PAYING THE PRICE THE HARD WAY

adapted from The Fiji Times, April 7th, 1994.

Women in leadership and political power rarely, if ever, get a fair deal.

When they do get somewhere in the power structure their enemies attack them on a personal level; attacking their hair styles, their dress, their husbands and partners, their private sexual lives and the list goes on.

Look what has happened to Helen Clarke, new leader of the New Zealand Labour Party and the first woman to head a major New Zealand political party.

The New Zealanal *Bulletin* of April 5, 1994, reports that supporters of Mike Moore, former Labour Party head, said that Clarke was the candidate of a lesbian mafia, husbandless women and feminists extremists.

Mike Moore, Clarke says, tried to depict her as part of a feminist lesbian conspiracy.

During the leadership struggle between Moore and Clarke, Moore supporters carried placards with messages such as "it's Mike versus the dyke".

Surely we must ask ourselves whether a male successor to Moore would have attracted such a personal attack?

When Clarke was a minister in the Lange Government she was criticised for her severe hairstyle.

She has since changed her hairstyle and made an attempt to appear more "feminine".

The *Bulletine* reports that her decision not to have children and marry her long-standing *de facto* husband Peter Davis, for political reasons, has raised eyebrows in New Zealand.

This is a sad reflection of New Zealand given that the country has just been through a suffrage centennial year and there has been much self-congratulation about New Zealand being the first country in the world to grant women the vote.

Clarke says that she is disgusted with the accusations and that, "at the end of that year to have a woman leader who is credible painted as emerging because she is a member of some sort of cult is really quite appalling".

Clarke believes that as former deputy leader of the Labour Party, she should have succeeded Moore without bitterness after the election loss.

The same is true in countries like Fiji where women who are trying to do positive things about violence and women's rights have been labelled in varying degrees as sexually frustrated, as either madonnas or whores, as out for revenge against men, as men haters, as publicity hungry women or as having personal problems with men.

These women's partners have been maligned and their caring, loving relationships have been subjected to vicious diatribe.

This is to be condemned but also expected. It is a measure of the impact that the struggle for women's equality is having in this county.

This is part of what Susan Faludi describes as the "Blacklash" and is motivated out of a fear that if women are given power and leadership they will change the structure and nature of politics and of society.

When there is no adequate answer as to why women should not be given equal rights there is no alternative but to resort to the personal.

What about arguing about the issues that really matter?

You know, feminists and women leaders do not pretend to be better than anyone else nor do they pretend to be morally superior.

They make the same mistakes as others and they struggle every day with the same prejudices and human failures that others do.

The only difference is that they simply want a just and equal society and they are prepared to do something about this, not just for themselves but for all women.

Let's lift the level of debate out of the gutter and talk about struggling for a just society for both men and women.

Ms. Praveen Sharma.

WEER Women, Employment *and* Economic Rights **project**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT contd.

In our last issue we informed readers about the problem of sexual harassment and how widespread it is around workplaces in Fiji. We also made readers aware of the lack of legislation in this area and the urgent need to recognize sexual harassment as the crime it is.

Sexual Harassment is part of a larger social and economic problem, namely that of sexual discrimination. While men can also be subject to sexual harassment, the majority of victims tend to be women. This may have a lot to do with the fact that women are largely confined to lower status and poorly paid work while men predominate in authoritative roles and supervisory positions; therefore since women are more insecure in their jobs because of their lower positions, they are much more vulnerable to sexual harassment.

As stated in the earlier issue, sexual harassment is a power play that exists between the victim and the harasser, women are more likely to be the victims of this power play since their need for income is desperate thus they cannot afford to lose their jobs; they have had minimal education, they lack self confidence and they are unaware of their rights in such situations. Women have been culturally conditioned to suffer in silence for so long that they have forgotten how to raise their voices against problems of sexual harassment that they are subject to frequently in their workplaces.

The consequences of sexual harassment are many; employees, employers and society as a whole suffers because of this widespread problem. As promised in the previous issue, we will explain the consequences of sexual harassment to our readers.

Consequences of Sexual Harassment:

1. For the employee (victim):

A person who is a victim of sexual harassment usually experiences feelings of humiliation, anxiety, anger, depression as well as a sense of powerlessness. All these feelings collectively lead to emotional stress which in most cases accumulates into physical illness. If you are unhappy in a workplace, you usually lose all motivation to work and this holds true for victims of harassment. Where the harasser is a boss and/or superior, sexual harassment can lead to a loss of promotions and further training opportunities. If the problem of sexual harassment is not addressed and solved, the victim ultimately has to either resign or is dismissed from the job.

2. For the organization (employer)

cont. pag. 10.

from page 9. WEER Project

Any form of harassment whether it be sexual or otherwise leads to a tension in the workplace; sexual harassment is much worse that other types and forms of harassment since it has a direct impact on the individual. When one is faced with a tense working environment, one loses all desire to work; people prefer to keep away from the workplace in order to avoid the harasser and the situation. This leads to an increase in absenteeism which in turn leads to lower productivity levels for organization/ company. When an employee chooses to stay away from her workplace due to sexual harassment, her work performance suffers which in turn leads to either resignation or dismissal.

If cases of sexual harassment continue within an organization and employees continue to leave or are dismissed this will inturn lead to a loss of valuable employees. Increased staff turnover means added costs for the organization in terms of recruiting and training new personnel. Increased cases of sexual harassment can also lead to a bad public image for the company concerned especially if the victims make their complaints public.

