



International
Labour
Organization

► E-learning programme on rights, responsibilities and representation for children, youth and families (3Rs)

Module 3. Equality in life and in families

Boys are tough, and girls are soft. Men earn, and women spend.

Are you familiar with these kinds of stereotypes? Most likely you are quite familiar.

Unfortunately, gender perceptions like these are ingrained in our societies. However, change is possible, and it starts with education and awareness.

This module is your go-to reference to challenge gender perceptions and expand your understanding of gender roles and happy families.

Let's begin unlearning these gender perceptions!





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Lesson 7

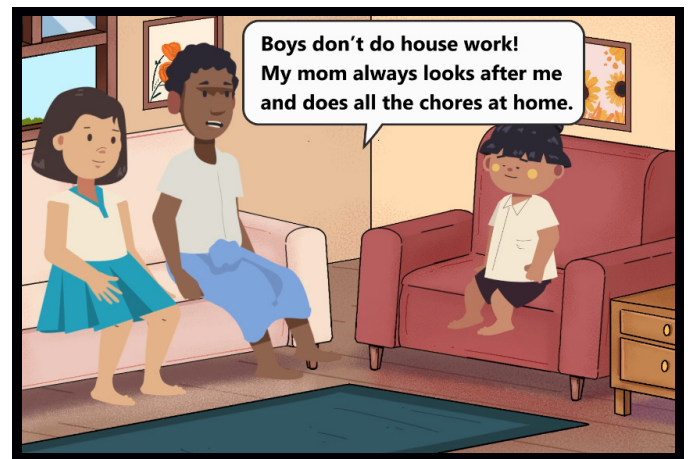
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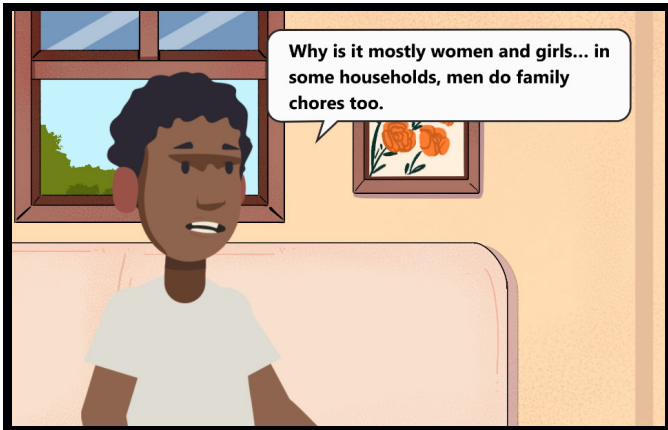
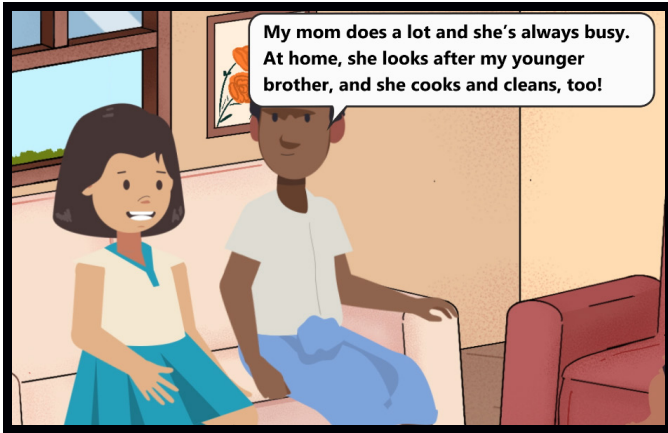
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► Is it fair?

Phoe Wah, Noe Noe and Mohammed are confused.

Read on to know the reason why.





Have you ever felt limited by societal expectations of how you should behave or present yourself based on gender?

Lesson 2 of 7

► Learning objectives



This module helps you:

- Distinguish between facts and opinions on gender.
- Describe how the expectations of family and society affect gender roles.
- Explain how families can achieve equality and happiness.

Ready to begin learning?

