculated that poverty and parental negligence could be the contributing factors for these trends. With more girls pursuing tertiary education, there will be imbalance in educational attainment between boys and girls. A scenario contradictory to the gender stereotype that men should have higher education, be the family breadwinners and earn more than their wives. With early drop out of the school system and the existing educational system, there is a possibility that these children are unable to read and write. Personal communication with several teachers especially in the rural areas revealed that there are lower secondary school children who cannot read and write.

Jariah Masud

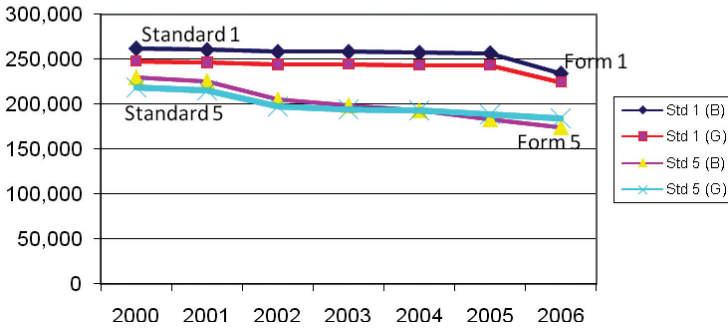


Figure 5.3 Number of Boys and Girls in Standard 1 and Standard 5 in 2000 and Form 1 and Form 5 in 2006

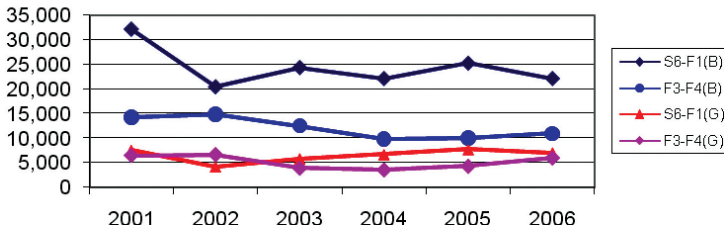


Figure 5.4 Number of Drop Out Standard 6-Form 1 and Form 3-Form 5, 2001-2006

Malaysia has been successful in providing education for all. Girls have done well in school to the extent that there are more girls undertaking tertiary education compared to boys. From the gender perspective it can be said that there is a gender disparity in tertiary education with boys/men at a disadvantage. In contrast to other countries which deprived girls from getting better education, Malaysia is experiencing the opposite and not due to gender marginalization or discrimination. The insensitivity of policy and program as well as parents and community leaders to the different needs of boys could be one factor contributing to such trends. The educational system which emphasizes on academics requires students to be studious and this nature is the opposite of boys' natures which

is to explore and for adventure. With more than 60% of school teachers being women, boys do not have many role models in school.

Figure 5.5 shows public university enrollment by field, number of graduates and academic staff by sex, 2007. It has been the tradition that girls tend to be more into arts and soft disciplines and the gender gap in science was of concern 20 years ago but the gap is now reversed. The data shows that there were 68% girls in educational courses. Such trends will continue to propagate the trend of too many female teachers in schools which may not be very good for the well being of future generations. In the science disciplines, there are more girls in disciplines such as agriculture, health and welfare, medicine and science and mathematics. There were more boys in computer and technology disciplines in 2006. The proportion of girls in technical courses is still limited with only 20% girls in engineering and technical skills courses and 33% in the manufacturing and construction sector.

With the number of girls in public universities double that of boys, the university management needs to provide more services to cater for the needs of female students. Men/boys and women/girls have different needs and concerns. Having more female students in the university does not mean that the university management will have to renovate the toilets and bathrooms but the management will need to be concerned about safety, security and health services to mention a few. One long term effect of the trend of having more girls in higher education is that labor force participation of women with tertiary education which was much lower compared to men in the past and this issue will be discussed in the next section.

Looking at the future everyday life implications of such trends, with female graduates comprising 63% of 85,448 graduates in 2007 and if a female graduate is to marry another graduates as is the traditional practice and expectation, there will be female graduates with no potential partners. In one of the training sessions among training officers in one of the ministries; the majority of male

trainers who were graduates themselves said that they would not allow their daughters/sisters to marry men with lower educational attainment. If this scenario really happens, one out two female graduates will not be able to find “suitable” husbands. This episode reflects that having tertiary education does not guarantee that a person will have non traditional gender ideology or roles. Study on gender role ideology conducted among 2,700 public university students in 2007 revealed that a large proportion of male and female students still hold on to the traditional gender ideology. Table 5.4 shows the distribution of students’ responses to three statements on gender roles, by sex. The table clearly shows that a higher proportion of male students strongly agree and agree with statements that earning money is the men’s job compared to female students. The proportion of female students who disagree with the statement is higher compared to the male students. In contrast the opposite trend was observed for the statement “Women work and men stay home”. More than three quarters of the male and female students in this study disagree to this statement. The responses given reflect that university students still hold traditional gender ideology though the environment has changed.

Two thirds of the male respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that men should earn more than women. On the other hand, slightly more than half the female respondents agree with this statement. The data show that male students expressed traditional beliefs with regards to earning. Getting university degrees will not guarantee a change in one’s gender ideology and gender role expectations. University students need to be gender sensitized so as to help them cope with changing gender roles in Malaysian society.

Gender in Everyday Life

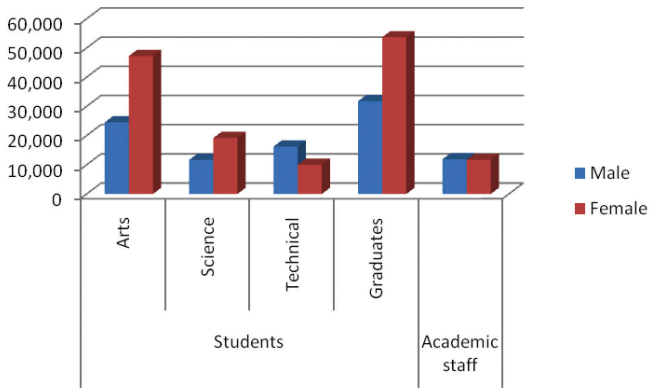


Figure 5.5 Number of students by Courses, Graduates and Academic Staff in Public Universities, 2007

Table 5.4 Students' Responses to Gender Role Statements by Sex

	Male			Female		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree
Earning is men's job*	32.77	45.69	21.54	25.08	42.52	32.40
Women work and men stay home*	5.11	19.43	75.45	2.31	15.14	82.54
Men should earn more than women*	23.89	40.27	35.84	16.69	36.96	46.35

*Chi-square significant at 0.01.

Gender and Employment

Education has a direct impact on employability as well as economic status. The labor force participation of men and women in Malaysia has not changed very much and in general it can be said that the labor force participation of women is still low (47%). Figure 5.6 shows the labor force participation rate of men and women in Malaysia. Men were not in the labor force due to their studies while 75% of women were not in the labor force due to family responsibilities. Despite the increase in the number of female graduates, labor force participation among females with tertiary education was only 85.7%. There are almost 15% female graduates, compared to 8% male graduates, who are not in the labor force. Lower labor force participation of women can have several implications. Those not in the labor force have no income and may find difficulty in achieving economic empowerment. In addition the issue of social security in old age can be of concern since they have no reliable means of supporting their old age living needs. Among those in the labor force only 1.3% were employers while 8.8% women were unpaid family workers. Majority of the unpaid family workers work in the agriculture and retail industry. Much has been achieved in narrowing the gender gap in employment but the gap remains. Majority of women are still in 'women' related jobs such as manufacturing, retail, education, agriculture and services, though the proportion of women professionals is much higher than the proportion of men. Looking at numbers there were 326.5 thousand men compared to only 270.3 thousand women in the professional category. Men are still ahead in the legislator, senior official and manager occupations (8.8% for men compared to 4.7% for women) in 2007. Men outnumbered women by 3.3 times in this occupational category. The data on registered professionals in 2007 revealed that there were more men registered, compared to women, in all professions except for dentists. The gap was bigger among professional and graduate engineers.