3. For society as a whole:

Sexual harassment hinders in the achievement of equality, it creates problems in the development and productivity of women. If society continues to ignore the problems of sexual harassment in the workplace, then society is condoning sexual violence!!!

What can YOU do to stop Sexual Harassment in your workplace?

First of all, we have to recognize sexual harassment as a problem! By acknowledging the fact that sexual harassment is a problem and it is happening in workplaces around Fiji, we will be raising the awareness of management and workers alike regarding this problem.

Organizations/ Companies need to make their own policies in order to combat sexual harassment; although there is currently no law against sexual harassment in the workplace, there is nothing stopping employers from developing their own company policies against sexual harassment. Firstly the company needs to make a clear statement that it considers sexual harassment to be unacceptable behavior. They need to define what sexual harassment in their particular workplace is. This will be beneficial for the victim since she can point out the part of the definition that applies to her and will also act as a warning to all potential harassers since there is a clear statement that certain forms of unwanted behavior constitute sexual harassment and that type of behavior will not be tolerated in that particular organization.

Ideally speaking, management, should appoint a specific person to deal with all sexual harassment complaints. This individual can either be male or female; she/he should be someone that is trusted by staff and is known for being neutral in such cases. It is crucial that confidentiality is maintained in all such complaints to prevent the victim suffering added harassment and abuse from other workers. In larger organizations, it would be possible to appoint two sexual harassment officers (a male and a female) so that victims can see whoever they prefer.

The company should also set up formal and informal complaint procedures so that workers can use these channels when making complaints. It is crucial to ensure that when complaints are received that they are dealt with speedily so that workers are reassured that their complaints will be taken seriously. Above all of these there has to be a guarantee of confidentiality in order to protect the victim from added abuse.

Finally, there needs to be appropriate legislation covering this area. At the moment, **there is no law in Fiji that covers sexual harassment in the workplace.** The need for appropriate legislation is paramount since the law sets a framework for defining the problem, specifying the employer's liability, establishing complaint procedures and specifying clear measures and remedies. It is crucial to ensure that any law that is written to cover sexual harassment does not allow the victim's sexual history to be used as evidence. **Sexual Harassment is a Crime** and we need to recognize it as such. Lobby your local parlimentarians to get sexual harassment on the government's agenda...**Ignoring the problem of sexual harassment will not make the problem go away...**

AIDS AND BABIES

A baby can be infected by HIV in the womb if its mother is infected.

Helping people who want to have a baby but are worried about AIDS is not easy.

The counsellor needs to help people to weigh up the likely risk, the need to conceive and the possible consequences for the family and baby.

Tani has been married to Abdul for three months. Her relatives are already dropping hints about grandchildren and her husband is anxious to have a son. Tani is worried about AIDS. There are quite a few cases in her country, and she believe that her husband had girlfriends before he married her.

How likely is it that Tani is infected with HIV?

If Tani was able to talk over her worries with Abdul, perhaps with the counsellor, she may find that he used condoms or had fewer sexual partners that she fears. If she has no signs of HIV infection and the prevalence of HIV infection in her area is low, she and Abdul are probably not infected. If Tani and Abdul can have a test, they can base their decision on more certain knowledge of their HIV status (assuming that neither has been exposed to risk in the previous three months).

What are the possible risks for Tani, her future baby and family if she is infected with HIV and she conceives?

Pregnancy causes complex changes in the immune system, but we do not yet know whether pregnancy can hasten the development of AIDS in HIV infected women. If it does, Abdul may lose his wife prematurely, and the baby may lose its mother. If Tani had other children, the couple would need to think about their needs also.

Some babies are born with HIV antibodies from their mothers but lose them in the first year. Other babies are born with no HIV antibodies. None of these babies are infected and they remain healthy.

Some babies are born with HIV antibodies and develop AIDS because the virus has been transmitted with the anitibodies through the placenta, and the antibodies have not been protective. These babies usually die by the age of two years.

The percentage of babies born of women infected with HIV who develop symptoms of HIV infection varies greatly, from 6 per cent in one study to 50 per cent in another. The baby is more likely to become infected if the mother has symptoms of HIV infection during pregnancy.

If Abdul is infected, the child may lose its father early, and perhaps grow up in a disadvantaged household.

The whole family may suffer from rejection and isolation if people get to know about their HIV infection.

What does having a baby mean for Tani and Abdul? Is it very important for Tani to conceive at this time? Could the couple cope with postponing pregnancy until they feel confident about their risk of HIV infection, or until more is know about the consequences of HIV for mothers and babies?

Tani is clearly under pressure from her family and partner to conceive soon, but the consellor need to find out how she herself feels and her reasons for wanting to conceive as well as her fears.

If Tani and Abdul decide to try for a baby, and one of them is likely to be infected, they can reduce further risk by using condoms during pregnancy; by getting treatment for infections quickly; and by eating well and reducing stress as much as possible. The counsellor can help Tani to feel optimistic and to negotiate the use of condoms with Abdul. If Tani wants to postpone pregnancy, she needs to explore how she will cope with the pressures at home. Could Tani and Abdul see the counsellor together so that he supports her in her decision? She needs a reliable contraceptive, such as the Pill. Because the Pill does not protect the couple against HIV, Abdul also needs to use condoms.

