



NJOKI KARUOYA } GENDER AGENDA

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Reproductive Health

Stemming reckless sex in campus

Stories coming out today from universities and colleges are very worryin-g. True, there is always been a level of promiscuity, drug abuse, and other forms of reckless behaviour in these institutions at higher learning, but with each generation the vices escalate to appalling levels.

Today, for instance, students are participating in the recording of pornographic videos for either personal enjoyment or commercial purposes.

Sadly, these actions are done without much thought of the consequences, the immediate being contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and unwanted pregnancies.

In the long term, such vices can creep in at the most inappropriate time, like during a job interview. One of the recruiters may have seen it on a Tube. Or when the individual, especially the woman, society tends to be harsher on a woman's moral nature, is going for a prestigious position in society, like being a chief justice or parliamentarian.

COVER OF DARKNESS

Then there are those who go for the cover of darkness to go strut their wares on Independence Street, or anywhere else where they are willing to take on any customer.

Such women will often argue that they are doing it for money so they can help pay their fees or meet their needs, but again, the same risks abound.

Within the gates of universities and colleges, young men and women meet in hostels and engage in indiscriminate twosomes, threesomes and open orgies. Infidelity among students is



Students from various universities and colleges listen to speakers during the campus edition of the Sista 2 Sista forum last Saturday at University of Nairobi. Officials of Women Students' Welfare Association are organising Reproductive Health Week set for next week. [PHOTO: TABITHA OTWORI/STANDARD]

in permanent relationships or, worse still, to still be virgins, are looked down upon as people who are not 'with it', which then places pressure on the gullible ones to abandon their moral values and fit in with the masses.

At the campus edition of Sista 2 Sista forum held last Saturday at the University of Nairobi, I learnt that certain nicknames are used on guys. There is *Pesa Pap!* for the wealthy boyfriends (including sugar daddies) who are flush with money and never disappoint when the campus/college girl calls them for money.

Then there are the ATM guys who, although their role is similar to that of the *Pesa Pap!* guy, they are classified

strength. Thus, the ATM guys are into three categories with names associated with banks (which I won't mention here for their own sake) that denote the strength of the guy's pocket (rich, medium, rare).

It is, therefore, not uncommon for the girls to have more than one boyfriend at a time, and vice versa. Not surprising also is the high number of illegal abortions among university and college students.

WOSWA

With this background, officials of the Women Students' Welfare Association (Woswa) are organising a *Reproductive Health Week* scheduled to begin on May 24 to May 27.

The officials say the week long conference, which has

en, *Healthy Nation*', aims to increase the students' knowledge and understanding on the linkage between reproductive health and social power relations.

While doing this, the organisers hope to reduce the level of misinformation about sex and other reproductive health concerns including sexually transmitted infections.

Similarly, the Woswa officials hope to reduce the frequency of unprotected sex and sexual promiscuity, and increase the use of protection against the infections and unwanted pregnancies.

Prominent personalities have been invited to give educative and motivational talks during conference, and ar-

HONOURABLE MISSION

Woswa focuses on creating intensive knowledge on personal health issues, improving living conditions in the hall of residence, enhancing the plight of female students as well as promoting the image and self-esteem, to boost their courage in aiming for top positions in society and promoting a peaceful co-existence among the students.

for students and visitors to get family planning, and to testing for HIV and cervical cancer.

Woswa must be applauded for their initiative to promote and sustain risk-reducing behaviour in their campus.

Other student organisations and leaders should take up similar initiatives to educate their fellow students on matters to do with health and sex.

Peer pressure is very powerful in most academic institutions. But when armed with information, the likelihood of students engaging in reckless behaviour will, hopefully, be reduced. A shift will occur — to that of focusing on why they are there, which is to study and prepare for their ca-