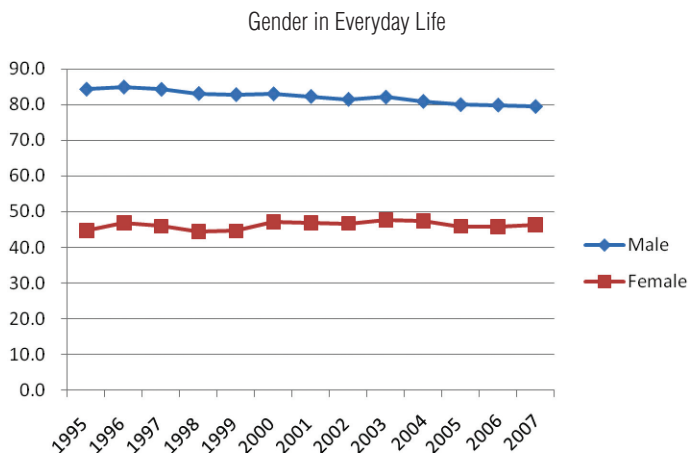


Figure 5.6 Labor force participation by Sex, 1995-2007

Table 5.4 shows the marital status of the labor force in 2007. Looking at the marital status of the labor force, the table shows that the number of female employed persons who were divorced or widowed was almost three times that of male employed persons. With increasing divorce cases and longer life expectancy among women the trend can be expected to continue. The traditional gender role stereotype of men as the bread winner and women as the caretaker of the home is no longer valid for almost half of the female employed persons. Since women were normally given the responsibility to care for younger children, we can expect the 152.7 thousand divorced women to have to face the child care dilemma in their daily lives. Lack of available child care facilities as well as the cost of child care services may affect the ability of the women to get quality care for their infants and toddlers. Divorced and widowed women are also responsible to head the household and the conventional way of identifying the head of the household needs to be re-looked at since there are an estimated 18% households in Malaysia which are headed by women.

Though the exact figures of the number of dual career families are unknown, the table indirectly shows that employed married females can be the proxy of dual

career households. With women employed; in support services such as child care services in particular is much needed and quality day care is of importance to ensure that the children undergo optimal and balanced development.

Table 5.4 Number and Percentage Distribution of Employed Persons by Sex, 2007

Marital status	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Never married	2221.1	32.9	1305.8	34.4
Married	4426.4	65.6	2221.6	58.6
Widowed	52.6	0.8	158.1	4.2
Divorced	47.1	0.7	105.6	2.8

Besides employment, unemployment is also an issue of concern. Data from the Human Resource Ministry website indicated that the number of women registered with the labor Department was almost double the number of men. According to Karim's (1998) study, unemployment is likely to affect women more than men, particularly those who are employed in low skilled or semi-skilled jobs in the service and industrial sectors. In fact, women constituted more than half of the retrenchments since July 1997 and the majority of them were low-skilled and semi-skilled factory operators. The falling income of female-headed households forced them to reduce their expenditure and thus, exerted additional pressure and stress on family life (Islam *et.al.*, 2007). Male-headed households enjoy higher incomes, and consequently higher household per capita expenditure. Women are more likely to lose their jobs than men, particularly women who are employed in low-skilled or semi-skilled jobs namely the industrial and services sector, not only due to gender bias but also due to the fact that fewer women are attached to the labour unions (Islam *et.al.*, 2007).

The growing participation of women in paid employment has contributed significantly to the economic and social empowerment of women. Access to earned income improves women's position within the household substantially, gives them greater control over the distribution of such earnings and household resources, and generally improves their status and strength in society as well as their own self-esteem. Programs need to be designed so as to enable those outside the labor force to attain economic empowerment as well as social security. Those in the labor force have to face the consequences of role overload and overburden with traditional gender roles while those not in the labor force are faced with lack of economic empowerment.

Gendered Way of Life in Malaysia: Evidence from Research

Gender is a socially constructed role assigned to men and women and we do gender in our everyday lives. Though specific research to study gender dynamics is still lacking in Malaysia, data collected throughout the years indirectly show the evidence on doing gender in Malaysian society. The data on education and employment show that we are changing but more changes are needed to achieve gender equality which will eventually enhance the well being of both men and women in Malaysia. This section will highlight evidence on the gendered way of life of the individual, family, community as well as at program level. Discussion will also focus on how the research results were used and can be used to address some of the gender issues and disparities. The sub topics are gender in agriculture, poverty, family economy and decision making. The research are on the productive and reproductive role of women in agriculture and rural economy, female headed households in the context of poverty, women economics activities: micro enterprise development, human capital investment through stimulation packages, economic and financial aspects of ageing, financial literacy and gender ideology among college students.

Gender in Agriculture

Traditionally agriculture is synonymous with men. Agriculture programs and activities are often targeted at men since it is assumed that men are involved in agriculture and women are involved in domestic activities. Nevertheless the assumption has to be rejected as there is evidence to show that women were involved mostly in extensive field crops and the small holder sectors for rubber, cocoa, coconut, coffee and in other short term cultivation activities. A study sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1991, among 180 farm households in Negeri Sembilan, revealed that women were actively involved in traditional crops, long term perennial crops and short term cash crops as well as home production activities such as quail, livestock and poultry rearing (Airmy *et. al.*, 1991). Women were also found to be involved in all stages of the cultivation process; from land clearing to marketing. The study provided concrete evidence on the involvement of women and men in small scale agricultural activities. Research conducted by Aminah and Narimah (1998) shows that repetitive, time consuming, and tedious tasks were performed by women, while tasks requiring muscle strength, operational skills to handle tools, technical skills to handle chemicals, and the expertise to handle money in marketing the crops were performed by men. Both Airmy *et. al* (1991) and Aminah and Narimah (1998) revealed that the content of agriculture related courses were very gender biased. Courses offered to women were domestic based courses such as cooking, sewing and child care while agriculture based courses were targeted at men. Airmy *et. al* (1991) found that courses such as compost preparation and propagation were only open to men while cooking courses were open to women. Women's involvement in commercial oil palm plantations were mainly in collecting the loose fruit on the ground. As explained by one of the managers in one of the plantations (personal encounter) the management likes to hire women to collect the loose fruits because they tend to collect every piece of fruit on the ground compared to males. Until today women still have to bend to collect

the loose fruit. No effort has been made to develop the appropriate machine to vacuum the fruit instead of it being done manually. Mechanization of paddy fields in MADA displaced women who used to do the transplanting manually (Husna et. al, 1988). Women, especially rural women, were not targeted to be the beneficiaries of the technology.

As a follow up to the study conducted by Airmy et. Al (1991) gender training modules for agriculture officers was developed. One day gender sensitization training was carried out among State Directors of Agriculture. At the end of the day one of the directors stood up and said “ What do you women want? If women do not want to cook he can find another one to replace” That remark clearly showed that gender is deeply embedded in one’s mind and it is very hard to change. Gender stereotype is not confined to less educated people but can also be an issue among those in the highly educated group. The efforts to sensitize agriculture and rural development extension workers continues through several training programs under the funding of UNFPA but unfortunately due to lack of political will among those responsible to disseminate the information and the changes in top level management, gender sensitization and gender training in the agriculture sector was stopped. Nevertheless the project brought about some changes. Today the courses offered by the department can be taken by both men as well as women instead of being confined to only domestic related courses for women and for men, only agriculture courses. Some courses are also conducted onsite instead of at training centres to allow women to attend.

The role of agriculture in the development of the country is obvious especially as the country is facing increased prices of good and services. Poverty has been synonymous with farmers. This is especially true among paddy farmers. For intact families, poor men farmers will also affect women and children. The 2007 labor force survey shows that 15.8% out of 6.7471 million men (1.066 million) and 9.8% of 3.791 million (371,518) women employed were in agriculture. Data from the RISDA rubber smallholders’ census revealed that there were 38%

female rubber smallholders and 78% of them earned below the poverty line compared to 53% male smallholders. Gender issues, in addition to economic security and poverty in agriculture, remain a concern especially with regards to health and safety. Not much research has been done to identify the gender impact of development in agriculture technology and environment. With the new motto of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro Industry “Agriculture is A Business” gender in agriculture research is much needed to identify possible gender constraints affecting the realization of the goal of making agriculture a business which will eventually enhance the livelihoods of men and women in agriculture. Worldwide the term “glass ceiling” is one of the issues encountered by women in business and this may hold true in Malaysia.



Picture 1 Partnership in Agriculture

Gender and Poverty

Poverty eradication has been the focus of many countries including Malaysia. One of the Millenium development goals is to eradicate poverty. Though much has been carried out to eradicate absolute poverty, poverty remains an issue to be addressed in Malaysia (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010). The target groups for poverty eradication include single parents or female headed households (FHHs)

and the elderly. The dominant patriarchal ideology in many countries perceives men as the head of the household and the breadwinner for the family and hence they are seen to be responsible for women's welfare (Motie, 2000). Women, when they become the head of the household, had a higher tendency to face financial difficulties due to having to play the dual roles of provider and caregiver on top of their low earning capacity (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986; Orthner and Neenan, 1996; Bird, 1997). Women become heads of households mainly for two reasons: because the partner is permanently absent due to separation or death and thus the woman is legally single, or, they become the heads of households when the partner is temporarily absent due to long-term work migration or refugee status (Sibongile, 1994). Studies conducted in Western countries show that, female headship was associated with poverty (McLanahan, 1985; Islam, 1993; Buvinic & Gupta, 1997; Nair, 2003; Joshi, 2004; and Moghadam, 2005), and that their children have higher rates of delinquency, emotional problems and lowered school performance (Wadsworth & Gass-Sternas, 1995; McLanahan, 1997; and Zhan & Sherraden, 2003).