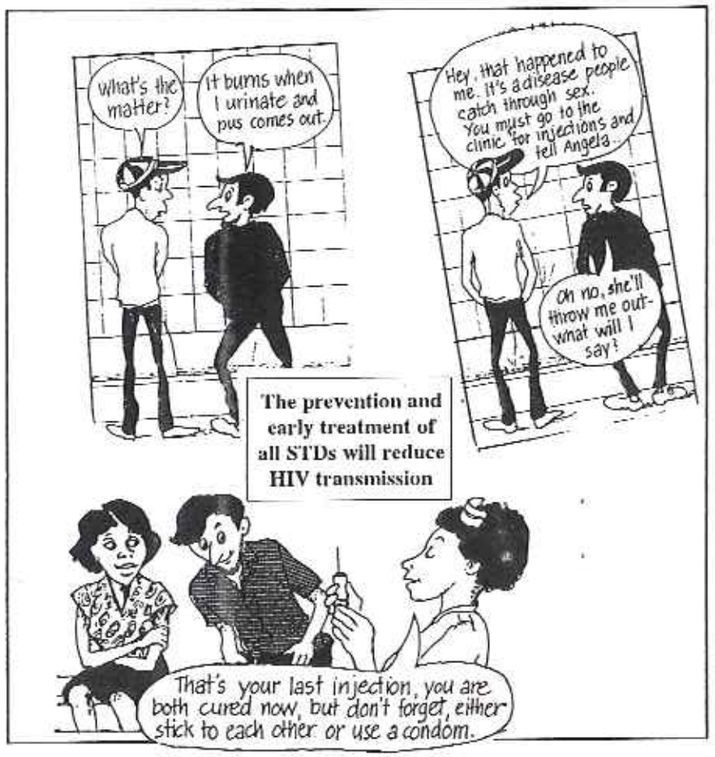
Some HIV infected women may request a termination of pregnancy on medical grounds. You will need to find out what the laws are in your country for HIV infected women and where they can obtain safe terminations at a price they can afford.

This case study shows how much time a counsellor would need to spend with clients talking through these difficult issues. The couple need information, an opportunity to explore their risk, the possible consequences of pregnancy and their options. Few community workers will have the time to go through this process themselves with each individual client.

However, they could reach more people by:

- using a similar case study to help small groups to explore the issues and obtain correct information (the case study could be presented as a role play);
- training peer counsellors from different groups.

from page 5.



HIV infection and HIV infection and AIDS. This is true especially if HIV is not yet common in your communities.

- People are more likely to change their behaviour to prevent a problem which affects them now, than to prevent an illness which they have never seen and which may not appear for another ten years.

- The actions which prevent STDs will prevent HIV, so people at low risk of STDs are also at risk of HIV.

- The reduction of STDs will also reduce HIV transmission. This is because HIV is more easily transmitted when a person has sores or discharges from another STD.

- The reduction of STDs will prevent a lot of infertility.

The safer sex guidelines on pages 31 (will be shown on the next issue - March - April) onwards can do much to prevent STD and HIV infection. In addition, family planning workers have much experience in giving the following kinds of advice for STD prevention and treatment which will be just as useful in the prevention of HIV infection.

- People should avoid sex with partners who have genital rashes, redness, sores or discharges.

- People should go for regular check-ups if cannot practise safer sex or as soon as they notice any signs of an STD. Women in particular should have STD checks when they have medical exams, perhaps during a family planning visit. This is because women often have no obvious signs of an STD.

- Most STDs can be cured if the person gets the correct treatment from a health worker. The STD germs are hard to kill, so people must take all the prescribed medicine, exactly as they are told.

- Encourage people to inform all their partners when they have an STD. Otherwise, the partners will go on spreading the disease, and they can give it to the cured person again.

Some Signs of STDs

Women	An unual discharge or smell from the vagina. Pain in the pelvic area between the navel and sex organs. Burning or itching around the vagina. Bleeding from the vagina which is not a period. Pain deep inside the vagina when having sex.
Both women and men	Sores, bumps or blisters near the sex organs or mouth. Burning and pain when urinating or having a bowel movement. Swelling or redness of the throat. Fever, chills and aches - like flu. Swelling in the groin - the area around the sex organs.
Men	A drip or discharge from the penis.

CANCER WARNING

Women urged to go for Pap Smear Tests

adapted from Fiji Times May 5th. 1994.
by Bernadette Bhagwan

About 30 to 40 women in Fiji die annually from cancer of the cervix, said Dr. Marry Schramm, Consultant Obstetrician at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva.

Dr. Schramm, who is also the president of the Fiji Cancer Society, said cancer of the cervix affected 50 per cent of all women who suffer from cancer cases in Fiji.

"This is more common than lung or stomach cancer and yet both men and women have got lungs and stomachs," said Dr. Schramm.

"It is more common than skin cancer, leukemia or cancer of the bowel and yet both these things men and women have".

"Even allowing for that, it is more than 20 per cent of all cancers in Fiji."

The cervix is neck of the uterus.

Dr. Harold Shyrock in his book *Modern Medical Guide*, says cancer of the cervix, along with cancer of other parts of the female reproductive organs, occurs more often in women who have taken diethylstilbestrol (DES).

He says this type of cancer occurs sometimes in young women still in their teens whose mothers received the hormone.