Lesson 3 of 7

► What's your perception?



How can you tell if someone is a boy, a girl, a man or a woman?

Look at the pictures below and consider which category they belong to.

Boy



A young boy, Myanmar. © Shutterstock

Girl



Young girl, Myanmar. © Marcel Crozet/ILO

Man



Man in construction site. © Shutterstock

Woman



Woman holding a clay pot, Myanmar. © Shutterstock

Let's see if you can guess for the following pictures.

You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.



Young monks reading, Myanmar. © Shutterstock



Person holding up their hands. © Shutterstock



Person with a flower. © Shutterstock



Person with their arms folded. © Shutterstock



Was it easy for you? How did you differentiate between a boy, a girl, a man or a woman?

There are many ways to tell the difference between boys, girls, men and women based on a few typical characteristics:

Physical traits such as:

- ▶ Height
- ▶ Body size
- ▶ Muscles
- ▶ Facial hair
- ▶ Breasts
- ▶ Pregnancy

Sexual organs:

- ▶ The most basic biological distinction.

Other characteristics may include:

- ▶ Men appear masculine, and women appear feminine.
- ▶ Women usually have longer hair, wear makeup, and have more elaborate clothing than men.
- ▶ Women are often seen as “sweet” and “gentle”; while men are viewed as physically “stronger” and “masculine”.

However, these typical characteristics are only sometimes reliable. Not everybody fits the specific expectations of who is male/female or masculine/feminine.

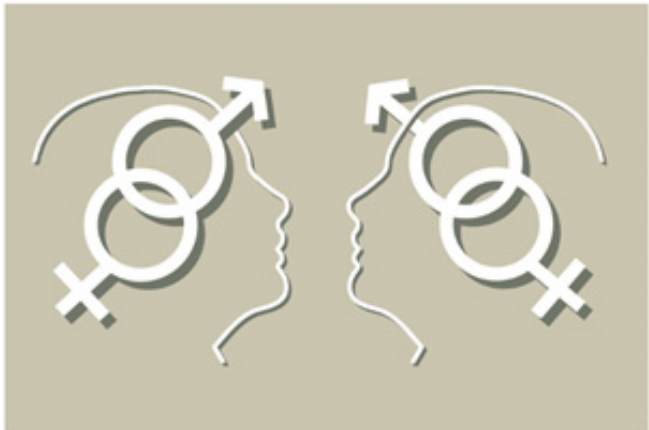
Some people's characteristics differ from and do not conform to the typical binary male/female or masculine/feminine categorizations. Being different doesn't mean these people are bad or doing something wrong. It's just because each person is different.



To avoid confusion concerning such situations, one must understand the meaning of “sex” and of “gender”. People often get confused between the two terms.

What do you think? Do they mean the same thing, or are they different?

Sex and gender are two distinct concepts that are often used interchangeably. However, these two terms carry different meanings.



Sex	Gender
Refers to the biological attributes of men and women	Refers to a social construct that defines the roles, behaviours and expectations that are associated with being male or female
Given by birth	Learned through socialization
Cannot be changed	Can be changed
Examples: Only women can give birth, and only men can produce sperm.	Example: In many countries, women care for young children, but men are increasingly caring for young children too.



Do you think this information about sex and gender was helpful?

Here is an exercise for you to better distinguish between sex and gender:

Do the following statements relate to sex or to gender?

Mark the correct answers. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

Statement	Sex	Gender
Men usually have a deeper voice than women.		
Women can breastfeed babies.		
Women and girls are responsible for the household and children.		
Men have short hair; women have long hair		
Men bottle-feed babies		
Women often work as cooks and traders in some countries.		
Men have facial and body hair and an Adam's apple		
Women can get pregnant		
Women in rural areas have a lot of children		
Nowadays, men and women get married at an older age		



Have you ever thought about who decides gender roles?



