cont. from pg. 7.

the Cairo Conference

years the world population had doubled to 2 billion, the transition from the fifth to the sixth billion, now under way, is anticipated in 11 years - 1987-1998.

Therefore, Cairo conference is seen as the last opportunity in the present century for the world to address the problem. Nations need to act decisively on the program of action adopted at the Cairo conference if they are to overcome this global problem.

The secretary-general of the International Conference on Population and Development, Nafis Sadek, in an interview, opined that education is the key for resolving this worlwide problem.

Sharing her views on how the Cairo conference changed the approach towards the population issue she remarked that the central message is that population policy should be broader than just family palnning and contaceptives. It has stressed education as a key investment that countries must make, particularly for girls.

Enlarging access to health services at the health level and broadening the scope of family planning programs to include women's health is as important she added. The conference has also emphasized the need for women to have control over decision-making but in a manner that promotes gender equality and not confrontation. And that population is not just an issue for developing countries but a global one. The developed countries must seriously examine their wasteful living and overuse of resources. She recommended holding a dialogue about how the world's resources can be equitably shared.

When it was suggested to Dr Sadik that many of the messages at the ICPD were diffused because of the abnormal focus on the abortion and reproductive rights issue, she responded that it did have an impact as some of these issues should have taken center stage. The debate on abortion was quite out of proportion but in a way it was good because these are sensitive and decisive issues that were swept under the carpet earlier. The Cairo Conference served as the platform on an international plane to voice their views on the issues. Also, many men and women have found that some of the things that they were led to believe by religion are not necessarily true. For instance, many would find it surprising that Islam allows family planning method, certainly for the life of the mother, all the religious leaders have endorsed it . Islam also talks about access to education and women's right to manage property for themselves.

In response to wheather the developed countries had put their money where their mouth is she said many nations have already announced an increase in funds for population-related activity. The US has announced that its goal is $1.2 billion by 2000. The Japanese have announced $3 billion over the next seven years. The Germans have promised a 50 per cent increase. And the European Union has indicated that it may increase it by three times its current amount. With the World Bank also chipping in she expected the rest of the world to be able to meet the estimated target of $5.2 billion from external resources. So she felt there was reason for optimism.

It was felt that unlike the past the Cairo conference doesn't seem to have laid down any demographic goals for the nations to achieve. Her views were that they wanted to get away from demographically-driven programs. Rather than set targets and push family planning methods, we will do better by listening to people, meeting the population's demands for family planning and leaving the choice of what they will use, if they will use and when they will use to the people. She further said we need to educate them. She opined that this enabling approach would lead to much lower levels of population for the world than the UN's medium projections.

She expressed that the notion that all one needs is economic development has been laid to rest. As well as the belief that unless one has economic growth, fertility will decline if one gives people the means and enabling environment for them to make the decisions.

Activities undertaken at the sub-regional and regional levels have been an important aspect of preparation of the conference. The outcome of subregional and regional preparatory meetings on population and development has clearly demonstrated the importance of acknowledging, alongside both international and national actions, the continuing contributions of subregional and regional action. For the realization of the targets set by the world conference, coordination and monitoring will be required at the international, subregional and regional levels. At this stage more doing than planning is required.

Crime Against Women

an edited version of a report by Ms Lalita Prakash.

"Crime Against Women" was the theme of a day-long workshop organised by the Women's Wing of the Fiji Teachers Union's Nadroga branch.

The Workshop, held at Sigatoka Methodist Mission High School on November 19, attracted 67 participants, including teachers, union leaders, representatives of women's groups and students.

Women's Wing president Lalita Prakash said the workshop's aim was to educate teachers and community leaders about violence and its eddects and parents about domestic violence, rape, child abuse and sexual harrasment.

"We cannot totally depend on the courts or the law to protect women against gender violence," Ms Prakash told participants.

"We have to take a preventative measure. Community awaremess and education on the subject and the rights of women are neccessary."

The workshop was opened by the coordinator of the Suva's Women's Crisis Centre, Shamima Ali, who warned that domestic violence, rape, child abuse and sexual harrassment were on the increase, with sexual harrassment the most prevalent.

"Many women and children suffer as victims of violent crimes and they suffer in silence," she said.

Many rapes went unreported, Ms Ali said, because women feared being humiliated by police, doctors and the court system, while Indian women were often dissuaded from reporting rape because of the stigma and shame involved.