Cancer of the cervix is dangerous once it spreads to other tissues, but if recognized and treated in its early stages, it can be successfully treated.

Dr. Schramm said doctors could not tell the exact cause of the cancer because it was not known.

"We know a number of things that are associated with it, and women who are at no risk of getting it are only those remain virgins all their lives," she said.

Its associated with being sexually active and having children."

Dr. Schramm said women who got married at an early age were at greater risk than women who married late.

"This is both in terms of child bearing and sexual activity even if they are sexually active without having children at an early age. Women who are involved in sexual activities from their teens are putting themselves at very high risks," she said.

Unlike other illnesses where there are signs or symptoms, cancer of the cervix does not have any.

"The symptoms only appear when the cancer has actually developed. It is a very silent process which is why there is a need for women to go for a pap smear test," Dr. Schramm said.

Pap smear is a test that determines whether the cervix is healthy.

Dr. Shylock says in his book that the test does not make cancer of the cervix any less deadly once it invades the surrounding tissue.

He says every woman should report to her doctor as frequently so that he may discover any cancerous changes in their earliest stage.

Pap smear test consists of obtaining a small amount of mucous secretion deep inside the vagina or from the cervix and making a microscope examination of it.

If cancer is to develop, the cell in the mucus will reveal changes signalling the start of transformation into cancer cells.

"After a test if a woman is found to be in a precancerous condition, it's not normal," said Dr. Schramm.

"The operation it can be a very minor one entailed to removing part of the cervix and the patient maybe in hospital for just 24 hours."

In the early stages the treatment is surgical but if the cancer spreads, this may lead to the removal of uterus.

"The bigger the cancer the bigger the operation," Dr., Schramm said.

"A point will be reached where you can't get it all the cancer tissues out by an operation. The patient's only hope then lies in radiotherapy which is not available here."

Dr. Schramm stressed the importance of a pap smear test saying that all women who were or had been sexually active, ought to have the test.

"If a woman has had pap smears taken twice, and the results have been quite satisfactory, then tests every three years is okay. In fact the changes from normal to cancer takes quite a long time," she said.

"It is not the same for everyone but it is very rare for it to develop in less than five years. If all is normal this year, the risk that a woman might have actually developed cancer by the year 1997 is very small indeed."

Dr. Schramm said because there were no symptoms of the cancer, a papsmear test was very important.

In order to neutralise the problem and to detect the cancer in its early stages, the Fiji Cancer Society offers pap smear tests at various health centres around the country.

"Response to the tests are good and it indicates that there are a lot of women who are health conscious," Dr. Schramm said.

"I think there has been an increase in the number of women who realise the high prevalence of the disease."

The society is also training nurses and is trying to increase the number of nurses taking pap smear tests.

"This way women can always be sure that a woman takes the tests and they are more comfortable," she said.

"We are also training sub-divisional health sisters to go around the nursing stations so women don't have to go to the main centres."

When the tests are completed, a

cont. page 12.

HOW TO PERFORM BSE - (Breast Self-Examination)

(adapted from The New South Wales State Cancer Council.)

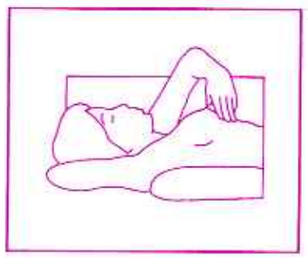
There are two ways for BSE - i) in the shower
- ii) lying down

In the shower

* Wet, soapy skin makes it easier to feel your breast structure.
* First, lift your elbow and place your hand behind your head, as illustrated.
* Keep your fingers flat and together. Use the flat surface of the fingers, not your fingertips.
* Now mentally divide your breast into segments and feel each segment carefully. Be gentle and relaxed.
* Alternatively, examine each breast in widening circles, starting from the nipple. Choose the method that is easier for you.
* And with each breast examine right up to the armpit. Do not forget to feel around the nipple.

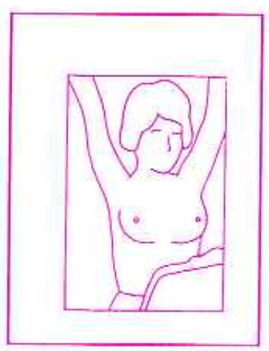
Lying down

* This method can be better for women with large breasts and older women whose breast structure has relaxed.



* To examine your right breast place a pillow or folded towel under your right shoulder and put your right hand behind your head to flatten the breast on the chest wall.
* With the other hand, fingers flat and together, throughly examine the breast - either in segments or by the expanding circles method.
* For the left breast, do the opposite, putting the pillow or towel under the left shoulder and the left hand behind the head.
* Lying down you can feel your ribs beneath the breast. Don't mistake them for lumps. Also a ridge of firm tissue at the lower curve of the breast is normal.

In the mirror



* Looking in the mirror, you may notice something you could feel with your hands - by either method.
* You look for differences in the contour of the breasts and irregularities of the surface, such as dimpling, puckering or retraction of the nipple.
* This is done standing - in 3 different postures:
  1) With arms by the side, then
  2) Arms raised above the head, and
  3) With palms on hips, pressed firmly down to tense the chest muscles.
* If your breasts are large, lean forward to get a better look at the contours.

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pathologist examines the mucous for abnormalities.

Dr. Schramm said women should not be scared to go for pap smear tests.