Group of people dressed in traditional attire, Myanmar. © Shutterstock

People from different cultures and traditions usually have different ideas and expectations about the characteristics, abilities and likely behaviour of girls/women and boys/men. Some families, communities and societies have strict ideas and standards of behaviour for women/girls and men/boys, often restricting the opportunities and potential of girls/women and sometimes of boys/men. Strict gender roles and norms can restrict potential contributions by women and men, girls and boys in the family, workplace, community and society because they are not allowed to exercise their fullest potential.



Things we hear about people, gender and society are not always based on facts. They are often opinions based on beliefs, ignorance, or even bias and prejudice.

Let's see how well you can tell fact from opinion.

Are the following statements facts or opinions?

Mark your answers. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

Statement	Fact	Opinion
Asian people have black hair.		
I got only 65% on last month's exam.		
There are four teachers in my school.		
My school does not have enough teachers.		
Asian people have very beautiful hair		
The math class is very boring		

How did you guess whether the statement was a fact or an opinion?

Facts are objective and verifiable statements that can be proven true or false. They are based on evidence, data and empirical observations. On the other hand, opinions are subjective statements that reflect personal beliefs, attitudes or judgements. Opinions are not based on solid evidence and can vary from person to person.

Now that you have read about the difference between a fact and an opinion, you should have a clearer idea.

Now sharpen your critical thinking skills by separating facts from opinions when it comes to sex and gender.

Are the following statements facts or opinions?

Mark your answers. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

Statement	Fact	Opinion
Real men do not cry.		
Pregnant women should not do heavy physical work, drink alcohol or take drugs.		
It is okay for men to get paid more than women because they are the providers.		
Whether the baby will be a son or daughter depends on whether or not they have a Y chromosome.		
Boys do not need to do household chores because it is a job for women and girls.		
A son is more important than a daughter because he will take care of his parents.		

Statement	Fact	Opinion
It is the woman's fault if she cannot give a son to the family.		
It is normal for men to get drunk, but drunken women are unsightly.		
Around the world, there are more girls out of school than boys.		
Men make better village heads than women.		
Women are better cooks than men.		
Women make better parents than men.		
Only women can get pregnant and give birth to babies		
The role of a man is to be a provider, and the role of a woman is to be a mother.		
Girls do not need a high level of education because they will get married anyway.		
Women and girls are sweet, gentle and kind.		
Men are more decisive than women.		
In many countries, men are paid more than women for doing the same job.		
Most men are bigger and taller than women.		
Women are more honest than men.		

Learning milestone

Which answer choice below describes a fact?

Select your answer. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers annex.

☐

A

Something true.

☐

B

Something imaginary.

Do you know how your perceptions affect gender labeling?

Lesson 4 of 7

► What affects gender roles?

Have you heard sayings related to gender roles? Every society has old sayings about men and women. Generations have passed down these sayings from one to another.

Have you ever thought about whether these sayings are true? How do these sorts of sayings affect women and men, boys and girls in society?

Have you ever heard the saying: "Husband is god, son is master." Do you think this is true?

Or what about, "A good lady wears only one flower". Do you agree with this saying?



Can you help Aye Aye understand the meaning of the proverb in the picture to the left?

You will get the answer in a short while. However, are you already thinking about how proverbs and gender roles are linked?

Language reflects culture – how people think and what they value. In the sayings above, someone long ago believed them to be presenting truths, which is why they came up with them in the first place! Cultural sayings – also called proverbs – were often used as a teaching tool in socializing members of society.

Let's see if you know any more proverbs from Myanmar.

Generally, values and attitudes in one's family and society affect gender stereotyping.

Wondering how?

Well, one way to demonstrate this is to recall a few common proverbs you may have heard in your household and society.

Here is a quick activity for you: Read the jumbled words in Column A and re-arrange them to form common proverbs in Column B.

You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

Column A	Column B
Husband is / god / son is / master.	
for the parents/ is like / an umbrella / a daughter	
is like / a son / a tiger / for the parents	
for a merchant / a pig / raising a son / is like raising	
deserves / an able man / a thousand maids	
Obey the father / when married / obey the husband / as a maiden	
without a husband / a woman / is like a chariot / lacking splendor / without a flag	
even the son / the king's counselor / can be / of low parentage	
a raging buffalo / is like having a jar / having a son / in front of the house / of fermented fish / having a son / is like having / having a daughter	
men are / of the elephant / and women are / the hind legs / the front legs	



How many sayings could you get correct? How many of them are still used by people around you? Do you think these proverbs make sense? Should they still be used? Why or why not?