Low level of education and lack of marketable skills among female headed households reduce their chances of finding well-paid employment (Motie, 2000). Besides FHH's low education and lack of skills, other problems associated with employment are gender wage differential (Bernhardt & Dresser, 2002; Spain & Bianchi, 1996), and the concentration of women in low-wage and traditionally female-jobs (Peterson, Song, & Jones-DeWeever, 2002). Women were less likely to receive employer-assisted job training programs because employer-assisted training is less prevalent in traditional female-dominated occupations (Lee, Clery, & Carroll, 1999). Women also tend to receive less financial support from their employer for employment related training programs (Duncan & Hoffman, 1979; Lee, *et al.*, 1999). Studies conducted by Bianchi (1980, 1981) concluded that economic well-being, whether measured by per capita household income or by the poverty rate, is lower in FHHs than in male-headed households.

Studies on single mothers in Malaysia have found that the majority lived below the poverty line (Asiah, 1994; Che Wan Aminah, 1994; Ida Ezanie, 1997; Jariah, *et al.*, 1994; Nor Alinun, 1997; Rosmini, 1997; Rosmiza, 1995; Ruzalina, 1994; Zakiah, 1997). Numerous studies have found that marital disruption has detrimental economic effects on women and their children (Arendell, 1987; Day & Bahr, 1986; Duncan & Hoffman, 1985; Weitzman, 1985). Broken families have a lower standard of living. As Duncan and Hoffman (1985) state, women and children in female-headed households have a markedly lower standard of living as compared to women and children in husband-wife households. These negative outcomes occur because of economic deprivation, diminished socialization, and more exposure to stress (McLanahan, 1985). This occurs not only because there is one earner rather than two but because on average women earn less than men.

With increased incidences of divorce and lower remarriage rates among women we can expect the number of female headed households to increase. The incidence of poverty among female-headed households increased from 15.1 per cent or 585,688 households in 1997 to 16.1 per cent or 588,554 households in 1999 (Eighth Malaysia Plan Report, 2001). The census 2000 data revealed that there were 522,704 households headed by women. Table 5.5 shows data on divorce among Muslim couples from 2000-2006. The table clearly shows that the divorce rate among Muslims is high compared to non Muslims. The percentage of divorce shows an increase among Muslim as well as Non Muslims. With increasing divorce cases, it can be expected that the number of female headed households will keep on increasing and that the threat of poverty among this vulnerable group will be high. The table shows that in 2006, for every five Muslim marriages there is one divorce. On the other hand, among non Muslims, there is one divorce for every 10 marriages. There were 2.5 divorces among Muslims every hour in Malaysia in 2006 compared to 1.6 in 2000.

Table 5.5 Number of Marriages and Divorces Among Muslims and Non Muslims, 2000-2006.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Muslim							
Marriage	93560	91849	95182	102062	112239	113132	114422
Divorce	13536	13187	13841	15543	16509	17708	21417
Percentage*	14.47	14.36	14.54	15.23	14.71	15.65	18.72
Non Muslim							
Marriage	61290	55017	59228	59387	50089	52877	64084
Divorce	1613	3238	3793	3318	3291	3804	5747
Percentage*	2.63	5.89	6.40	5.59	6.57	7.19	8.97

*Number of divorce divide by no of marriage

Study among 681 Malay FHHs of productive age in four metropolitan cities revealed that the main reason for divorce was husbands having affairs with other women (Sharifah et. Al, 2008). Majority had ex husbands who worked as technician, laborers and unskilled jobs. Only 47% of the women were working before becoming FHH and at the time of the study 75% had a job. Half of those working worked for pay while 20% were own account workers. Eighty three percent of the respondents declared that they are the main breadwinners of the household. With lack of education and skills FHH tend to be involved in low paying jobs. The mean income of the 509 respondents who reported their income was RM563.38 per month. The economic position of female headed households has not changed much. An earlier study conducted in 1994, among 1200 female headed households, revealed that 63% of FHHs earned below poverty line income (Fawzia, 2005). Most of the women in the study (47.0% widowed and 48.0% divorced) had monthly incomes of up to RM255, which is half the average of the poverty line in Malaysia at that time (RM510). Programs to

support female headed households, known as “IBUTUNGGAL WAJA” (Resilience Single Mother), were launched in 1999 focusing on four aspects: economy, legal, emotional support and children education. Today there is at least one single mother’s association in every state.

Women and children suffer the impact of poverty as a result of family breakup. Most often the divorce took place because the husband was having affairs with other women. Islam allows men to marry up to four wives provided that they are fair. Unfortunately people tend to neglect the issue of fairness. Though not all female headed households are poor but the majority can be regarded as poor. Changing family living patterns from extended to nuclear family, migration and to a certain extent social stigma decreases the social support system accessible to women headed households. The stereotype that family breakups are due to women’s failure to keep the marriage together is no longer relevant though there are instances where the women were blamed for the divorce. The comment “tak tahu jaga suami” (don’t know how to take care of husband) was often targeted at women who seek advise from the authorities. Insensitivity among those handling divorce cases can be detrimental to the well being of women. Those handling couple relationships need to be gender sensitized so as to ensure no uncalled for remarks and comments are made. Programs to support female headed households to adjust and cope with new family structures is a must to ensure that they do not fall into the poverty trap.

Access to economic resources has been an issue of concern related to poverty eradication efforts especially among women. Based on the pilot project carried out in the 80s, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) was established to accelerate poverty eradication efforts in Malaysia. Started with pilot projects (1986-1988) focusing on men and women, the project was launched in Peninsular Malaysia targeting women only. Women became the focus because of higher levels of female poverty and women’s responsibility for household well-being and the high female repayment rates and the contributions from women’s economic

activities to economic growth (Zabidah, 2008). This was done because repayment rates among women were much better than the men. In 2007 AIM reached out to 257,000 poor households (82% of the poor). The program has improved employment opportunities for women and increased employment opportunities; 89% have business registration with average of 3.3 employees and average wage per employee of RM 20/ day (for 23 days per month).

The micro credit program has successfully eradicated poverty among women and family members. The impact study conducted among AIM members showed that 84% members have current assets of more than RM 100,000 with average assets of RM 76,342. The women were also found to have better decision making where the data shows that the proportion of women fund managers increased from 36% for first loan to 44% to current loan. The pipe liner (women who borrow and gave the money to husbands to run the project) declined by 25%. Meanwhile the partnership project increased from 37% to 50% for the latest loans undertaken by these women. There were only 6% pipe liner members as compared to 31% for the first loan (Zabidah, 2008).



Picture 2 Loan disbursement AIM member

Gender and Micro Enterprise Among Rural Women

Traditionally women's sphere has been in the home and extension or adult education programs have focused on enhancing the women's role in the home (Aminah and Narimah, 1998). Women especially rural women were taught cooking, sewing and child care skills to make them better wives and mothers. Agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Rubber Industry Smallholders Authority (RISDA), Community Development Division (KEMAS), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Federal Land development Authority (FELDA), and other regional authorities conducted classes for their women separately. Non formal women's groups were formed and these ran activities and programs under the supervision of the respective department's officers. With increased income and expansion of consumer markets, some women began to venture beyond producing food or sewing for others to income generating activities which are also known as micro enterprises. Micro enterprise has been recognized as one of the poverty eradication strategies used internationally (ILO, 1995). Women's earnings from micro enterprise activities have become supplementary family earnings (Sarimah, 1995, Jariah and Laily, 1995). Data available from the Department of Agriculture revealed that there are more than 2,145 women's economic groups with membership of over 6,800 women in Peninsular Malaysia. The gross sale value for 2007 was estimated to be more than RM173.2 million. Based on this figure the mean gross sales for each women is RM25,470 per year or RM80,756 per group per year. The gross sale for 2000 was only RM72 million, an increase of almost 2.5 times in seven years (Faridah, 2008).

Women's involvement in micro enterprises as an extension of their domestic skills often require only very small financial investments. Studies conducted over time among rural women revealed that the women's micro enterprises have the potential of being scaled up to become small scale enterprises. Most of the micro enterprise projects in the rural areas started as group projects as part of

Gender in Everyday Life

the various departments activities. Those with enterprising traits would venture into business on their own and continue to expand the business on their own or together with husbands or family members. Figure 5.7 shows the framework explaining the micro enterprise scale up especially among rural women based on research conducted since the 1980s. Programs initiated by the government departments through extension workers began as income generating activities to either occupy the women's time or to help generate additional income for poor households. The projects expanded into self employment and earnings from the enterprises became important sources of income for the family. At this stage almost all the projects were operated by women alone. As the enterprise grew (small scale level), the data shows that husbands or sons would join in as they could see the potential returns of the project.