"They should realise that it is not a disease and is not like sexually transmitted diseases which is an indication that either the woman or her partner has been playing around," she said.

"They have to know that it is something which can only affect a woman when she becomes sexually active.

After she has become sexually active, even if she is a widow, she should still go an have pap smear."

"We are training and motivating nurses to do this so our programme goes hand-in-hand with the Government health offices," she said.

"What we would like women to know is that they should start having pap smears within two years of becoming sexually active."

KEYPOINTS

- If you are still not sure about how to examine your breasts, ask your doctor at your next visit. He or she will be happy to show you.
- Learn to make BSE a routine: on the day after each period, or on the same day each month if you have passed the menopause.
- If you are still having periods, do not examine your breasts during this time. This is because hormonal changes during menstruation can cause temporary changes in the breasts.

Above all

- Don't hesitate to see your doctor if you notice any change in your breasts. Don't spend days worrying...wasting time.
- Don't be afraid of raising a false alarm. Don't be embarrased. Your doctor will understand and appreciate your concern for your health.

from page 4.

children with AIDS and health care workers who look after patients with AIDS do not become infected as long as they are not accidentally injected with infected blood. It is only the sexual partners of infected people who may become infected in such situations.

- All the people who have got HIV infection are either sexually active, or have had blood transfusions or are young babies. If HIV was spread through mosquitoes or normal contact many older children and others outside these groups would be infected, as they with malaria or measles.
- We can show by our own example that we do not believe that HIV is spread through normal contact, by touching and caring for people with HIV as we would any other person.

AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases

HIV can be sexually transmitted in the same way as sexually transmitted diseases or STDs. STDs used to be called venereal diseases (VD). The most common serious STDs are gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, chancroid, herpes and genital warts. a person can become infected with an STD when he or she has vaginal or anal sexual intercourse or oral sex with an infected person. The vagina, panis, rectum and mouth provide the ideal environment from which STD germs can invade the body.

STDs are serious and painful and they can cause a lot of damage to the body - resulting in illness, infertility, disability and death. Most STDs in pregnant women can infect babies in the womb or during delivery, causing severe handicaps and death.

Rather like HIV infection, many STDs have early symptoms which go away without treatment, but the germs remain in the body causing damage to different organs. Some STDs give no symptoms at all, particularly in women. A person infected with an STD may look and feel healthy but can still infect partners or unborn babies.

There are a number of advatages to concentrating on the prevention and treatment of STDs, rather than just focussing on

cont. page 6.

HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME INFECTED WITH HIV?

adapted from "Talking AIDS - A Guide For Community Work"

It is not easy to become infected with HIV. HIV cannot enter the body through the air in the same way as measles. There are only four ways by which HIV can enter the body and many, many ways that it cannot enter.

HIV can enter the body in these four ways:

- by having sexual intercourse with an infected person;
- by transfusion of infected blood;
- by an infected mother to her unborn child
- by infected blood in or on needles syringes or other instruments.

Although HIV has been found in many body fluids, it is only infectious in blood, semen and vaginal secretions.

HIV from an infected person must enter the white cells of another person in order to survive. HIV can only enter another person when the blood, semen or vaginal secretion of an infected person come into contact with the blood or mucous membranes of another person.

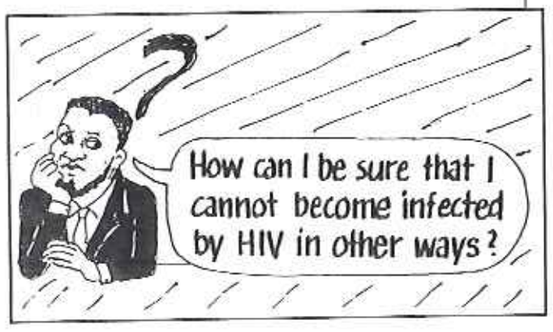
The outside of the body is covered with a thick skin which keeps out HIV as long as there are no cuts or sores in it. The vagina, penis, rectum and mouth are covered with a much thinner skin called **mucous membrane.** White blood cells can be found on the surface of these mucous membrane. HIV can infect these white cells before they return to the blood vessels which are close to the surface of the membranes. Any break, sore or inflammation in the vagina, penis, rectum or mouth makes is even easier for HIV to come into contact with the blood cells. Discharges contain a lot of white cells which make it easier for HIV to infect people with discharges from the vagina, penis or rectum. For these reasons, people with other sexually transmitted disease are at greater risk of HIV infection.

Many people find it hard to believe that they can only become infected with HIV in four ways. They think, wrongly, that HIV is spread in the same ways as all other diseases they know about; for example, by touch, through the air, through shared food, utensils or clothes, by mosquitoes and flies, and by contact with urine, spit or faeces.

Or, they think that it is not sensible to take any chances of being infected with a deadly disease in case the doctor are wrong.

People who think this way:

- do not think that it is worthwhile to change their sexual behavior when they can become infected in other ways anyway;
- are afraid to live and work with people who have HIV infection or AIDS.



How can we reassure people?

- There are no known cases of people becoming infected with HIV through normal living with an infected person. Parents who look after

cont. page 5.

MARRIAGE

What is marriage.?

Marriage in Fiji must be the voluntary union (joining) of one man to one woman to the exclusion of all others. The consent of the future husband and wife must be real and not forced.