In cases of domestic abuse, Ms Ali said many women stayed in violence relationships with their husbands because of low self-esteem, social isolation, fear of being stigmatised,economic and psychological dependency and because clergy and counsellors told them it was their duty to do so.

The effects of domestic violence on its victims profoundly damaging," she said.
Ms Ali also told participants that the tragedy of child sex abuse was that the main offenders were not strangers, but members of the child's immediate family or someone else the child knows and trusts.

"Children who have been sexually abused have disastrous effects on their lives," she said. "They live with fear, guilt, loneliness and confusion."

The issue of bulubulu was raised at the workshop by subdivisional health sister for Nadroga/Navosa, Sister Nuitawaqa, who said the custom of settling matters through roconciliation between families often took the decision of reporting rape or sexual assault out of the woman's hands.

She appealed to rape victims and their parents to report all matters of sexual violence to police.

Suva lawyer Vandhana Narayan said sentences were too lenient in some sexual violence cases and a review of laws affecting women was needed.

"Sometimes the courts take too long to punish the accused, while the female victims continue to suffer emotionally, psychologically, physically and morally," she said.

The workshop passed a number of resolutions, including urging the government to review laws on domestic violence, rape, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment, to increase penalties for offenders. It also called on the government to appoint more women magistrates to handle gender-based crimes.

The workshop also agreed that the Ministry of Education should run programs to educate teachers on matters of gender violence and child abuse, and that teachers shold pass this knowledge on to students in primary and secondary schools.

The workshop also called on all men in authority to honour the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that everyone "without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language or other status" has the right to "life, liberty and security of persons" and shall not "be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

1994 In Brief...!

Jan : Had one full time paid staff , the coordinator, Ms Vani Dulaki and was assisted by Zarina Bibi, a member.

Feb : Ms. Suman Chandra joined the Movement as Clerical Officer.

: Organised the first regional meet ing (roundtable) on Women In Politics which was attended by 15 women from 11 South Pacific countries. Funding was provided by The Asia Foundation - Pacific Office.

: Ms Catherine Harm Nam joined FWRM as Communication Officer.

: First edition of BALANCE for Women's Day.

Mar : Participated in the different activities organised by women's organisation to mark the International Women's Day

: Ms Jenny Carter voluntarily assisted in the office. She is a Law student from England who was visiting a friend.

: Organised a 3 day national legal literacy workshop that focused on the Family Law of Fiji. This was attended by 30 women from different parts of Fiji and representing different women's groups.

: Published articles on the Family Law of Fiji in the three languages (English, Fijian & Hindi). This was made possible by funds provided by the Dept., of Women through the AIDAB Small Grant Scheme.

Apr : Organised and hosted the first regional meeting on Women an Law which ended brainstorming session on Land Rights.

: Ms Praveen Sharma joined the Movement as WEER Project Officer.

May : Re-writing of project proposal and focusing on other possible projects. The Asia Foundation provided us six months funding for the interim period (May - Oct.)

June : Co-Resourced a one week legal literacy workshop on the Family Law of Fiji in Taveuni with the Regional Legal Adviser for British Aid which also supported it financially. This was organised by Ms Volau Yavalanavanua, a member of FWRM who attended the first workshop.

: Invited by the Soqosoqo Vakamarama - Lomaiviti through the Dept. of Women to address the group on the topic "Women and Law. FWRM was joined by Regional Legal Adviser - British Aid and Salote Kaimacuata from the DPP's office. Trip was made possible by British Aid.

: Our Legal Adviser attended a one week meeting in Manila on Women In Politics organised by the Centre for ASIA-Pacific Women In Politics (CAPWIP)

cont. page 11.

The Cairo Conference

adapted from APWIP newsletter - Vol 2. Fall 1994.

On September 5, 1994 the world's largest congress on population got underway. The Cairo conference sought fundamental shifts in country population programs. It called for countries to lay stress on demographic targets and include development in their plans.

Education is the key for resolving this worldwide problem

There were moments when it appeared that the conference was bogged down over the issue of abortion and would not be able to come up with a twenty-year program as it had targeted. However, despite the hardline stand of the Vatican and some Muslim countries, nations agreed to key changes in their population programs.

Cairo marked a decisive shift away from the ideology of those population ideologie that had dominated the past twenty years. In 1974, Bucharest, and in 1984, Mexico City, the plan of action laid down specific demographic targets to be achieved. The Cairo declaration was conspicuous by the absence of such goals. Family planning was no longer the dominant theme.