Picture 3 Women in Micro Enterprise



Picture 4 Mechanization in Micro enterprise

A study conducted in 2003 among 105 entrepreneurs identified by the Department of Agriculture as with potential to be scaled up shows that all of the projects were registered and nine of the projects were registered under the husband's name. An earlier study on women in micro enterprises under the Department of Agriculture showed that all 319 projects studied were solely operated by women. Husbands were not interested in the enterprise as operations were on a very small scale. Observation during data collection revealed that after the husband took over and that the women became the cooks instead of being involved in managing the enterprise. This scenario is not contributing to gender equality and is instead putting women back into the traditional gender role. The latest data collected by Zumilah (2008) revealed that 9% of the 702 women entrepreneurs under the department of Agriculture in her study had the enterprise registered under their husband's name even though the enterprise had been initiated by the women. This is happening probably due to the women's lack of managerial skills or lack of bargaining power in the family. Women also faced limitations as entrepreneurs since they also have other roles as mothers, daughters and wives.

The model proposes for the development of micro enterprises to small scale family enterprises whereby men and women/husband and wife as well as family members can join efforts in developing the enterprise for their livelihood. A collection of successful enterprises in one village can cooperate to become a community enterprise responsible for developing and generating economic resources for the community. This is inline with the concept of 'one district one industry' as promoted by the government. Gender sensitive enterprise development can contribute to the achievement of the model provided that we acknowledge the roles of both the men and women in community development. As long as planners and program implementers view women as domestic sphere managers, women will not be able to get access to resources in mainstream development. Since women entrepreneurs have different needs from men, gender sensitive entrepreneurial development programs can enhance their role in rural economies. Review of entrepreneurial development training curriculum conducted in 2004 revealed that the human development elements of training was lacking. Most training focussed on the enterprises but there was lack of focus on the person who ran the enterprise interacting with others in their daily lives. There is a need to review the entrepreneurial development curriculum to take into account the gender challenges of being entrepreneurs especially for women.

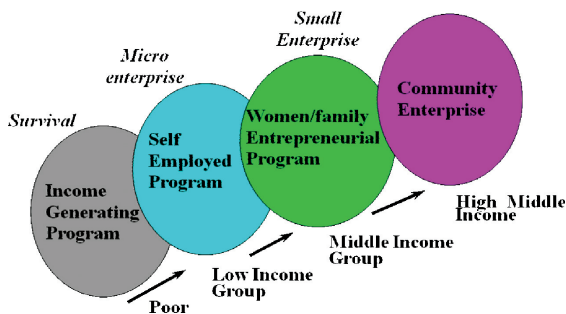


Figure 5.7 Women Micro Enterprise Development

Gender in the Family

Through gender socialization children learn how to behave as boys and girls early in life. Children learn through observation, reinforcement and imitation. The closest persons to learn from are parents and siblings. Parents' awareness of their roles as models for children is very critical to ensure that the children do not imitate or model the wrong behavior. Action research projects called "increasing parents' participation in child development through stimulation package" (Known as STIMULATION PACKAGE PROJECT) which have been carried out since 1992 in five locations (Bukit Changgang Selangor, 1992; Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan 1995, Batu Rakit Terengganu, 1996 and Kemaman, 2000) revealed that mothers are responsible for domestic affairs while fathers are responsible as providers. Whenever project teams enter a community to discuss about the project with the Village Security and Development Committee members comprising mainly of men with only two women, they would say that anything to do with children is women's work. This is in contract with the teachings of Islam whereby whenever there are men and women, only men can lead the prayer. Interaction during the project implementation revealed that fathers as well as mothers had minimal knowledge about child development and they performed their roles based on what they had observed done by their parents.



Picture 5 Launching of Stimulation Package in Terengganu

A study conducted by Ziarat et. Al (2005) among rural families in Kedah showed that mothers were more involved in childcare compared to fathers. The data showed that mothers perceived that they were significantly more involved in bedtime routines, physical care, feeding, playing, soothing, and singing to infants while fathers estimated that they spent 18% as much time cleaning infants, 22% as much time feeding infants, and 56% as much time playing with infants, relative to mothers.

The stimulation package project was replicated in Besut, Terengganu involving families in the day care center under the Terengganu Family Development Foundation. It was observed that there were more fathers attending the sessions conducted. The study revealed that the majority of the parents where the fathers were educated seemed to be more concerned about the development of their children. The examples cited here is to highlight that gender roles can change and with increasing awareness of the need to cope with the everyday challenges facing the family, gender role specialization will slowly be eroded. Table 5.5 shows college students' responses on who did what when they were growing up.

The table clearly shows that more than half of college students had both parents helping in school work, cleaning up house, caring for sick family members, disciplining children and buying food for the family. Comparing mother and father roles alone, more mothers were doing house cleaning, caring for sick members and buying food for the family. In contrast a higher percentage of students indicated that father alone were earning income for the family, paying bills, managing the finance and dealing with financial institutions i.e most of the public domain chores.

Table 5.5 Who Did What When They Were Growing Up, by Sex

	Male Respondents				Female Respondents			
	Mother	Father	Both	Others	Mother	Father	Both	Others
Help in school work	19.91	7.17	65.30	7.62	22.55	5.29	64.00	8.16
Cleaning house	44.91	3.51	50.34	1.24	45.26	2.26	50.17	2.31
Earn income to support family	6.35	47.28	45.92	0.45	6.88	51.76	40.81	0.55
Care for sick family members	26.87	7.26	65.53	0.34	30.89	4.41	64.04	0.66
Pay bills	12.90	50.45	34.95	1.70	13.93	53.69	31.33	1.05
Manage family finance	21.88	37.07	40.70	0.34	25.08	33.99	40.48	0.44
Disciplining children	18.48	18.93	62.13	0.45	18.88	12.16	68.63	0.33
Deal with financial institutions	13.36	41.56	43.26	1.81	13.90	41.04	43.52	1.54
To school meeting teachers	24.77	26.25	48.07	0.91	29.31	24.46	45.12	1.10
Attend parent-teacher meetings	20.53	27.75	47.82	3.90	23.85	28.63	43.58	3.95
Buy food for the family	27.60	16.06	55.32	1.02	29.58	14.13	55.74	0.55

The gender role stereotype is being perpetuated not only in the home but also in society. Personal experience working with the Village Security and Development Committee (JKKK) mirrored the gender stereotype. Most of the JKKK have only two female members to represent women and women youth groups. It was often observed that women were responsible for preparing tea or food in most of the meetings. Women will always lead the food and beverages committee even though men tend to eat more than women. In school, girls will be assigned to the food and beverages committee too, depriving them from being actively involved in more critical decision making in projects or activities. This is a manifestation of the gender stereotype that men should be served and women should serve.

Gender and Ageing

Malaysia will become an aged nation by 2035. The demographic and social trends of population ageing in Malaysia is moving at a quicker pace than observed 10 years ago, as is evident in the data collected in the 2000 Census of Malaysia (Jean Pala, 2005). Table 5.6 shows the ageing trend in Malaysia. The table clearly shows an increase in the proportion of elderly in all age groups. Though the gender ratio shows that there will still be more men compared to women, the 2007 data revealed that the number of women exceeded the number of men in the age group of 70 and older. Women are expected to live for almost five years longer than men. Ageing and older women seem to be synonymous. Knodel and Ofstedal (2003) in their review of gender and ageing highlighted that focus has been on older women for three reasons, the number of older women far exceeded older men, women live longer, and the higher incidence of widowhood among women. This led to concerns over economic security and living arrangements among older women. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing explicitly advocates “the integration of a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and legislation” dealing with aging (United Nations

2002: paragraph 8). The life course perspective recognizes changes in status and roles as persons age and highlights how changes, such as from married to widowed or employed to retired, can differentially affect men and women as they pass through their older years (Knodel and Ofstedal, 2003). The differences in men's and women's earlier life experiences were assumed to have resulted in disadvantages among elderly women including the different economic and care giving roles they have filled and the different rewards they received (Hooyman, 1999). On the other hand elderly men may also be at a disadvantage due to role disruption and reduced self esteem associated with their exit from paid work while mothers may have stronger bonds with children compared to fathers.