Myanmar



Myanmar proverb

"An unmarried woman is not honored even if she has ten brothers."

Meaning of the proverb

A girl's duty is to settle down and have a family. Her value and honor is attached to her status as a wife.

Chinese



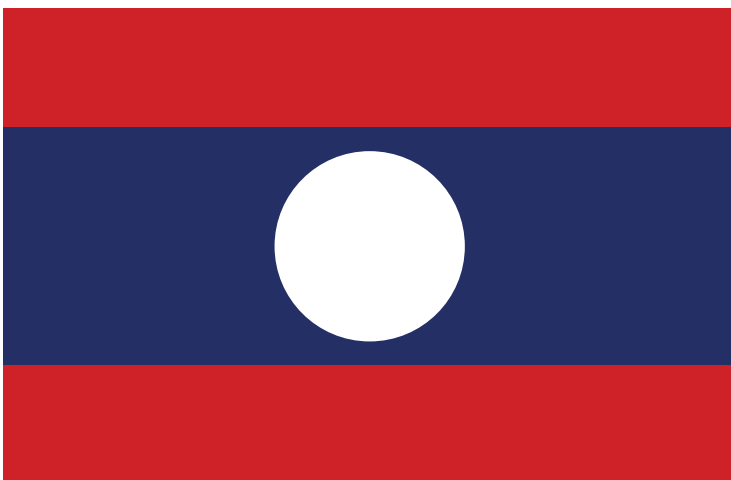
Chinese proverb

"If a son is uneducated, his father is to blame."

Meaning of the proverb

Parents are responsible for their children's education.

Laos



Laos proverb

"Wife eats after husband is full."

Meaning of the proverb

Husbands must come first in everything.

Khmer



Khmer proverb

"Men are bees, women are flowers."

Meaning of the proverb

Men are attracted to women's beauty.

Vietnam



Vietnamese proverb

"If you have ten daughters, you don't have any children. If you have a son, you have a child."

Meaning of the proverb

It is more important to have sons than daughters



Can you now decode how these proverbs might affect your perceptions of gender roles?



Happy family at the beach. © Shutterstock

Here is the link between proverbs and gender stereotyping.

Language can shape people's thinking. We may not always be conscious of it, but when people use traditional sayings, slogans or proverbs that are demeaning or stereotype one or both sexes, they indirectly pass on that skewed mindset to the next generation.

In modern times, these modes of thinking are no longer appropriate, nor are they helpful. For families and societies to prosper, old thinking needs to change to reflect new realities, such as gender equality.

Learning milestone

Which of the following affects the gender roles in our society?

Choose your answer(s) – you can select more than one. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers annex.

☐**A**

Culture

☐**B**

Family

☐**C**

Media

☐**D**

Education

How can gender equality help in making happy families?

Lesson 5 of 7

► What makes a happy family?



Let's take a look at Aye Aye's family situation.

Her family has six people, including her. She lives with her father, mother, grandmother, sister and brother.

Take a look at a few situations in Aye Aye's family below, and guess whether each one is a happy or sad situation.



Family meal



Early morning



Evening after school



After dinner



Quarrel



Family finance



Saying goodbye



Family outing in the park



Gambling and drinking



Parent-teacher meeting at school



Grandma very ill



Too many family members in a small room



After looking at the pictures, how many situations in Aye Aye's family are happy? What made those situations happy ones?

Many factors contribute to a happy family, such as:

Health and security

If everyone has good health, it's already a blessing. Security comes from having enough food and money to afford other basic necessities. Security may also mean safety and protection from harm if society is not peaceful.

Happiness and emotional balance

Spending time together as a family and caring for, loving, respecting, being patient with, and forgiving one another all contribute to harmony when living together.