This means that you can have one legal marriage to one other person of the opposite sex. Both parties must enter the marriage voluntarily. If either is being forced into the marriage then the marriage can be declared a Nullity (of no legal effect).

Can anyone get married?

The minimum legal age for marriage in Fiji with consent of parents is;

- 16 years old for females
- 18 years for males

To marry without parental consent (agreement) you have to be over 21 years of age. This is because once you reach the age of 21 years old you are an adult in the eyes of the law and legally responsible for your own actions.

What can I do if I want to get married but my parents will not give their permission?

Permission may be obtained from a Magistrate if consent is "unreasonably withheld" by a parent or guardian. i.e. the parents have no valid (good) reasons to withhold their consent.

In order to obtain the consent of the magistrate, where the parents have denied consent, the couple have to file documents at the Court Registry Office asking for special permission to marry.

You will need to prepare a form and take it to the Magistrate's office. If the Magistrate is satisfied that neither of your parents are alive, are not in Fiji, that consent is being withheld unreasonably by the parents, the parents are incapable, then the Magistrate may give the consent.

The parents who are denying consent will be given an opportunity to state their reasons for the refusal. The Magistrate will not grant an order unless it is proven that the parents of the applicants were given copies of the application and the Court is satisfied they know about the court case. This can be done by filing an *Affidavit of Service* - this is a written statement made by the person who delivered the actual document; the server than swears that the statement is true before a lawyer or magistrate.

Are all types of marriages recognized by the law and the Courts?

Only legal marriages are recognized in Fiji as being valid marriages are recognized in Fiji as being valid marriages. Most communities have religious ceremonies of marriage in addition to the legal ceremony which has to be officiated (legally conducted) by a certified marriage officer.

In practice most religious leaders are also certified marriage officers and can conduct both legal and religious ceremonies.

The Indo-Fijian community, particularly the Muslim community, will often do the "nikah" (the Muslim marriage contract and ceremony) without legalizing the marriage, particularly where a second marriage is taking place and one of the parties is unable to obtain a divorce due to the difficulty of proving fault in divorce.

In Fiji tradition a marriage would have been made by the presentation of a Tabu and the exchange of gifts, although most would now have a lawful church marriage performed, in the past there would have been no other ceremony and as such the marriage would not be recognized by the Courts.

Because the law does not recognized marriages that are not performed by a certified marriage officer, the effect is that women who have been so married are

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from page13.

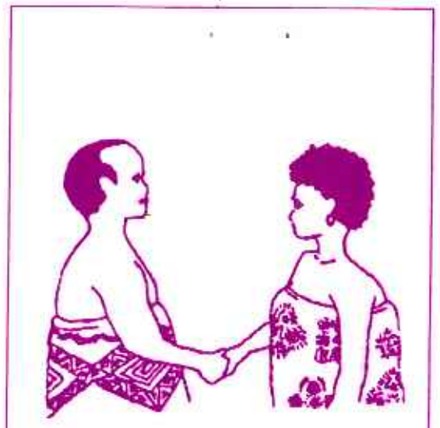
unable to obtain a legally recognized divorce, maintenance for themselves or any other order from the Court which is dependent upon there being a legally recognized marriage. The law only provides for maintenence for legally married women.

How does it affect me?

If you are a wife within a marriage that is not recognized by the law, the law calls you a de facto wife (a wife in fact as opposed to wife in law). You should be concerned because the lack of legal recognition for such marriages has the effect that if you seperate from your de facto husband you and possibly your children are denied what little protective the law has to offer to lawfully married women.

What do I have to do to get lawfully married?

You will have to give Notice of your intended marriage, on a form that you can get from the Registrar's Office, to the Registrar of marriages in your district. Once completed, you take the form with any consent, if necessary, to the Registrar and he or she will arrange for you to make a Declaration. This is simply a process where you declare to the person that the written statement is true. You will also have to pay the fee.



A Notice is then displayed by the Registrar for not less than 21 days. After this period has finished you can ask the Registrar for a certificate that the rules have been followed, as long as no lawful objection has come to the notice of the Registrar a certificate will be issued (Marriage licence).

You can now go through the marriage ceremony at any time as long as it is within three months of the date that the Notice was posted up. If for some reason you are unable to have the marriage ceremony within the three month period you will have to start the process again.

Do I have to wait 21 days?

It is possible to obtain a Special Licence from the Registrar which will enable you to marry at any time within 28 days of the special licence being granted.

Do I have to be married in the Registrar's Office?

No. The law provides that the ceremony can be performed in any place as long as it is within the Registrar's district. This means that as long as the Registrar or marriage officer is willing to do so you can have the legal ceremony performance at your house, in your garden, in the village and obviously in a Church if the priest is a marriage officer.

What do you mean by the term NULLITY?

Nullity of Marriage is the legal process which is used to obtain an order from the court either to say that the marriage never existed in law (Void) or that there was something about the marriage and the Court should declare it to be of no legal effect.

A Nullity decree (order or declaration) will be made if at the date when the marriage took place any of these situation existed;

One of the parties was already married

The parties were related too closely by blood or marriage

Either party did not freely agree to the marriage

Either party was not old enough

The Court will declare a marriage a nullity where either party can show at the time of the marriage;

One of the parties was incapable of sexual intercourse

One of the parties was suffering from an unsound mind or was mentally defective

One of the parties was suffering from a Venereal Disease in a communicable form

The wife was pregnant by someone other than the husband.

from page 2.