The focus had shifted to issues such as better delivery of health care services, women's empowerment, gender equality and reproductive rights. Experience of the past two decades indicates that these played a greater role in bringing down population growth levels rather than better family planning services.

In the conference the world community committed to quantitative goals in three areas. The areas are education, especially for girls; reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality; universal access to family planning and reproductive health services.

Though in the three preparatory meetings prior to the Cairo conference nations had been able to work out an agreement on 85% of the text of the program of action to be endorsed by the general body of nations, there was no consensus on matters such as sexual health, reproductive rights, family planning services, and abortion.

The abortion issue had been raised by the Vatican in the preparotry meetings as well but it was not expected to get the mileage that it did at the Cairo conference. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Sudan supported the Vatican stand and they stayed away in protest over the inclusion of reproductive rights and adolescent sexuality in the agenda.

The major problem identified at the conference was the funding problem. Programs listed in the action plan are not getting implemented due to lack of funding. Rich countries postponed a decision on the "20/20" proposal floated by the United Nation agencies. It directed developed countries to set aside at least 20% of their budget for social development and a similar amount for development aid to poor nations.

Many African countries were also against such a proposal because it would mean restructuring their own budgets significantly. Finally, broad agreement was reached on the estimated $17 billion that the program of action is going to cost.

Delegates were confronted with the fact that 90 million people were being added to world population annually, that the growth of world population was at an all-time high. Over a period of 123

Is AIDS a new disease?

Some people find it hard to believe that AIDS is a new diease. They think that it has been around for a long time, but not diagnosed. They may think this because thay have never seen a person with AIDS or because the symptoms are the same as those of a local syndrome.

In one country some people believe that AIDS is a local disease caused by a spell put on a unfaithful woman by her jealous partner. This disease causes wasting and death.

If people think that AIDS has been around for along time they will see less reason to change their behaviour because they have managed to avoid it up till now.

The history of AIDS suggests that the present epidemic is new, even if isolated cases of AIDS occurred earlier.

In the early 1980s doctors in the USA, Europe and Africa began to see a particular combination of symptoms which they had not seen before. These cases were surprising because;

- the serious infection which killed people were previously only seen in people with severely weakened immune systems. For example, in people with cancer or malnutrition;

- the symptoms of usually mild infections such as thrus or herpes were very severe and spread over the body. they occured in un usual combinations;

- the disease affected previously strong, young people.

Health workers noticed that while mainly men who have sex with men were affected in the West, both men **and** woman were affected in Africa. Then people who had had blood transfusions, intravenous drug users and newborn babies of infected mothers started to get AIDS.

This suggested that the disease was caused by an infectious agent transmitted in blood and during sexual activity. The search for a virus began and HIV was discovered.

HIV was found in blood, semen and vaginal fluids in infected people. There is no trace of the virus before 1969 in stored blood, which suggests that it is a new virus.

The number of cases of AIDS has doubled every eight months since the early 1980s in countries where the virus first appeared. It has spread to almost every country in the world.

cont. from pg. 10. 1994 in brief.....!

July : Co-resourced another week long work shop with women in Nadi with the Regional Legal Adviser - British Aid. This was organised by the women's Interest Officer - Nadi with funding pro-vided also by the British Aid.

: Project Officer attended a one week meeting in Bangkok which was organised by UNESCAP which was focused on Social development. This was possible through funding from the International Labour Organisation (Suva).

Aug : Coordinator attended a two week work shop in Vanuatu for the Beneath Paradise Project. She was also nominated to be one of the five women representing this Pacific Women's NGO group to Beijing in 1995.

Sep : Coordinator attended a two week work shop/ seminar meeting in Brisbane organised by the Australian federation of University Women. FWRM was nominated by FAWG.

Oct : Received positive response from the Global Fund for Women regarding funds for the execution of the WEER project and also OXFAM NZ who with Community Aid Abroad Australia are willing to make a momentary contribution towards WEER.

Nov : FWRM hosted some members of the team who accompanied the NZ Minister for For eign Affairs official visit to Fiji. Members present were able to meet two NZ MP's and also the Executive Director of OXFAM NZ. Meeting was very successful.

: Dr. Mridula Sainath went to India and Ugenda to attend a Women and Health exchange programme.

: Co-resourced a week long legal literacy workshop organised by the Dept. of Women for it's officers.

: Sent out the second edition of BALANCE for the year after a long lapse.