Table 5.6 Age distribution, gender ratio, fertility, infant mortality, and life expectancy in Malaysia

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2025	2050
Percentage aged 60–64	2.2	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.4	4.4	5.5
Percentage aged 65–79	4.5	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.5	7.6	12.2
Percentage aged 80 or over	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.3	3.9
Gender ratio (males per 100 females)	106.0	103.4	101.9	101.4	103.0	103.2	102.1	101.1
Total fertility (per woman)	6.83	6.72	5.15	4.24	3.62	2.93	2.02	1.85
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	99	63	42	28	15	10	7	7
Life expectancy at birth								
Males	47.0	54.2	61.4	66.0	68.7	70.8	74.4	77.6
Females	50.0	57.4	64.7	70.0	73.1	75.5	79.1	82.3

Source: Abdel Ghany (2008)

To understand the gender perspective of ageing in Malaysia, this section will highlight the findings from research on the economic and financial aspects of ageing funded by the Ministry of Science conducted in 2004 among those aged 55-70 years. The cut off age of 55 was used since the retirement age then was 55 instead of 60, the cut of age of older persons used globally. A total of 2327 elderly were successfully interviewed. Eighty five percent of the male and 46% of the female elderly were currently married. This figure is slightly higher compared to the 43% percentage in developing countries. The proportion of widowed among the female respondents was 50% compared to only 11% among the male elderly. The data revealed that 91% married elderly male respondents had wives who were younger than them. In contrast there were 83% married elderly females whose age was younger than that of their spouses. With longer life expectancy, women in Malaysia. All the widowed as well as divorced males and females had older spouses. This fits the description by Knodel and Ofstedal (2003) whereby older women are more likely to be widowed than older men because women typically live longer than men, marry men who are older than themselves, and are less likely than men to remarry.

Though the proportion of widowed was high, the proportion of living alone was much lower. Only 5.6% elderly (3.1% among males and 8.1% among females) were living alone while 23% were living with the spouse only while the rest were living with children or other relatives. In general, the proportion of elderly living alone in Malaysia is small and this could be a reflection of stronger family ties. Looking at ethnic differences, a higher proportion of Malays and Chinese, compared to Indians, were living alone. The lower percentage of elderly living alone can be a reflection of stronger family ties and the traditional practice of respecting the elderly in the community.

Health is one of the major concerns in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Figure 5.8 shows the respondents' perception of their health conditions by age group and sex. On the overall the elderly in this study tend

to perceive their health status as good while a small percentage felt that they were in bad health. The younger age group perceived a much better health status compared to the older age group with a higher percentage of elderly women perceiving their health status as bad. In another study conducted in Selangor among 827 elderly, aged 50 and older, 25% out of 800 respondents perceived their health status as bad and a higher proportion of females perceived their health conditions as bad (30%) compared to elderly men (20%). Almost half (46%) of the female elderly, compared to 36% male elderly, reported experiencing health problems that interfered with their daily life. More than two thirds of women aged 70 and older compared to 59% elderly men in the same age group reported having at least one health problem that interfered with their daily activities. The data revealed that men tend to perceive their health status to be better than women especially among the older age groups.

Why women perceive themselves to be unhealthy needs to be investigated. With expansion of health care services in the last 30 years we would expect people to have better access to health care services. An unpublished study on health practices among rural communities conducted in 2000 shows that rural woman did not seek health services because their husbands did not take them to the clinic. Since women are responsible to care for the family especially young children, they will not be able to seek health care services unless there was someone available to take over their chores. A meeting with the JKKK in one of the villages in East Coast Malaysia, to explain about health concerns, especially about breast cancer among women revealed that men were unaware of the health problems faced by women. After the presentation one man stood up and said that he did not know about this health threat among women and that he would definitely had taken his wife for screening earlier if he had known about it. Since health care during younger age will affect health status in old age, women's access to health care services is directly influenced by their husband's willingness to take them to the clinic. Husbands with very traditional gender

Gender in Everyday Life

ideology often refuse to take their wives to the doctor for breast cancer screening because they do not want other men touching parts of her body. Availability of health services does not ensure accessibility to women. Men have to be sensitized on the health needs and issues among women so that the husbands can facilitate women in getting access to health services.

The higher proportion of female elderly also brings about a new dimension in health care services. The gender budgeting pilot project carried out in four ministries including the Ministry of Health revealed the need for new dimension of services. With many older women, the incidence of osteoporosis is on the increase. Traditionally the orthopedic ward is occupied by men who were involved in accidents or on the job casualties. It was observed that more and more women were admitted to the orthopedic ward as a result of falls. The hospital policy of minimizing the length of ward stay also had gender implications. Since women normally provide care for the sick and frail, when sick family members are discharged early, the responsibility of care will be shouldered by women who may have to work to support their living. Whatever health policy is to be implemented should be analyzed through gender lenses to ensure that the well being of both men and women are not adversely affected.

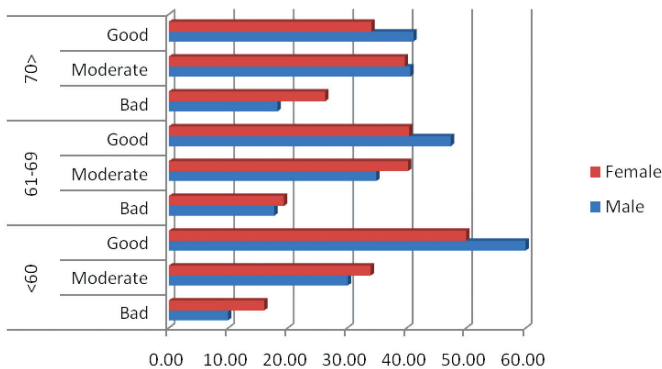


Figure 5.8 Perceived health status by age group and sex

Another area of concern is the economic well being of the elderly. The lower educational attainment among older women contributes to gender differences in employment histories--particularly employment in the government and formal sectors that affects access to work-related pensions--and is hence a potentially important factor in gender differences in economic well-being (Knodel and Ofstedal, 2003). A study conducted in 2004 revealed that more than 51% of elderly women had no formal education compared to only 18% of male elderly (Bita Parsa, 2008). In contrast there were 5.4% males compared to only 1.7 female elderly who had tertiary education. The educational attainment of the elderly directly influenced their employment opportunities. Forty percent of female elderly, compared to less than 3% males in this study never work. There were 37% male and 14% female elderly still working. Labor force participation provides access to old age financial plans though not all are working in the non formal sectors. Since large numbers of women work as unpaid family worker or are own account workers and had no mandatory old age fund contributions, it can be expected that they have no pension plans.

Table 5.7 shows elderly income from various sources. The elderly income can be grouped into three categories; employment related income, investment related income and social income. The table shows that the proportion of female elderly with income from employment related resources was much lower compared to men. On the other hand there was a higher percentage of female elderly who received income from sons or daughters. This is in line with the recent cross-national study by Ofstedal, Reidy, and Knodel (2003) in all seven Asian countries which found that older men are more likely than older women to receive income from work-related pensions. Higher proportion of elderly females receiving money from children may be proof of the fact that women benefit through their caring roles as mothers. The small percentage of respondents who received income from investments could reflect that the elderly in this study do not have much old age financial planning. Elderly men still depend

on earned income and children as main sources of income. In contrast elderly women depend on children as sources of income.

Table 5.7 Sources of Respondent's Annual Income by Sex (n=2327)

Sources of income	Male (n=1178)			Female (n=1149)		
	N	%	Median (RM)	n	%	Median (RM)
Salary	354	30.1	4,800	121	10.5	2,400
Pension	290	24.6	6,426	111	9.6	4,800
Annuity	3	0.2	720	3	0.3	4,200
Business	131	11.1	7,200	61	5.3	1,080
Rental	58	4.9	3,600	42	3.6	3,600
Agricultural	140	11.8	1,200	84	7.3	600
Dividends	24	2.0	2,000	9	0.8	500
Bonus	43	3.6	800	7	0.6	600
Son	634	53.8	1,200	778	67.7	1,200
Daughter	456	38.9	600	555	48.3	600
Grandchildren	45	3.8	100	55	4.7	200
Others	46	3.8	650	41	3.5	720

Based on income reported, the incidence of poverty was calculated using the poverty line income. Since majority of the elderly were living with family members, incidence of poverty by household income was also calculated. Table 5.8 shows the incidence of poverty using the two income measures for male and female elderly. Using respondent income, 82.2% women were considered poor compared to only 58.8% men. The percentage of poor elderly declined drastically when the household income was used to determine poverty. The gender difference narrowed when household income was used to measure poverty.