Equality and sharing

In Asian societies, including in Myanmar, respecting elders is important, but consideration for younger people is also necessary to ensure happiness for everyone. Living together in a family means sharing resources. If everyone in the family helps one another and shares resources and responsibilities fairly and equally, all family members can be happy. Sharing can mean sharing opportunities, workloads, decision-making, and money.

Room to grow

For a family to progress, family members – especially children – need room to grow. It is essential to support opportunities for individual development for everybody in the family.



Having discussed the ingredients of a happy family, you must also remember that even the happiest families are never happy all of time. Sometimes, conflicting situations may arise in families, causing distress.

How should these conflicts be managed?

Here are a couple of situations for you. Read them and think how you would respond to each.

What would you do if your parents disagree with you? For example, in making decisions about your education, job or marriage?

Will you obey your parents because they want the best for you?

Will your parents listen to you and help you decide what is in your best interest?



In any decision-making situation, it is always good to consider various options well before making a judgement.

In case of a disagreement, all family members should communicate with each other nicely and respectfully. The disagreeing members should try to understand each other's perspective.

What if your family struggles with disagreements and unhappy situations? What will you do?

Will you solve the problem by listening to and supporting each other?

Will you improve the unhappy situation by changing their behaviour?

Will you seek outside help for an issue affecting the life and safety of family members, especially children?



Some unhappy situations are easier to resolve than others. However, if certain conditions never seem to change, you can seek outside help.

Learning milestone

1. Which of the following family situations is happy?

Choose an answer. You can view the correct answer at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

☐
A

The father cooks, while the mother reads a book.

☐
B

The father abuses the mother.

2. Which of the following is an example of an unhappy family situation?

Choose an answer. You can view the correct answer at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

☐
A

Going on a family vacation

☐
B

Losing a family member

☐
C

Celebrating a birthday party

☐
D

Watching a movie together

3. Which of the following is an example of a happy family situation?

Choose an answer. You can view the correct answer at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

☐ **A** Having frequent arguments and conflicts

☐ **B** Criticizing and blaming each other

☐ **C** Ignoring each other's feelings and needs

☐ **D** Having a family game night

4. Which of the following is an example of an unhappy family situation?

Choose your answer(s) – you can select more than one. You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

☐ **A** Parents criticizing their children

☐ **B** Spending time together doing fun activities

☐ **C** Siblings teasing and mocking each other

☐ **D** Losing a family pet

► Self-evaluation

Well done!

You've almost completed **Module 3. Equality in life and in families.**

Here is a self-evaluation with questions designed to help you identify learning gaps. This is not a test because, while you will receive a score, there is no passing score. Use your score to identify what you may need to go back and re-review.

You can attempt this self-evaluation as many times as you like!

All the best.

You can view the correct answers at the back of this booklet, in the Answers Annex.

Question 1 of 5

Maung is a 25-year-old teacher. He likes to keep his hair long and has a feminine walk. Students at his school mock him for these reasons. He sometimes gets upset due to these comments.

What will be your advice to Maung to handle this situation?

Choose an answer.

☐
A

Change your habits

☐
B

Be yourself

☐
C

Scold those students

☐
D

Change the school

Question 2 of 5

Which of the following sayings reflects gender stereotyping?

Choose your answer(s) – you may select more than one.

☐
A

"Fall seven times, stand up eight."

☐
B

"Patience is a bitter plant, but it bears sweet fruit."

☐
C

"A good lady wears only one flower."

☐
D

"Women hold half of the sky."

Question 3 of 5

"Women are better at multitasking than men." Is this a fact or an opinion?

Choose an answer.

☐**A**

Fact

☐**B**

Opinion

Question 4 of 5

Ohma's parents always expected her to be a stay-at-home mom and care for the household. What impact might this have on her gender role?

Choose an answer.

☐**A**

It may reinforce traditional gender roles and limit her career opportunities

☐**B**

It may eliminate gender roles

☐**C**

It may promote gender equality and encourage her to pursue a career

☐**D**

It may have no impact on her gender role

Question 5 of 5

Your friend's father lost his job, and his family struggled financially. Despite the challenges, they stuck together.