Dec : Meeting organised in Pakistan was attend by P.Imrana Jalal. This was organised by Women Living Under Muslim Law Group. Trip was funded by The Asia Foundation.

: Ms Tupou Vere attended a Mock trial in Bangkok organised to try human rights abusers. Funded by APWLD.

VISIT BY PARTICIPANTS FROM THE YOUNG WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

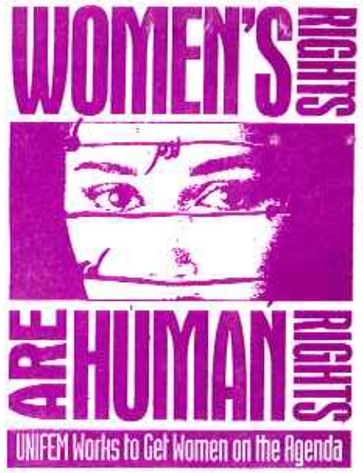
by Gina Houng Lee

The World Conference of Churches, Pacific Conference of Churches and the Fiji Council of Churhes held a young women's festival titled **"I am Worthy, Young Women Demand a Violence Free World"**. 60 participants from Latin America, Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East, Caribbean and the Pacific attended. The festival also brought together positive experiences of ways in which young women have enhanced communities in which they live. A group of 15 representatives visited our office and Praveen presented a talk on "Economic Violence" and our Women's Employment and Equal Rights (WEER) Project. The session was informative and warmly received. We shared experiences of economic struggles and strategies for improving women's employment rights.

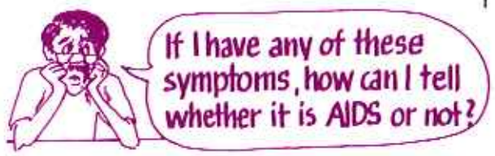
WOMEN *IN* DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

by Gina Houng Lee

We attended the Women in Develoment Steering Committee meeting on 17 November 1994. This Committee consists of government ministries and NGO representatives. The NGO component consists of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Fiji National Council of Women. This main objective of the meeting was to discuss progress and preparations for the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing. Sereima Lomaloma and Kiti Makasiale from the Department of Women (national focal point) reported on the Noumea and Jakarta Meeting as the unified voice of the Pacific delegations. We now have our regional plan of action and strategies to improve the status of women titled the "Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in the Asia and Pacific Regiona." The Steering committee is now looking to disseminate information through the mainstream media. Another important meeting is the final prepcom which is in March 1995 in New York at the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW is the secretariat for the Bejing Conference. Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB) plans to organise a technical expert team to examine the draft Global Platform of Action and lobby to include Pacific issues. It was decided that the committee nominate Tupou Vere (Department of Women) as a member of this technical expert team. We were advised that after Beijing a Fiji national human development summit would be held to examine implementation of the UN World Summit on Social Development. We look forward to this summit as it aims to examine national strategies to implement action plans endorsed at these international conferences. and Issues that affect us. We will keep you posted.



CLINICAL SIGNS OF AIDS	
Major Signs	Weight loss greater than 10% of body, weight, Fever for longer than one month, Diarrhoea for longer than one month (on and off or all the time), Persistent severe fatigue
Minor Signs	Cough for more than one month, Itchy skin rashes, Cold sores all over body, Shingles, Thrush in the month and throat, Swollen glands at two or more sites (excluding the groin) for more than 3 months.



People who are worried that they might have AIDS should consult a doctor. People should never say that a person has one of these symptoms. In the first palce, because AIDS can mimic other illnesses, it is very difficult to dignose and this can only be done by a well-qualified, experienced worker. Secondly, the person concerned and his family will suffer from anxiety and possibly rejection and isolation.

3) The illinesses in AIDS

Finally so much of the immune system is destroyed that the person is attacked by rare and serious infections which eventually kill him or her. The diseases vary in different countries, depending on which viruses, bacteria, fungus and protozoal infections are around.

Common diseases that can affect a person with AIDS include:

- chest infections causing pneumonia and shortness of breath (TB is common in people with AIDS)
- brain infections causing mental confusion, severe headache and fits
- gut infections causing severe diarrhoea lasting many weeks
- cancers, particularly a skin cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma.

About half of the peole diagnosed with AIDS die within two years of diagnosis. 15 per cent of people with AIDS in the USA have lived for five years since diagnosis.

If people are infected with HIV, how long will they have before they get AIDS....?