Feminism suffers from a definite image problem. Feminists according to patriarchal mythology, are man - hating lesbians who burn bras, have hairy legs, do not shower, and are generally rowdy rabble - raisers who won't shut up and make dinner/ do the washing/ clean the house like a real woman should.

Many women, in particular young women, are terrified of the **F - word** and the stigma attached to it. This is great news for patriarchy, as it means that the women's movement will slow to a sluggish crawl and then conveniently disappear when there are no young women to continue the struggle.

Men don't like feminism for much the same reason that the Catholics didn't like Darwinism and the Russian nobility didn't like communism: it threatens their power. For women to reject the belief, instilled in them since birth, which is so comfortable for men.

It is therefore in the interest of misogynists to promote, by whatever means, a negative and inaccurate image of feminism. They reject us as anachronistic, abnormal, as rowdy, as disturbed, as homosexual.

The point of all this is that in calling yourself a feminist, you will encounter the "Freak Barrier", where people's prejudices get in the way of their taking in what you are saying. By acknowledging that you hold feminist beliefs, you become stigmatised. These days the term "womanist" is gaining in popularity. Why? Because its meaning and ideology are the same, but it had not been appropriated by patriarchy to be loaded with negative connotations.

Therefore, in telling people that you are a feminist, be prepared for negative reaction. Explain what feminism means to you and why you believe in it. Prove their negative preconceptions wrong.

Breaking the freak barrier.

The best way to do this is to be open about your feminist/ womanist views in a non-alienating way. By challenging false notions of what a feminist is, the stigma around the word can be dissipated. You do not conform to stereotypes constructed to oppress you (this is also true outside of feminism and is a good thing to keep in mind: (stereotype = oppression).

Is feminism irrelevant in the nineties?

The "anachronism" issue is rather a large one. Opponents of feminism would have women believe that the fight for women's rights is over, that men and women are equal. After all, women can vote, work and wear pants.

The reality is that women are still paid one third less than men for equal work. The number for women in parliament still does not even nearly reflect the number of women in the community. Those women who do make it to parliamentary seat are rarely given a position of significance. And while we may have broken through certain dress code barriers, women still suffer to fit the conventional, mass - produced concept of beauty they are led to believe is "normal".

In addition there are issues such as sexual violence, domestic violence, abortion, childcare, pornography and sexism in all facets of daily life which still have not been adequately addressed.

All right, I'm a feminist, where do I go?

For a start you could support the work of the Fiji Women's Right's Movement and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. You could become a volunteer by contacting their offices or by participating in marches and events organised by both organisations.

You can also begin to raise your awareness by getting involved, talking to members of both organisations.

If groups are not your thing, act on a personal level. Read 'Backlash' and the 'The Beauty Myth'. Write letters to government departments, newspapers and support petitions put out by FWRM or FWCC.

Educate those around you and be proud to be a person, a womanist and a feminist.

Why We Hate "F" - Word or I'm Not A Feminist

adabted from Tharunka 1993 Magazine - by Syndell Carter : Sydney, Australia.

What is feminist?

A feminist is a person who acknowledges the unequal position of women in our society, and who seeks in some way to change the position for the better.

How to spot a feminist.

A feminist may be young or old. A feminist may have a boyfriend, spouse, girlfriend, lover or be single. A feminist may have children. A feminist may have hairy armpits - or they may wax their entire body. A feminist may work as a lawyer, a housewife, a sales assistant, a waitperson, a teacher, a carpenter, a doctor - a feminist is not limited in their career path.

A feminist may wear a skirt, jeans, a bra, a habit, a dress, a bikini, a suit. They have as a rule, long, short or medium or no hair. They are commonly found in pubs, universities, cafes, buses, trains, supermarkets, bookshops, in homes, at the beach, on the news, next door.

How to tell if you are a feminist.

* Do you consider men to be equal to women?
* Are you opposed to rape?
* Do you believe women should receive equal pay for equal work?
* Should women have access to abortion and contraceptives?
* Should women be allowed to vote in elections?
* Can women be doctors, lawyers and mechanics?
* Should there be more women in parliamentary seats?
* Do terms such as "chick", "and "slut" bother you?
* Do you believe that laws should be tightened to curb domestic violence?
* Does sexism make you angry/ frustrated/ vomit?
* Do the words "Patriarchy sex" ever spring to mind?

If you answered yes to any or all of those questions, then, like it or not, you are a feminist.

* If you answered "No, men are inferior," then you can probably skip the other questions.

How to tell other people that you are a feminist.

A sad fact of life as a feminist is that people don't like to know about us. Some of us even refuse to accept ourselves, are feminists.

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editorial

in the media have a role to play in highlighting the work done by women in the community in contributing to the development of the country.

I believe that women in the media need to highlight the disparities in all section of the community where women are still being treated unfairly.

I think women in the media need to fill in the gap in the understanding between men and women of issues and concerns important to women, and, I also think that to be a woman in the media is not enough - we have a higher goal to attain in proving ourselves, not only in the reporting of ALL issues but ensuring that gender sensitivity is also practised. Positions in the decision making echelon of an organisation, gives us also the opportunity to speak and act on behalf of others who are not able to do so, no matter how low in the pecking they are!.