What factors kept your friend's family together in tough times?

Choose your answer(s) – you may select more than one.

☐**A**

Support

☐**B**

Love

☐**C**

Equality

☐**D**

Intelligence

☐**E**

Security

Lesson 7 of 7

Summary

Before closing this module, here is a quick recap of the key learnings.



Group of people dressed in traditional attire, Myanmar. © Shutterstock

Sex versus gender

In the first lesson, you learned that:

- ▶ Gender roles are defined by society and can change over time.
- ▶ Prejudices in regard to gender roles fuel gender inequality.
- ▶ Facts are evidence-based and widely accepted as true.
- ▶ Opinions are beliefs not based on fact.
- ▶ When there is equality in the family, community and society, everyone can enjoy happiness.

Gender roles

In the second lesson, you learned that:

- ▶ Societal values and attitudes shape gender norms, which vary between cultures and change over time.
- ▶ Some old sayings and slogans defame the sexes and should not be considered as holding true.
- ▶ Children should be encouraged to make choices and have equal opportunities to pursue their aspirations, free from societal expectations.

About a happy family

In the third lesson, you learned that:

- ▶ A happy family needs health, security, happiness, emotional balance, equality, sharing and room to grow.
- ▶ It is possible to change unhappy situations in family life.

**Thank you! We hope you found this
learning module useful.**

**This module can also be accessed online at
<https://ecampus.ilooyangon.org/>**

Answers annex

Lesson 3, Page 5



Young monks reading, Myanmar. © Shutterstock

Boy



Person holding up their hands. © Shutterstock

Girl



Person with a flower. © Shutterstock

Man



Person with their arms folded. © Shutterstock

Woman

Lesson 3, Page 8

Do the following statements relate to sex or gender?

Statement	Sex	Gender
Men usually have a deeper voice than women.	✓	
Women can breastfeed babies.	✓	
Women and girls are responsible for the household and children.		✓
Men have short hair; women have long hair		✓
Men bottle-feed babies		✓
Women often work as cooks and traders in some countries.		✓
Men have facial and body hair and an Adam's apple	✓	
Women can get pregnant	✓	
Women in rural areas have a lot of children		✓
Nowadays, men and women get married at an older age		✓

Lesson 3, Page 10

Are the following statements facts or opinions?

Statement	Fact	Opinion
Asian people have black hair.	✓	
I got only 65% on last month's exam.	✓	
There are four teachers in my school.	✓	
My school does not have enough teachers.		✓
Asian people have very beautiful hair		✓
The math class is very boring		✓

Are the following statements facts or opinions?

Statement	Fact	Opinion
Real men do not cry.		✓
Pregnant women should not do heavy physical work, drink alcohol or take drugs.	✓	
It is okay for men to get paid more than women because they are the providers.		✓
Whether the baby will be a son or daughter depends on whether or not they have a Y chromosome.	✓	
Boys do not need to do household chores because it is a job for women and girls.		✓
A son is more important than a daughter because he will take care of his parents.		✓
It is the woman's fault if she cannot give a son to the family.		✓
It is normal for men to get drunk, but drunken women are unsightly.		✓
Around the world, there are more girls out of school than boys.	✓	
Men make better village heads than women.		✓
Women are better cooks than men.		✓
Women make better parents than men.		✓
Only women can get pregnant and give birth to babies	✓	
The role of a man is to be a provider, and the role of a woman is to be a mother.		✓
Girls do not need a high level of education because they will get married anyway.		✓
Women and girls are sweet, gentle and kind.		✓
Men are more decisive than women.		✓
In many countries, men are paid more than women for doing the same job.	✓	
Most men are bigger and taller than women.		✓
Women are more honest than men.		✓

Lesson 3, Page 11

Which answer choice describes a fact?

If you selected A, you are correct. Well done!

The fact is true and can be proven or verified.

Lesson 4, Page 13

Read the jumbled words in Column A and re-arrange them to form proverbs in Column B.