Table 5.8 Incidence of Poverty by Respondent and Household Income by Sex (N=2327)

	Male		Female	
	Poor	Non poor	Poor	Non poor
Respondent's Income	58.8	41.2	82.2	17.8
Household income	23.7	76.3	24.9	75.1

The appropriateness of using income to measure poverty among the elderly can be questioned because some elderly may no longer be working but have accumulated enough during their working years to support old age living. Lucy (2007) combined the concepts of net flow (income minus expenditure) and net worth (assets minus liabilities) in determining the economic status of the elderly. Four typologies of economic status were derived from this method, positive net flow and positive net worth, positive net flow and negative net worth, negative net flow and positive net worth and negative net flow and negative net worth. Table 5.9 shows the economic status of the elderly using these typologies. Of the four typologies, the positive net worth and net flow represents the non poor group while the negative net flow and net worth represent the worst off group or poorest group. The proportion of women in the worse off group was three times more compared to men. There were almost similar percentages of male and female elderly in the category of positive net worth and negative net flow. This group has assets but had limited sources of income. In contrast, the percentage of women without much assets but with positive net flow was much higher and since the majority of the women did not work, the proportion of those in the category of negative net flow was higher. Using this typology the percentage of poor elderly tends to be much lower compared to when using income as the measure of poverty.

Table 5.9 Typology of Economic Status

		NET WORTH (Assets- Liabilities)			
		Positive		Negative	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
NET FLOW	Positive	70%	53%	9%	20%
	Negative	19%	18%	3%	10%

The data analyzed shows that there are gender differences in employment, income and poverty. Since the data analyzed was cross sectional data, a longitudinal study is needed to objectively identify the economic status of the elderly. Since the majority of the elderly were living with family members, the measurement of poverty among the elderly and gender differences need to be further refined.

Gender and Finance

Money means different things to different people. How women and men view and manage money or finance can shed some light into the gender differences in the financial aspect of every day life. Though not much has been investigated on gender and money, data collected among university students revealed that there were gender difference in financial knowledge and practices which reflected the existence of gender stereotype. Previous research have shown that women were mainly responsible for domestic types of spending while men were responsible for big ticketed spending such as buying cars, television and insurance. With increasing numbers of working women such trends can be expected to have changed. Twenty years ago women who applied for bank loans had to have the husband as co-signer but today this requirement has been dropped. Both men and women can get access to loans as long as they are able to show that they

can afford to pay back the loan. Since men and women have different gender roles, it can also be expected that men and women play different financial or consumer roles. Buying food, clothing and children's items tend to be the women's responsibility while paying road tax, buying insurance or electrical items is the men's role.

Based on gender socialization theory, it can be hypothesized that boys and girls will socialize differently in relation to finance. Table 5.9 shows childhood experiences with money among college students. Data were collected in 11 public and private universities in 2004. The table shows that there were no significant differences in childhood experiences with money between male and female students. There was a small portion of male and female students who never had experience with money and this could be due to the economic situation of their families which deprived them from having own bank accounts, have savings and be involved in family financial management. In contrast to developed nations, children in Malaysia do not have much opportunity to earn income during childhood. This is reflected in the table whereby more than one fifth of the students had never had the experience of earning their own income. Can similar childhood experiences result in similar financial experiences in college? Table 5.10 shows the financial behavior among male and female students. Higher percentage of female students acknowledge that their hobby was shopping and that they enjoyed shopping. In contrast a higher proportion of male students agreed that debt causes problem and they hid their spending habits.

Table 5.9 Selected childhood experiences with money by sex

	Male			Female				
	Never	<7	7-12	13>	Never	<7	7-12	13>
receive allowance	8.58	20.41	41.68	29.33	5.73	24.61	45.96	23.71
Have own bank account	3.94	13.01	35.96	47.09	3.35	13.17	36.50	46.99
Involved in family financial discussions	16.52	1.89	8.61	72.98	11.86	0.79	9.15	78.19
Knew family finance	9.47	1.55	11.70	77.28	8.47	0.90	11.30	79.32
Receive own income	25.09	1.38	6.40	67.13	35.03	1.47	5.56	57.94
Have saving account	2.93	9.14	30.17	57.76	4.40	9.13	29.20	57.27
Buy goods on my own	1.89	14.11	33.91	50.09	1.57	10.66	26.82	60.94

Table 5.10 Selected Financial Behavior by sex

	Male		Female	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Main hobby is shopping	12.86	87.14	19.60	80.40
Enjoy shopping	32.66	67.17	55.22	44.78
Buy things not planned	37.76	62.07	38.04	61.96
Spending habits create problem	41.67	58.33	41.24	58.76
Buy thing can not afford	20.65	79.35	10.81	89.19
Debt cause problem	33.79	66.21	20.45	79.55
Hide spending habits	56.03	43.97	40.78	59.22

Gender and Social Issues

Girls and women have been identified as the weaker sex. Increased social issues and problems have direct effect on the well being of men and women. The impact on women can be expected to be much more severe since girls/women are often the target for criminal acts. Increasing numbers of drug addicts, HIV/AIDS and many other problems is shown in Tables 5.11, 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14. Table 5.11 shows that incidences of crime and theft/robbery are on the increase. Based on the figures in 2006, there were 18 theft cases every hour in Malaysia. There is at least one theft in every state every hour. There were also 1.6 murder cases in the country everyday, and about five crime cases reported every hour in the country. In addition to bodily injury and loss of valuable things is the trauma the victims have to go through especially among women/ girls. The increasing number of rape cases is also of concern. The number doubled in 2006 compared to 2000. Rape is not only a women's issue but it is a gender issue. It affects not only the victims but also the family of the victims.

HIV/AIDS is a rather new phenomenon that society has to face. Figure 5.9 shows the reported HIV and AIDS cases in the country among men and women.

Gender in Everyday Life

Women tend to be affected the most by HIV/AIDS and also to suffer the most. Having to take care of partners with AIDS, the women can also be suffering from AIDS. The figure clearly shows a steady increase in the number of women being HIV positive and with AIDS.

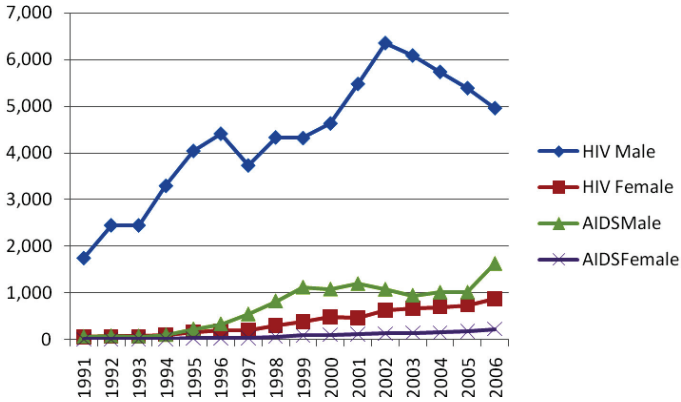


Figure 5 Reported HIV and AIDS Cases, 1991-2006

Table 5.11 Number of Incidences of Various Crimes 2000-2006

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Murder	551	608	516	565	565	497	604
Attempted murder	43	68	64	77	92	94	*
Group robbery with weapon	89	65	73	45	44	40	68
Group robbery without weapon	1,681	1,697	1,704	1,920	1,689	1842	2,658
Robbery with firearm	722	566	425	381	334	317	247
Robbery without firearm	12,204	11,333	12,203	13,963	13,221	13,210	18,446
Rape	1,210	1,354	1,418	1,471	1,718	1,887	2,435
Causing harm	5,104	4,699	4,440	4,368	4,196	4,246	5,716
Total crime	21,604	20,390	20,843	22,790	21,859	22,133	42,343
Total theft	145,569	136,079	128,199	133,525	134,596	135,326	156,279

Most of the HIV/AIDS cases in the country are drug related cases. Table 5.12 shows the number of new addicts, number of those admitted to rehabilitation centers and the number of addicts discharged from rehabilitation centers. Majority of drug addicts were men. Every hour there were 2.6 addicts in 2006. Everyday in 2006 15 addicts were admitted and the same number was discharged from rehabilitation centres. Since majority of addicts were men, women have to take on the responsibility of caring for family members when the husband is in rehabilitation as well to care for the husband when he gets out of the rehabilitation center.

In addition to drugs and HIV/AIDS resulting from drugs, girls and women are also more susceptible to many other abuses. Table 5.13 shows the number of incest, rape and sexual harassment cases, 2000-2007. Though the number of reported cases did not increase consistently, the fact that it happens is something difficult to accept. Fathers, step fathers and uncles were the most often reported perpetrators. Personal communication with investigating officers revealed that one of the factors contributing to incest was gender ideology. The perpetrator felt that he should enjoy his daughter/ granddaughter before other people enjoyed her. Such men view girls/women as sex object to fulfill his sexual desire. In addition, the cases of molest and rape also show an increase. Studies on sexual harassment among public sector workers shows that many women dare not report cases of sexual harassment because they do not want to be labeled as the bad person (Azimah, 2006). In-depth interviews conducted by Azimah (2006) revealed that those involved in sexual harassment cases felt that women enjoyed being sexually harassed or in some cases the perpetrator knew the victim would not take any action since he was her boss.