Some people infected with HIV may never get AIDS.

AIDS has only been recognized since 1980, so we do not yet know what percentage of people will have moved from one stage to another after 10 or 20 years.

We can only say that uptil now, after each year that has gone by, 12 per cent of people infected with HIV have developed some symptoms of HIV infection and between 2 and 9 per cent have developed AIDS. On average, people infected with HIV develop AIDS after eight years.

How HIV weakens the immune system

Our blood contains white and red blood cells. Normally the white cells fight off and kill any germs which enter our bodies. They do this by eating up the germs and by producing chemicals called antibodies which kill them. In this way our bodies fight off many different germs and we stay healthy. Sometimes we have symptoms of illness when our white cells are fighting the germs, but usually the white cells win and we get better. HIV weakens this immune system by entering and finally destroying our white cells. As more and more white cells are killed, the body becomes less and less able to fight off the many different germs which live around and in our bodies all the time. Finally, people with AIDS die from one of a number of serious and rare diseases which their bodies cannot resist.

HIV can also attack the brain cells and nervous system directly causing mental and co-ordination problems.

What happens when a person is infected with HIV.

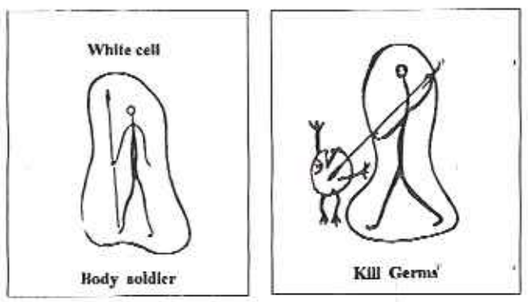
There are *three stages* of HIV infection.

(1) A healthy person infected with HIV

Around the time of infection some people have a short illness similar to glandular fever. After this most people remain healthy with no signs of illness for many years.

However, HIV is still present in the body and the person can infect others without either partner knowing it.

After about three months most people infected with HIV produce antibodies against the virus, but they are not able to kill HIV because it hides in the white cells. A blood test can detect these antibodies.

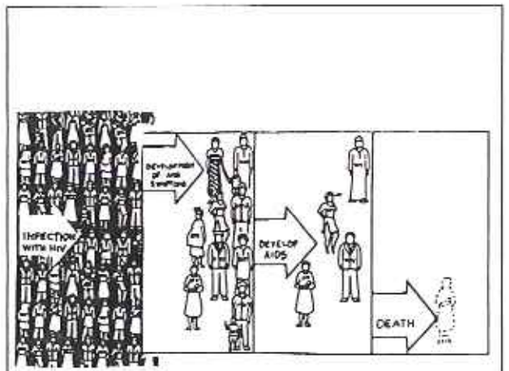


Stages of HIV infection

(2) Illnesses associated with HIV infection may begin to appear

A person infected with HIV may begin to show signs of illness after six months or after may years.

These signs are common in many illnesses



If infected with HIV, 100 people can expect to progress like this over one year.

and cannot be used by themselves to diagnose AIDS. They are also common in people with immune deficiency, which can be caused in a number of ways apart from HIV infection. for example, malnutrition, cancer and reactions to some drugs. After excluding such causes, a doctor may diagnose AIDS when a person has two or more of the following major signs together and at least one minor sign. Major signs are those which are more closely linked frequently in other illnesses as well.

If possible people with such signs and symptoms should also have an HIV antibody blood test.

cont. next page

WEER Women, Employment and Economic Rights project

From this issue onwards we will be informing our members of issues affecting women workers. If you have any questions/suggestions regarding issues affecting Women and Work, please do not hesitate to call/write to FWRM.

If readers are interested in learning more about issues addressed through our WEER project, FWRM will be conducting workshops on Women and Work issues. Please register your interest in organising/participating in these workshops at the FWRM office.

Since this issue of the "Balance" is targeted towards the 16 days of Action against violence Against Women, it seems appropriate to talk about Sexual Harassment in the Workplace as part of this issue. We have stressed earlier that ***Violence against women is not just physical but economic as well.*** Since women's need for income is desperate, they have little or no avenues to protest when faced with sexual harrasment and other similar problems at the workplace.

What is sexual harrasment?

Sexual Harrasment is a relatively new name to describe a problem which is certainly not new. It used to be one of the problems associated with being a woman. Different people had different phrases to describe this common problem that was faced by many women. In the 1970's, the term sexual harrasment was recognised as a specific type of behaviour which was against the law.

