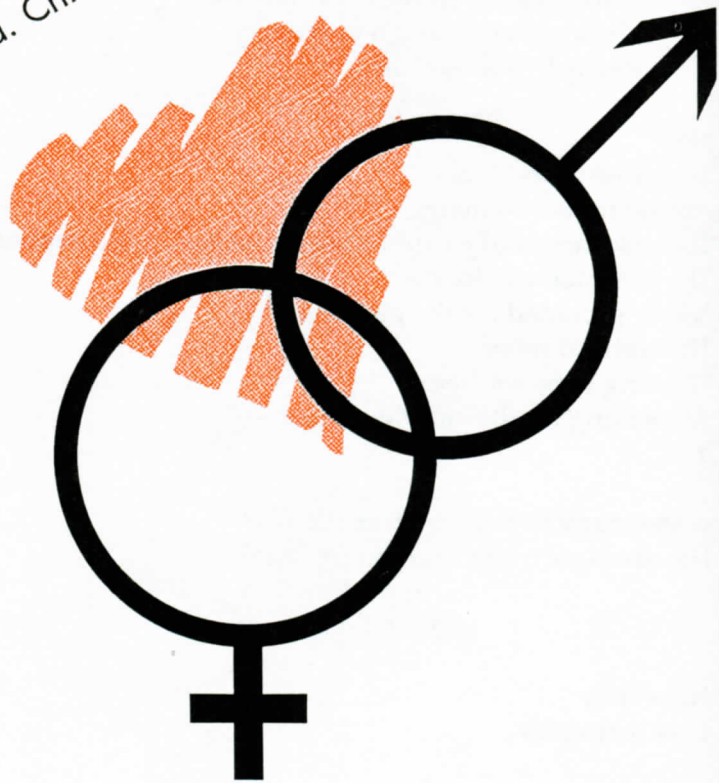


A SURVEY ON GENDER RELATIONS

SHE Said, HE Said

by Ma. Christine Bantug

*Often, we have been told that the youth shall be the final measure of our effectiveness as advocates of change. So, **Women in Action** conducted an informal poll of male and female youths in Fiji and the Philippines to see if their ideas of gender relations are changing in any way. The answers that we got made us wonder, some stopped us in our tracks, some brought laughter, and some gave hope.*



A total of 48 male and female respondents from Fiji and the Philippines, whose ages ranged from 14 to 20 years old, answered **Women in Action's** questions on gender relations.

The majority of the respondents for both countries were girls (67 percent). They made up 75 percent of the Filipino sample and 60 percent of the Fijian sample.

Sixty-eight percent of the Fijian respondents are students. The remaining 32 percent gave no information about what they do. On the other hand, 70 percent of the Filipino respondents are students in secondary, college and vocational schools. Only five percent of the Filipino respondents, all of whom are male, are employed. The unemployed (10 percent) are all female. Fifteen percent of the respondents gave no information.

Forty-six percent of the Fijian respondents listed their mothers' occupations as "housewives" or having domestic duties. The mothers of the remaining 44 percent are "gainfully" employed: 21 percent as professionals (teachers, nurses); 14 percent in supervisory positions; seven percent as rank and file employees (secretaries, clerks); and two percent as skilled workers.

Regarding their fathers's occupations, only seven percent of the respondents said that their fathers had no occupation, most of whom are in retirement. The majority (89 percent) have fathers who are fully employed. Most of those who have work are engaged in a profession (53 percent). Some have supervisory functions, are in business or are self-employed, some are in sales and other occupations.

For the Filipino sample, 45 percent of the respondents' mothers are employed—30 percent have mothers holding professional jobs, 15 percent have mothers who are skilled workers, and five percent have mothers working overseas. Recognizing their mothers' reproductive roles as work, a quarter of the Filipino respondents said their mothers are full-time "housewives" when asked about their mothers' occupation. But 15 percent answered that their mothers were not working. Ten percent of the respondents gave no data.

Only 15 percent of the Filipino fathers are unemployed; two percent said their fathers were retired. On the other hand, 25 percent of the fathers are in business, 25 percent are skilled workers, 10

percent are rank and file employees and five percent are in supervisory positions. Of the remaining 20 percent, 10 percent were deceased. Ten percent of the respondents gave no answer.