Table 5.12 Number of Drug Addicts, addicts admitted and discharged from Rehabilitation Centers, 2004-2006

	2004			2005			2006		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Drug Addict	38,672	37,980	692	32,808	32,141	667	22,811	22,348	463
Admitted	13,695	13,476	219	8,678	8,519	159	5,554	5,471	83
Discharge	7,787	7,565	222	9,296	9,094	202	5,463	5,366	97

Table 5.13 Number of incest, Molest, rape and sexual harassment cases 2000-2007

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Incest Cases	213	246	306	254	335	295	332	177
Molest Cases	1,234	1,393	1,522	1,399	1,661	1,746	1,972	1,073
Rape Cases	1,217	1,386	1,431	1,479	1,765	1,931	2,431	1,494
Sexual Harassment	112	96	94	92	119	102	119	90

*until June 2007

Table 5.14 shows the child abuse and domestic violence cases, 2002-2006. Majority of the victims of child abuse and domestic violence were girls and women. There was an increase by 61% in child abuse cases in 2006 compared to 2002. Women often bear the abuse because they are helpless and without resources, especially economic resources. For example at the end of one gender training session in 2006, one woman stood up asking for input. She said that she has been abused by her husband for the last 10 years and she asked whether she should leave him. Such phenomenon is happening and women dare not take any action because some of them feel that it is normal for husbands to beat them. In some cases women may not know what to do when faced with such abuse especially by her husband.

The data presented above is data accessed from various Ministries' websites and existing datasets available. The data reflect the outcome of the gendered way of life which showed the different impact on men and women. Despite much changes taking place in Malaysian society, the gendered way of life is not changing as fast as the changes in the environment. Gender gaps in the family, society as well as at program level remain though in some cases the gap has narrowed.

TOWARDS ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY: CHALLENGES

The discussion in this paper utilized relevant data accessible to the writer and data from various government reports, The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985), the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific (1994), the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995),

Millenium development goals and many other international efforts have had some impact in changing the gendered way of life especially at the policy and program levels. Achieving gender equality means that both men and women have equal opportunity to have access to resources for development. Though

Table 5.14 Child abuse and domestic Violence, 2002-2006

	2002			2003			2004			2005			2006		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Child Abuse Cases	492	750	1,242	480	910	1,390	596	1,060	1,656	630	1,170	1,800	633	1,366	1,999
Domestic Violence	9	589	598	14	622	636	16	544	560	18	403	421	22	463	485
Destitute Persons	765	243	1,008	1,086	363	1,449	869	355	1,224	675	236	911	812	234	1,046

Malaysian society is changing, the changes taking place are rather slow.

The gendered way of life presented in this paper covers selected aspects related to research conducted in the last 30 years. Sub topics covered include gender and agriculture, poverty, family, micro enterprise, aging, finance and social issues. Much has been achieved but there is still room for improvement towards achieving gender equality. The general trends observed are as follow:

- In the education system, women remain dominant in the “soft sciences”, the traditionally female fields of specialisation, i.e. in education, arts, and humanities though the numbers in tertiary education have increased.
- In employment, a high percentage of women employees are found in low-skilled, low-paid jobs. There is a significant increase in women in managerial positions, thereby narrowing the gender gap but men still hold most of the top management positions.
- There is a lack of data on the role of men and women in agriculture. With persistent poverty in the agriculture sector, the gender dynamics in this sector need to be unravelled to enable more effective program planning and implementation.
- Poverty affects both men and women. Women have been the target for poverty eradication programs. Unless gender relations in the family are addressed, women will remain overworked. Husbands will remain with their traditional role ideology leaving women with all household chores.
- Women's involvement in income generating activities provides additional income to the family. Lack of skills as well as appropriate technology makes it hard for women to advance.
- Gender and aging is a new focus of research. Women may be economically disadvantaged due to not being involved in the labor force. Nevertheless women may be at an advantage compared to men due to bonding established with their children

- The family is where major gender socialization takes place. How parents treat boys and girls will remain with the child. Research on gender dimensions of family living is needed to provide better understanding of the gendered way of life.
- Data among college students show that there is not much difference in financial behaviour but data showed that women tend to display the traditional gender traits, soft, accommodative etc.

The social issues that are emerging today is very worrying and will have direct impact on the well being of girls and women, boys and men.

Gender inequality is still in place in Malaysia as reflected in indexes developed internationally. Gender inequality and barriers emerge due to:

- Lack of awareness and understanding of the concept of “gender”, its influences in the lives of men and women and its impact on gender equality and development.
- Traditional gender ideology, which to a great extent has limited the development of human potential of a substantial proportion of women, as leaders in the public, private and political sectors; the sharing of reproductive work in the family system; thereby imposing a heavy burden on women who work in both the productive and reproductive spheres, and the power of decision-making of women, especially when they are less able to have access to and control over resources and make the necessary decisions.

A two-pronged approach should be adopted towards achieving gender equality; increased awareness and understanding of the concept of “gender” and its impact on development and gender equality; and to empowerment of men and women with knowledge and skills through training and re-training, provision of supports and services such as technological development, social services and infrastructure, legal services and other productive resources and facilities. The role of family in promoting gender equality should not be taken

for granted. Changing family living patterns to accommodate the changes in the environment should be followed by changing gender roles. Parents can play critical roles in shaping children's gender schema and ideology. Some strategies to be adopted by governments to achieve gender equality include:

- Capacity building to increase awareness and understanding of Gender and its impact on development and gender equality.
- Develop, implement and monitor comprehensive and integrative strategies to empower both women and men for quality participation in all sectors, thereby narrowing the gender gap, while ensuring the quality of life of women, men and their families.
- Collect and establish sex-disaggregated databases for purposes of planning, evaluating and monitoring the implementation and achievement of goals towards gender equality.
- Strengthen inter-agency networking and collaboration (GOs, NGOs, private sector, regional and international organisations, donor agencies) to formulate, disseminate, incorporate, implement, evaluate and monitor gender sensitive policies, goals, programmes and projects, at all levels throughout the nation.
- Promote and co-ordinate research on women and gender issues so as to provide input for policy formulation and basis for amendments to discriminatory actions in all sectors of development.
- Review all courses in family development to ensure such courses do not perpetuate gender stereotypes
- Ensure message disseminate through the media contributes to gender equality and avoid disseminating messages which can contribute to gender inequality.

CONCLUSION

The data presented revealed that despite all the efforts to address gender disparities, these disparities still prevail as we enter the 21st century. Research reviewed revealed that gender disparities and inequalities are deep rooted in the family which is the most crucial social unit in this region. Addressing gender inequalities in the community and public sphere will not overcome the problems arising from gender inequalities. Since the construction of gender determines what is expected, allowed and the values of men and women, and these happen mainly in the home or family, understanding the family should be made the focus of intervention. Gender sensitization of both men and women in the family must be carried out effectively to break the vicious gender cycle. In addition, conscious gender socialization in the family, school and work place is a prerequisite to address gender disparities and inequity. An integrated approach is needed to bring about effective change in the family and societal gender make-up toward optimal and balanced development of all family members.

Changing lifestyles and way of living require men and women to reassess the gender ideology they hold. The era of maintaining traditions needs to be changed to enable both men and women to become partners in development of individuals, family, community as well as the nation. Girls/women comprise almost half of Malaysia's human resource and they should be given equal opportunities to contribute to the development of the nation. This requires all Malaysians to think out of the box to change the gendered way of life to improve the well being of everyone as we move closer to becoming a developed nation

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BIOGRAPHY

Born in Rembau Negeri Sembilan, **Prof Jariah Masud** received her primary education at Sekolah Kebangsaan Pedas and continued her secondary education at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Rembau, presently know as Sekolah Dato' Sedia Raja. After SPM she continued on to form Six at the Alam Shah School in Cheras. She then continued her studies in the Faculty of Economic and Administration in the University of Malaya. She received her Bachelor of Economic (Hons) second class upper qualifications in 1974. She then joined UPM as a tutor in the then Faculty of Agriculture in 1974 and in 1975 she was awarded a Food and Agriculture fellowship to continue her studies at Fresno State University where she graduated in 1977 with a M. Sc (Home Economics) degree. Prof. Jariah was appointed as a lecturer in Family economics and management in 1977. In 1984 she was awarded study leave to do her doctoral degree. She received her doctoral degree from the Oregon State University, Corvallis in the area of Management and Family Economics in 1987.