Although there are various ways of defining "sexual harrasment", the different definitions ususlly refer to:

"unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which either the rejection or imposition of can have negative employment consequences for the victim, as well as undesirable effects on the work environment."

Sexual harrasment can be any look, comment, suggestion which can be either physical and/or verbal that you find offensive and/or puts you in an awkward position. Usually people feel that in order to be sexually harrased, you need to be touched physically. **THIS IS FALSE!** The harraser need not lay a finger on you, but may make comments, tell jokes that can either be directed to you personally or to women in general which you find offensive.

This type of behaviour is different from friendly behaviour which is welcomed and mutual. The women who is on the receiving end is the one who determines whether the behaviour is welcome or not. She is the one who will have the final say in whether she treats that look/touch/comment as a compliment or as sexual harrasment. In countries where sexual harrasment is illegal (against the law) the courts define sexual harrasment as "conduct which is unwanted/ unwelcomed from a ***reasonable women's point of view.***

In Fiji, unfortunately, sexual harrasment is not against the law! The popular thinking is that sexual harrasment is not as rampant in Fiji as other countries hence there is really no need for legislation in this area. This type of thought has established firm roots in society and it needs to be corrected if we to safeguard the women workers of Fiji. Sexual harrasment is happening in Fiji; in a survey by FWRM, Domestic workers claimed that sexual harrasment was part of the job for them. In the same survey, police officers considered offensive jokes/comments as something associated with being in the police force. There have been many reports in the media about garment workers who are subject to body searches, forced to provide sexual favours to supervisors and superiors to name a few. Waitresses and other restaurant workers could recount innumerable number of occasions where male customers and/or bosses have either physically

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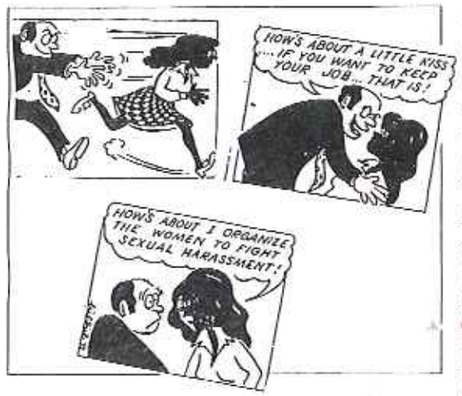
WEER project

touched them or made suggestive sexual remarks against them. These are all examples of sexual harrasment. It is happening today in Fiji so **Why have we not got a law against it?**

There are two major types of sexual harrasment in the workplace; these are:

1. When a person in authority demands sexual favours in return for job security, promotion etc. This type of behaviour is sometimes called sexual blackmail or "This for that..." *(ie. if you do this for me...you can keep your job!!)*

2. This is when unwelcome advances, verbal and physical interfere with the woman's work and can result in a hostile working environment. A common example would be when the victim's work suffers due to a lack of concentration and she begins to stay away from work in order to avoid tha harraser. This is more subtle then then the first one which involves asking for favours directly.



Because few women complain about sexual harrasment, many people are unaware of the problem. Cases have come about where women have complained about sexual harrasment after they have left work which makes people suspicious stating that it could be a case of "sour grapes"

Cases where women have complained, the typical response has been "you cannot take a joke!" The other common response is "Your (the victim's) behaviour somehow encouraged this form of harrasment." Both these statements are discriminatory to say the least. Firstly, we are all individuals and our sense of humour differs from individual to individual. One cannot say that because she/ he finds a comment amusing, everyone else has to agree. We are all entitled to our own opinions and what may be amusing to one person can be offensive to another, therefore the comment that a woman who complains of sexual harrasment cannot take a joke is unsubstantiated. The other common response also does not stand since all women can be subject to sexual harrasment regardless of their age, marital status, their appearance, and the position they occupy in the company.

It has been noted that women who are in certain occupations are more likely to be victims of harrasment than others. Domestic workers are more vulnerable to sexual harrasment since they usually work alone in the home; women in female dominated industries eg. garment workers are also more susceptible to this behaviour.

Sexual harrasment is a power play that exists between the victim and the harasser. It has nothing to do with victim's behaviour, age or dress. Research has proved time and time again that in most cases of sexual harassment, there is a power differece between the harasser and the victim. The link between sexual harassment and women's subordinate status in the labour market cannot be ignored. Sexual harassment of women workers is bound to persist while women continue to occupy positions at the lower end of wages and working conditions scale and are ignorant of their rights.....