Majority (80 percent) of the Filipino respondents are Catholics, five percent were born-again Christians, while 15 percent provided no information as to their religion. The religious affiliations of the Fijian respondents are Hinduism (39 percent), Roman Catholic (32 percent), Methodist (21 percent), and Islam (3 percent).

GENDER RELATIONS

In Fiji, a slight majority (60 percent) of the respondents have partners (boyfriends/girlfriends). There was an equal percentage of girls with and without partners (47 percent). Compared to the male sample, 82 percent are with partners and only nine percent are without. Nine percent of the males and five percent of the females gave no answer.

Among the Filipino respondents: girls with partners equaled those without (40 percent) and the percentage of boys with partners (45 percent) was only slightly higher than those without (40 percent).

DESIRABLE QUALITIES

Among the female Filipino respondents, 80 percent favored a partner who is thoughtful, sweet and

romantic. Sixty percent want a partner who is good-looking, handsome, tall, presentable and well dressed while 53 percent want a partner who is understanding. Moreover, they want partners that are: caring and loving (20 percent), responsible and hardworking (27 percent), honest (20 percent), intelligent or educated (20 percent), with a sense of humor (20 percent), and friendly (20 percent). The following qualities are also desirable: being a gentleman, simplicity, resourcefulness, steadfastness, and recognizing women as their equal.

The Fijian girls gave a more varied list of desirable qualities they looked for in boys. Only 47 percent want a physically attractive partner. They also

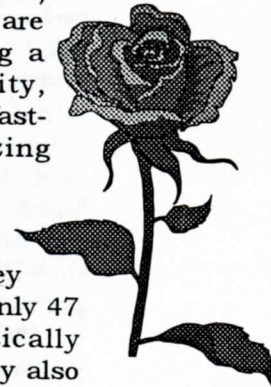


Table 1
Qualities you look for in a boyfriend
(Female Respondents)

* Qualities	Philippines	Fiji
Physically attractive	9	8
Thoughtful/Sweet/Romantic	12	
Understanding	8	6
Caring/Loving	3	7

Table 2
Qualities you look for in a girlfriend
(Male Respondents)

Qualities	Philippines	Fiji
Physically Attractive	4	4
Understanding	4	4
Caring/Loving	1	5
Intelligent/Educated	2	2

wanted partners to be: caring and loving (41 percent), understanding (35 percent), responsible and hardworking (29 percent), sensitive, supportive and respectful of women's needs (29 percent), honest (24 percent), with a sense of humor (24 percent), faithful and loyal (18 percent), expressive and open about their feelings (12 percent), friendly (12 percent), and intelligent or educated (12 percent). They also mentioned being modern, the ability to share, cooperation, fear of God, trustworthiness, and having a "nice personality" as qualities they look for in a partner.

Of the five Filipino males, only one did not mention physical attractiveness as an important quality of an ideal partner. Beauty (80 percent) was the number one quality looked for by Filipino males. Not only should a girl be beautiful, she should equally be understanding and kind (80 percent). Only 40 percent said they are also attracted by a woman's intelligence. Other favorable qualities include: the ability to communicate, neatness, humility, being caring and loving, industry especially in the home, unpossessiveness, and inner beauty. The Fijian male teenagers,

similar to the Fijian females, look for a wider range of desirable qualities. First in their list was a partner's being caring and loving (45 percent). They also like girls who are understanding (36 percent), who are physically attractive (36 percent), outgoing (18 percent), intelligent (18 percent), and able to provide good companionship (18 percent). The males said they also like girls who are funny,

transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.

But the thing to remember here are the reasons for virginity's importance. It is worthwhile to remember too that female respondents valued their virginity because they intend to share this only with the one they truly love whom they assume is their spouse. The male respondents, on the other hand, emphasized a woman's purity as their main reason for valuing virginity.

When it comes to the Filipino sample, it was the boys who manifested a nontraditional outlook on virginity. Sixty percent of the male respondents believed that virginity is not important. The one respondent who believes virginity to be still important gave

religion and culture as his reasons.