Column A	Column B
Husband is / god / son is / master.	Husband is god, son is master.
for the parents/ is like / an umbrella / a daughter	A daughter is like an umbrella for the parents
is like / a son / a tiger / for the parents	A son is like a tiger/power for the parents.
for a merchant / a pig / raising a son / is like raising	Raising a son is like raising a pig for a merchant.
deserves / an able man / a thousand maids	An able man deserves a thousand maids.
Obey the father / when married / obey the husband / as a maiden	Obey the father as a maiden, obey the husband when married.
without a husband / a woman / is like a chariot / lacking splendor / without a flag	A woman without a husband is like a chariot without a flag, lacking splendor.
even the son / the king's counselor / can be / of low parentage	Even the son of low parentage can be the king's counselor.
a raging buffalo / is like having a jar / having a son / in front of the house / of fermented fish / having a son / is like having / having a daughter	Having a daughter is like having a jar of fermented fish in front of the house; having a son is like having a raging buffalo.
men are / of the elephant / and women are / the hind legs / the front legs	Men are the front legs, and women are the hind legs of the elephant.

Lesson 4, Page 16

Learning milestone

Which of the following affects the gender roles in our society?

If you selected all of the options – A, B, C, and D – you are correct. Well done!

Several factors can affect gender roles in our society, including culture, family, media and education.

Learning milestone

1. Which of the following family situations is happy?

If you selected A, you are correct. Well done!

The father cooks, while the mother reads a book is a happy situation.

2. Which of the following is an example of an unhappy family situation?

If you selected B, you are correct. Well done!

An example of an unhappy family situation is losing a family member.

3. Which of the following is an example of a happy family situation?

If you selected B, you are correct. Well done!

If you selected D, you are correct. Well done!

4. Which of the following is an example of an unhappy family situation? Choose your answer(s).

If you selected A, C and D, you are correct. Well done!

Parents criticizing their children, siblings teasing and mocking each other, and losing a family pet are unhappy family situations.

Lesson 6, Page 23

Self-evaluation

Question 1 of 5

If you selected B, you are correct. Well done!

Your best advice could be to tell Maung to be himself.

Question 2 of 5

If you selected C, you are correct. Well done!

A statement like “A good lady wears only one flower” reflects gender stereotyping.

Question 3 of 5

If you selected B, you are correct. Well done!

"Women are better at multitasking than men" is an opinion.

Question 4 of 5

If you selected A, you are correct. Well done!

It may reinforce traditional gender roles and limit her career opportunities.

Question 5 of 5

If you selected A and B, you are correct. Well done!

In the given situation, love and support kept your friend's family together.

E-learning programme on rights, responsibilities and representation for children, youth and families (3Rs)

Building upon the foundation laid by the 3-R Trainers' Kit developed in 2018 and the E-learning Programme on Child Labour launched in 2022, the 3Rs e-Learning kit is a comprehensive resource designed to empower individuals and organizations working in communities vulnerable to child labour and trafficking. This kit equips its users with the necessary tools to prevent and combat these violations effectively.

With an increased number of children at risk of child labour in Myanmar due to the ongoing crisis, the 3Rs underscores the urgent need to instil understand child rights, workers' rights and gender equality among children, youth and their families in at-risk communities and workplaces.

Comprising 11 modules, the course covers a wide range of topics essential for holistic empowerment. From understanding child rights to promoting gender equality, the 3Rs e-Learning kit serves as a catalyst for positive change, providing the knowledge and skills necessary to create a more equitable and empowered society.

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)

International Labour Office
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22 – Switzerland
T: +41 (0) 22 799 61 11
E: childlabour@ilo.org
W: [@ILO_Childlabour](http://ilo.org/childlabour)

ILO Liaison Office for Myanmar

No.1 (A), Kanbae (Thitsar) Road
Yankin Township
Yangon, Myanmar
T: + 95 1 7336538 ~ 9 / 579956 / 578925
F: + 95 1 7336582
E: yangon@ilo.org