Which brings me to the Noa Nadruku issue. Apparently certain members of the media had been alerted about the situation in the nightclub but were reluctant to do anything about it - after all Noa was the 'golden boy'. I was alerted, did my research, spoke about it and mentioned his name **once** and then everybody else started running around in circles! You see it was safe now - if any other reporter got into trouble they could always blame me - seeing as I started it!.

Which brings me back to the first two paragraphs of this article! You see what I mean?.

Don't Bash the *Loving* out of Me

by Maureen Watson

The party's over and I sit here waiting
For you to come through that door
And my guts are tied up in knots inside, and we'll go through it all once more.
If there's any female Gods up there
Why can't they make you see
You're bashing your head against a brick wall
Bashing the loving out of me.
The good times don't make up for the bad
In the begining I thought they could
Sure we had our fights and arguments, but the making up was good.
And life was a game, till the babies came
Then more pressure and jealousy
And you lash out in your frustration
And you bash the loving out of me.
Oh you cry to me after and you swear you'll change
And you bash the loving out of me.
Oh, you cry to me after and you swear you'll change
And you beg me not to leave you
But it builds up and then, we go through it again, so how can I believe you.
I turn away from the fear in my baby's eyes
That everyone but you can see
You kill a child's pride in her Daddy
While you bash the loving out of me.
Some people have to fight from the day we're born
But it's us women who are black and blue
I guess it's our love gives us strength to carry on, like the love I have for you.
But I live sick inside with the waiting
For the violence I dread to break through
And don't ever think I'm not pushed to the brink
But I don't bash the loving out of you.
I'm tired of making excuses for the things you do
Tired of carrying the guilt and the blame
You've got to front up and look at yourself, and own your violence your shame.,
Your enemy is inside you
Deep wounds fester where you can't see
Well take them out there, confront them
Don't bash the loving out of me.
And the time will come, I know, and you'll make me go
I just hope that then you'll make me see
'Cause as time will come, I know we'll both cry
'Cause you bashed the loving out of me.

Please fill in the coupon and send it to the

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

We look forward to receive your opinion.

Tell the Fiji Government about one thing that concerns you as a woman - and what you would like the Government to do about it.

STAMP

To,

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

P.O. Box 14194
Suva
Fiji.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement will collate your response and advise the government as part of its preparations for the United Nations 1995 World Conference on Women. The Movement will conduct ongoing consultations with women in the lead-up to the 1995 Conference.

Tel : 313 156
Fax : 313 466

To: GINA HOUNG LEE
4 WAIMATE STREET
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 & mail or fax it to our office.

Postal Address/Tel./Fax.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement,
P.O.Box 14194, Suva, Fiji Islands.
Tel: 313 156, Fax: (679) 313 466.

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.

FWRM

Balance

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

P.O.Box 14194, Suva.
Fiji. Tel: (679) 313 156,
Fax: (679) 313 466

January - February Issue, 1995.

Editorial.....!

by Bernadette Ganilau - COMMUNICATOR

I think that age has a lot to do with where I stand in the media at the moment! As I would be one of the older members of this "profession", people have either gotten used to me talking in the background whilst they carry on with their daily chores, driving around the highways and byways of the republic, sitting at their desks, painting the roof, planting marijuana or whatever every morning, or, when I do say something, it's looked on endearingly or otherwise as "Isa, is she still on radio?" and then nothing more is ever thought or said about my presence. Or is it?.

Well, I actually am very comfortable with all of the above, because it means that I can say whatever I like and whether one person hears it or dozens or hendreds, the numbers are relatively the same to me! I always felt intimidated in the past by female members of our academe, and the power sisters of our women's movement who when interviewed on my show would articulate wisely about what they were doing to forward the progress of our community and our women and what we should be doing to help them - and there I sat playing request after request of the George Baker Selection, Tammy Wynette or Jimmy Subaidas for "Timaima Marama and the gang at Vunidawa and not forgetting mistress Sera of Rewa Street" Those were the days!.

But, believe me, I'm basically do-

cont. page 2.

Mrs Bernadette Ganilau works as a communicator and indeed plays a vital role within our Fiji radio network.She is currently involving herself in the following international organisation:-

1. Global Fund For Women
   - *Advisory Council member for the Pacific area.*
2. Asia Pacific Media Task Force for Beijing
   - *Pacific Representative.*
3. International association Of Women In Radio And Television (IAWRT)
   Member, Board of Directors - first Pacific member in the 52 year history of the organisation.

18 January Global Media Day.

In over forty countries, women will be watching and listening for the presence and portrayal of women in the major media outlets. Participants will be supplied with appropriate monitoring grids and instructions. Media Watch, a Canadian volunteer organisation working to eliminate sexism in the media, is co-ordinating the project and ERIN Research will tabulate the results. The resulting report will become a platform of action for presentation at the UN Conference on Women in September 1995. All individuals and orgnisations interested in participating in this project should contact Janice Bagot, the Australian co-ordinator. Write to her at PO Box 3135, Tamarama, NSW 2026; or telephone (02) 389 5478,or fax (02) 550 6734.

Inside news letter

- Editorial
- 18 January Global Media Day
- Feminism
- Aids
- Imrana's Line
- Cancer Warning
- How to Perform Breast Self Examination - (BSE).
- WEER Project
- Marriages
- Poem - "Don't Bash The Loving Out Of Me" - *by Maurine Watson*