SEXUAL HARASSMENT NEEDS TO BE RECOGNISED AS THE CRIME IT IS!

Next Issue.....!

Consequences of Sexual Harrasment & What **YOU** can do to combat sexual harrasment!

Where did AIDS come from.....?

Early reports suggested that HIV originated in Central Africa, was carried to Haiti and from there reached USA through gay men. This theory was written into documents as a fact although it was later found to be based on unreliable evidence. On top of this, the earlier numbers of people reported with HIV in Africa were found to be exaggerated because early tests gave many false positives. And westerners explained the high incidence of HIV in Africa as being the result of 'promiscuity' and 'traumatic sexual practices'. This biased reporting resulted in further discrimination against Africans and angered many African governments and those involved in AIDS programmes.

This was a painful start and it hindered international efforts to work together in preventing the further spread of HIV. It is not known where HIV originated. One of the earliest presumed cases was in a boy in the USA who died in 1969 of an illness which suggested immune deficiency. His stored blood and tissues were found to contain antibodies to HIV.

We should learn from this experience to be very careful not to present theories as if they were facts when talk about AIDS, and not to make assumptions about other people's sexual behaviour. The most important task now is to prevent the further spread of the virus and care for those who are infected with HIV. No one is to blame for the appearance of HIV. But now that we know it is there, we must not be accused of failing to create the kind of responsible and caring society which will make it possible to prevent AIDS.

What is AIDS

AIDS is a medical diagnoisis for a combination of illnesses which results from a specific weakness of the immune system. The immune system defends the body against infections and diseases. This immune deficiency is caused by infection with a virus. A virus is a very small germ.

A	*cquired*	*become infected*
I	*mmune*	*the immune system is weakend by the virus*
D	*eficiency*	
S	*yndrome*	*the illness has a variety of symptoms*

AIDS is caused by infection with a type of virus called HIV.

H	*uman*
I	*mmune deficiency*
V	*irus*

HIV is not one virus, but a family of many similar viruses. For example, HIV 1 is found in most countries of the world while HIV 2 is found mainly in West Africa.

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from that experience" or that "the victim had known different men sexually before the incident". Given such comments from law enforcers, it's hardly surprising that rapist are more succesful than any other criminal in getting away with their crimes.

Why are many people still so unconcerned about rape? Why does society seem indifferent to the suffering of survivors of rape? These are two difficult questions to answer but after putting more thoughts to it, is it because rape is identified as a women's issue and not a human one. By seeing or calling rape as a "women's issue" brings about a danger that it will continue to be seen as a sexual problem.

How, ultimately then can we get men to understand the ordeal of rape? This is also a difficult question to answer because men don't think of rape as their problem as it is something that happens mostly to women. They don't think about it until it happens to the wife, the mother or the daughter they love. Rape doesn't affect women solely - it affects the whole family. Perhaps only when men realise this, will they be able to see rape as the CRIME it is!

Perhaps then, they will understand that since it is men who commit rape, it is true to say that ONLY men can STOP rape.....!

Ms. Praveen Sharma.
Project Officer - FWRM

As promised in last issue, We introduce our new Project Officer for the "Women, Employment & Economic Rights (WEER)" project who joined the FWRM in April 1994. Praveen received her primary education at Nehru Memorial , followed by three years at St. Joseph's Secondary before leaving to further her studies in Australia.

FWRM is her first employment upon completing a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A) from the University of Tasmania in Hobart, majoring in Political Science and Administration. For those of our members who frequent the FWRM office, you would be familiar with our Project officer, but for those of our members who were curious to find out more about the face behind the voice you have been hearing on our weekly radio programs, your request is fulfilled!

An International Conference **"Towards Beijing, Women, Environment and Development in the Asian and Pacific regions"** will be held at the Victoria University of Technology, St Albans Campus, Melbourne from Thursday 9th - Saturday 11th February 1995. It is for all interested in the UN, World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 and the issues it will cover even if they are not planning to attend. Keynote speakers will be womens activists from Asian and Pacific countries as well as from Australia. Topics to be addressed in panels and workshops will include: Population, environment, reproductive rights and womens health; Biodiversity and biotechnology, Interllectual property and indigenous knowledge; Violence against women; Women and religious fundamentalism; Women and the media; Womens Studies in the Asian and Pacific region; Women's creative writing in the Region, Women and international trade; Women's rights as human rights, Education for empowerment; Women and the Asian arms race; Computer networking for the Beijing Conference; Lobbying governments; Getting more women in Parliaments; The Copenhagen Social Summit, Reform of the UN system; Women and Development Assistance; Gender sensitivity in Aid Programmes.