As for the female sample, only 20 percent said virginity is no longer important while the majority still value virginity because they look at it as the best gift they can give their future husbands.

ONLY FOR BOYS, ONLY FOR GIRLS

For both Fiji and the Philippines, a greater percentage of the female respondents (Fiji, 53 percent; Philippines, 46 percent) believe that either sex should not be barred from doing activities traditionally seen as men's or women's jobs.

But those who believe that there are activities only for boys

Table 3
Is Virginity Important?

	PHILIPPINES		FIJI	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	1	12	10	16
No	3	3		
Others			1	1
No answer	1			
Total	5	15	11	17

who are Christian, faithful, communicative, "good," jealous, who respect the male's wishes and who do not drink.

VIRGINITY IS TOPS

Both male and female respondents from Fiji put a lot of premium in virginity. Ninety-two percent of the Fijian respondents replied that virginity is important for many reasons. One, virginity is best shared only with someone you really love, and this means the spouse. Two, virginity is a sign of purity, dignity, responsibility, respect and sincerity. Three, a non-virgin is unacceptable in their religion and culture. And four, because they want to avoid potential problems of sexually



Male and female respondents from Fiji both placed a lot of premium on virginity.



cited the following as the boys's domain: (answers from the Philippines) being gentlemanly, being responsible and intelligent, basketball, drinking, pornographic magazines, and respect for women, (answers from Fiji) fixing a leaking faucet or broken furniture, being in the army, and being altar boys and priests.

The Filipino male respondents are almost equally divided in their opinion on stereotyping of activities according to sexes: 60 percent believe that boys and girls should be able to engage in any activity they want while 40 percent believe otherwise. Those who believe otherwise described the following to be solely boys's activities: priesthood, masturbation, smoking and drinking, and courting women.

In Fiji, although 72 percent of the boys said that there are activities only for boys, only 54 percent said that there are activities that are only for girls. Roughly, this can be taken to mean that the boys in the poll still believe that girls will have a difficulty doing activities that are traditionally for boys. But boys will have an easier time adjusting to activities that are traditionally done by girls.

Those who agreed to the a stereotyping of activities said that the protection of women, the cutting down of trees,

military work and hard labor were solely for boys.

Being reserved around boys, being understanding of the male's problems, domestic work, childbirth (and perhaps childrearing) and mental activities were activities and characteristics for girls.

It is interesting to note that even those who said that work should be shared between the sexes and that activities should not be stereotyped, said hard work should be done only by the male sex and that it is a man's role to protect a woman.

WOMEN COURTING MEN

When it comes to women courting men, 60 percent of the Filipino respondents believed that this behavior is unacceptable (girls, 46 percent; boys, 100 percent). The respondents think that women who court men are cheap, lack

ethics and are going against tradition.

On the contrary, majority of the respondents from Fiji (75 percent) have no problem with the idea. Instead, they look at it as a sign of gender equality—a recognition of a woman's right to pursue what she wants. A mere 11 percent of the total Fijian respondents found the idea unacceptable and all of them were boys.

It was also interesting to note how some girls from both countries gave a conditional response to the question (Philippines, 20 percent; Fiji, 24 percent). They said that only in certain situations is it acceptable for women to court men: when the man is too shy to make the first move or when the man approves of the idea.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Half of the total number of respondents from both

Table 4
What do you think of women courting men?

	PHILIPPINES		FIJI	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agree		5	8	13
Disagree	5	7	3	
Depends		3		4
No answer				
Total	5	15	11	17

Table 5
Is marriage important?

	PHILIPPINES		FIJI	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	5	14	6	12
No		1	1	3
Others			3	2
No answer (don't know)			1	
Total	5	15	11	17

countries disapprove of homosexual relationships and in both countries, the boys were the majority of those who found homosexual relationships to be wrong. They found homosexual relationships immoral, unnatural, and against the teachings of their church.

On the other hand, there was almost an equal number of female respondents in both countries who find homosexuality acceptable.