Professor Dr Jariah has been actively involved in curriculum development and has taught various courses and supervised more than 60 undergraduate and graduate students. She led more than 50 research projects funded by local and international agencies such as Japan International Organization (JICA) and Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations (FAO). Topics researched include time use, household production, women in micro enterprise, female headed households, economic and financial aspects of ageing, and gender ideology. The Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) provided funding to study rural women in micro enterprise and Prof. Jariah was given the responsibility to coordinate the five week JICA Third Country Training Program (TCTP) on Enhancing the Economic Roles of Rural women through Scaling up of Micro Enterprise to Small Scale Enterprises from 1997 to 2002. Since 2007 Professor Dr Jariah has led similar trainings under NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women (NIEW). She is also serving as a member of

the NIEW technical committee. Her research findings have been incorporated in programs for female headed households, micro enterprise scaling up for rural women, gender sensitization and Village Vision Movement. Professor Jariah is also a founder member of the Malaysian Women Graduates Association and the Malaysian Consumer and Family Economics Association (MACFEA), a professional association with the goal of promoting and developing the area of consumer and family economics in Malaysia. She is the President of MACFEA for the period 2008-2010.

Currently she is leading three research projects in addition to being a member of five other research projects. Professor Dr Jariah embarked on using the Geographical Information System (GIS) in her research from 2004. Her current project is in developing a social indicator database at district level and mapping social issues and concerns using GIS for systematic and integrated social planning efforts. Professor Dr Jariah is a gender trainer who believes that both men and women should have equal opportunities in development and that Islam promotes gender equality in contrast to the western view that Islam promotes inequality. She also believes that Malaysia can achieve gender equality using our own mould.

LIST OF INAUGURAL LECTURES

1. Prof. Dr. Sulaiman M. Yassin
The Challenge to Communication Research in Extension
22 July 1989
2. Prof. Ir. Abang Abdullah Abang Ali
Indigenous Materials and Technology for Low Cost Housing
30 August 1990
3. Prof. Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdul Razak
Plant Parasitic Nematodes, Lesser Known Pests of Agricultural Crops
30 January 1993
4. Prof. Dr. Mohamed Suleiman
Numerical Solution of Ordinary Differential Equations: A Historical Perspective
11 December 1993
5. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Ariff Hussein
Changing Roles of Agricultural Economics
5 March 1994
6. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Ismail Ahmad
Marketing Management: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture
6 April 1994
7. Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mahyuddin Mohd. Dahan
The Changing Demand for Livestock Products
20 April 1994
8. Prof. Dr. Ruth Kiew
Plant Taxonomy, Biodiversity and Conservation
11 May 1994
9. Prof. Ir. Dr. Mohd. Zohadie Bardaie
Engineering Technological Developments Propelling Agriculture into the 21st Century
28 May 1994
10. Prof. Dr. Shamsuddin Jusop
Rock, Mineral and Soil
18 June 1994

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11. Prof. Dr. Abdul Salam Abdullah
Natural Toxicants Affecting Animal Health and Production
29 June 1994
12. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Yusof Hussein
Pest Control: A Challenge in Applied Ecology
9 July 1994
13. Prof. Dr. Kapt. Mohd. Ibrahim Haji Mohamed
Managing Challenges in Fisheries Development through Science and Technology
23 July 1994
14. Prof. Dr. Hj. Amat Juhari Moain
Sejarah Keagungan Bahasa Melayu
6 Ogos 1994
15. Prof. Dr. Law Ah Theem
Oil Pollution in the Malaysian Seas
24 September 1994
16. Prof. Dr. Md. Nordin Hj. Lajis
Fine Chemicals from Biological Resources: The Wealth from Nature
21 January 1995
17. Prof. Dr. Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman
Health, Disease and Death in Creatures Great and Small
25 February 1995
18. Prof. Dr. Mohamed Shariff Mohamed Din
Fish Health: An Odyssey through the Asia - Pacific Region
25 March 1995
19. Prof. Dr. Tengku Azmi Tengku Ibrahim
Chromosome Distribution and Production Performance of Water Buffaloes
6 May 1995
20. Prof. Dr. Abdul Hamid Mahmood
Bahasa Melayu sebagai Bahasa Ilmu- Cabaran dan Harapan
10 Jun 1995

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21. Prof. Dr. Rahim Md. Sail
Extension Education for Industrialising Malaysia: Trends, Priorities and Emerging Issues
22 July 1995
22. Prof. Dr. Nik Muhammad Nik Abd. Majid
The Diminishing Tropical Rain Forest: Causes, Symptoms and Cure
19 August 1995
23. Prof. Dr. Ang Kok Jee
The Evolution of an Environmentally Friendly Hatchery Technology for Udang Galah, the King of Freshwater Prawns and a Glimpse into the Future of Aquaculture in the 21st Century
14 October 1995
24. Prof. Dr. Sharifuddin Haji Abdul Hamid
Management of Highly Weathered Acid Soils for Sustainable Crop Production
28 October 1995
25. Prof. Dr. Yu Swee Yean
Fish Processing and Preservation: Recent Advances and Future Directions
9 December 1995
26. Prof. Dr. Rosli Mohamad
Pesticide Usage: Concern and Options
10 February 1996
27. Prof. Dr. Mohamed Ismail Abdul Karim
Microbial Fermentation and Utilization of Agricultural Bioresources and Wastes in Malaysia
2 March 1996
28. Prof. Dr. Wan Sulaiman Wan Harun
Soil Physics: From Glass Beads to Precision Agriculture
16 March 1996
29. Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman
Sustained Growth and Sustainable Development: Is there a Trade-Off 1 or Malaysia
13 April 1996
30. Prof. Dr. Chew Tek Ann
Sharecropping in Perfectly Competitive Markets: A Contradiction in Terms
27 April 1996

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31. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Yusuf Sulaiman
Back to the Future with the Sun
18 May 1996
32. Prof. Dr. Abu Bakar Salleh
Enzyme Technology: The Basis for Biotechnological Development
8 June 1996
33. Prof. Dr. Kamel Ariffin Mohd. Atan
The Fascinating Numbers
29 June 1996
34. Prof. Dr. Ho Yin Wan
Fungi: Friends or Foes
27 July 1996
35. Prof. Dr. Tan Soon Guan
Genetic Diversity of Some Southeast Asian Animals: Of Buffaloes and Goats and Fishes Too
10 August 1996
36. Prof. Dr. Nazaruddin Mohd. Jali
Will Rural Sociology Remain Relevant in the 21st Century?
21 September 1996
37. Prof. Dr. Abdul Rani Bahaman
Leptospirosis-A Model for Epidemiology, Diagnosis and Control of Infectious Diseases
16 November 1996
38. Prof. Dr. Marziah Mahmood
Plant Biotechnology - Strategies for Commercialization
21 December 1996
39. Prof. Dr. Ishak Hj. Omar
Market Relationships in the Malaysian Fish Trade: Theory and Application
22 March 1997
40. Prof. Dr. Suhaila Mohamad
Food and Its Healing Power
12 April 1997

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41. Prof. Dr. Malay Raj Mukerjee
A Distributed Collaborative Environment for Distance Learning Applications
17 June 1998
42. Prof. Dr. Wong Kai Choo
Advancing the Fruit Industry in Malaysia: A Need to Shift Research Emphasis
15 May 1999
43. Prof. Dr. Aini Ideris
Avian Respiratory and Immunosuppressive Diseases- A Fatal Attraction
10 July 1999
44. Prof. Dr. Sariah Meon
Biological Control of Plant Pathogens: Harnessing the Richness of Microbial Diversity
14 August 1999
45. Prof. Dr. Azizah Hashim
The Endomycorrhiza: A Futile Investment?
23 Oktober 1999
46. Prof. Dr. Noraini Abdul Samad
Molecular Plant Virology: The Way Forward
2 February 2000
47. Prof. Dr. Muhamad Awang
Do We Have Enough Clean Air to Breathe?
7 April 2000
48. Prof. Dr. Lee Chnoong Kheng
Green Environment, Clean Power
24 June 2000
49. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Ghazali Mohayidin
Managing Change in the Agriculture Sector: The Need for Innovative Educational Initiatives
12 January 2002
50. Prof. Dr. Fatimah Mohd. Arshad
Analisis Pemasaran Pertanian di Malaysia: Keperluan Agenda Pembaharuan
26 Januari 2002

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51. Prof. Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah
Fisheries Co-Management: An Institutional Innovation Towards Sustainable Fisheries Industry
28 February 2002
52. Prof. Dr. Gulam Rusul Rahmat Ali
Food Safety: Perspectives and Challenges
23 March 2002
53. Prof. Dr. Zaharah A. Rahman
Nutrient Management Strategies for Sustainable Crop Production in Acid Soils: The Role of Research Using Isotopes
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