A brochure with further details is available from the organizers

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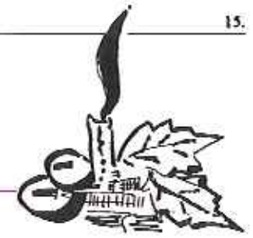
Acknowledgement



The year has come to an end and like any other, it brought with it some highs and lows . Fortunately we were able to overcome the "low" periods coming out at the end of the day as winners. This would not have been possible without the many organisations and individuals who were always ready to create a step for us to continue the difficult role that we have agreed to shoulder on behalf of the women of Fiji. This is not only for todays' generation but also for tomorrows.

On behalf of the members of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement I would like to convey our sincere thanks through this column to the:

- *Australian International Development Assistance Bureau*
- *Christian Aid of London*
- *OXFAM New Zealand*
- *The Asia Foundation - Pacific Office*
- *Global Fund for Women (USA)*
- *Threshold Foundation (USA)*
- *British Aid - PRAG*
- *New Zealand Embassy*
- *Department of Women and Culture*
- *Corona Women's Club - Fiji*

and also to the many individuals, who we believe will take up the whole 16 pages of this newsletter if we were to mention all their names. To you all our big,

Vinaka Vakaleva.....Bahut Dhaanyabad and Thank You Very Much for your wonderful support and we hope that we will continue to work together to build a society that believes, accepts and practices

EQUALITY for EVERYONE.

We wish you all a Merry Chrismas and a Prosperous New Year

Dulaki
COORDINATOR.

To: GINA HOUNG LEE
4 WAIMATE ST
LAMI
SUVA .

Fiji Women's Rights Movement
P.O.Box 14194
Suva, Fiji Islands

Membership:

To become a member of the FWRM it is necessary for you to fill our membership form and pay $5.00 to receive our newsletter. Men are welcome to join as Friends of the Movement and will receive our newsletter. For overseas friends, a subscription of $10.00 will be required to enable us to send copies of the Balance to you. Please fill & return the form to our postal address.

Postal Address:

Fiji Women's Rights Movement,
P.O.Box 14194, Suva, Fiji Islands.

Membership Form

I agree to abide by the rules of the Movement and support it's aims and objectives.

Name .....
Postal Address .....
.....
Tel:..... City.....Town.....Area Code.....

Signature..... .....

Upon payment of membership & completion of this form you will be eligible for membership.

Balance

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

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Dec. 1994

editorial.....!

by Vani Dulaki

Greetings and welcome to the third and final edition of BALANCE for the year 1994. I hope that it has been a successful one for you and your loved ones.

RAPE: it is the one crime no women is safe from. More than any other crime, rape has it's wellsprings in a patriachal culture like ours. One that views women as the undisputed property of the male, to do with as he wills.

With six years of our serious campaign of fighting to change society's attitude has had little effect. Traumatised often destroyed by the act itself, a woman has to further bear the structures of a society that blames her in some way for a crime of which she is the victim and not the perpetrator.

There have been some positive and negative comments reported lately in the dailies which were attributed to members of the Fiji Bench and some responses to it from the general public. Many of us I am sure were angered and saddened by these reports.

To sit back and think about it, actually, the seeds of rape are deeply planted in our society..... in attitudes toward sex and toward female/male roles. As Mr Justice Lewis stressed in a rape case hearing lately, he emphasised the role others (men) have to play - "that there is a need to reasses their whole attitude to women in general and female sexuality in particular".

The biggest detterent to bringing rapists to justice is public attitude. Unfortunately, these attitudes extends into the court room where even today it often feels that the victims is on trial. A recent comment made by a magistrate here is a clear indication of this when he said "she was the author of her own vulnerability". This Magistrate failed to consider the fact that the survivor was asleep amongst the people she knew and who later raped her or is this what he meant by her vulnerability. Clearly this should be seen as an abuse of trust bestowed on people we know that makes us so vulnerable to this horrendous crime. Another such comment which was made in court said "there was no evidence that the girl will suffer any adverse effects

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inside news letter

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