Boys and girls who find homosexual relationships acceptable believe that homosexuals have the right to engage in normal relationships like any other human being.

On the other hand, 10 percent of the total respondents (15 percent of the Filipino respondents and 12 percent of the Fijian respondents) said that although they are personally against homosexual relationships, they believe that society should respect and

accept those who decide to engage in such relationships.

ON MARRIAGE

Majority of the respondents from both countries (Philippines, 95 percent; Fiji, 64 percent) believe that marriage is important. Among the Filipino respondents, only one female answered to the contrary. Meanwhile, only 14 percent of the Fijian respondents said that it is not important, while 18 percent said that, at this point in their life, marriage is not yet important. The 18 percent said that staying single is an alternate option to marriage.

As to gender roles in marriage, the Filipino respondents, cited caring for the husband and children (60 percent), managing the household (20 percent—all of whom are girls), and being responsible for the emotional, physical, social and moral (values) well-being of the family (10 percent—all of whom were boys) were the most commonly cited roles for women in marriage. However, 15 percent of the respondents said that a woman's role in marriage should not be any different from that of a man's.

In Fiji, the top answer for women's roles in marriage was

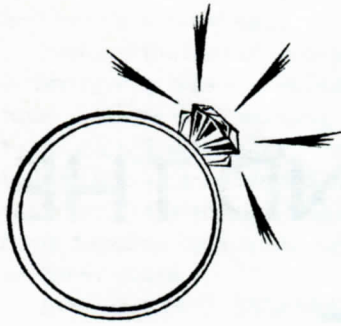
similar to that of their Filipino counterpart: caring for the husband and children (46 percent). The other roles mentioned were those that fall under traditional female roles: managing the household (18 percent), and providing support (emotional, spiritual, etc...) to the family (11 percent). And, similar to the Philippines, 25 percent of the respondents (mostly girls) said that there is no difference between a woman's and a man's role in marriage. Moreover, non-traditional roles such as being the provider for the family (14 percent) and doing anything she wants to do (11 percent) were also mentioned as female roles in marriage.

As for the married man, the Filipino respondents expected him to be the provider for the family (50 percent) and to care for his wife and children (50 percent). Only 18 percent said that there should be no difference between the roles of men and women in marriage. The respondents also said a married man should respect and support his wife, make the decisions in the family, discipline the children, and be understanding and loyal.

The Fiji respondents, meanwhile, said a man's primary role in marriage is caring for his wife and children (61 percent), followed by being the family's provider (32 percent). Twenty-five percent of the respondents said men should have a similar role to women. Eleven percent of the respondents (all of whom were girls) mentioned the role of being protector of the family as a man's role in marriage.

(The total number of responses made by the respondents is greater than the total number of





Respondents said women who court men are cheap, lack ethics and are going against tradition.

respondents since the respondents gave multiple responses.)

CHANGING ROLES

All of those polled in Fiji and 70 percent of the respondents from the Philippines believe that roles between men and women are changing. However, a sole female respondent (Filipino) believed that as long as men do not accept women as equals, there still will not be any change in roles between the two sexes.

According to the Filipino respondents, the changing roles are manifested mainly through the changing roles of women in the family. Nowadays, there are more women-headed households as more and more women are better educated and work outside the home while their husbands care for the children at home.

The Fijian respondents cited other factors to account for these changing roles. Fifty-four percent of the male respondents and 36 percent of the female respondents attributed

the shifting in roles to the increasing number of divorced cases in the country, and the couples' inability to cope with the "changing lifestyles." They said that unlike before, women are now heading the family and are being independent, working and providing for the family while the men stay at home to take care of the children, share in the household work, and listen to their wives because changes in the family structure, they said, resulted in women taking on traditionally male roles and men engaging in what used to be traditionally female roles. *(Responses for this item were multiple, therefore the total number of responses are greater than the total sample.)*

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With poll reports from Joyce E. Sierra for the Philippines and from Shamima Ali for Fiji.

Table 6
Roles Changing?

	PHILIPPINES		FIJI	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	3	11	11	17
No	1	1		
Depends		2		
No answer	1	2		
Total	5	15	11	17