

INTRODUCTION

The National Workshop on Women in Governance held on 7th March 2003 at Vigyan Bhavan, to mark the celebration of International Women's Day, was the culmination of a series of national consultations held earlier on women's participation in Civil Services, Local Self Government and Public Sector Undertakings, in January-February 2003. All the three consultations, based on well worked papers in the three areas, were well attended and keenly participated by women belonging to various walks of life including political leaders, grass root elected women representatives, government officials, academics, media persons, researchers, NGOs and social activists. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated in the papers and presented before the national workshop for nationwide dissemination and further discussion of strategies to promote greater participation of women in decision making levels so as to build up a critical mass that will be able to bring about policies for changing the lives of women.

Background papers of the workshop held on 7th March 2003 find place as Part-I of the Report. Part-II of the Report covers Inaugural Session and the three Business Sessions on the three areas of Public Sector Undertakings, Local Self Governance and Civil Services. Part-III covers the area of Women in Legislature containing the background note and the Report of the joint meeting of the NCW and the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women on Role of Women in Legislature held on 21st August 2003.

A consolidated set of recommendations and strategies for action as adopted by NCW is contained in Part-IV. This should enable the policy makers and others to formulate action plans and seek to achieve the goals of this effort, viz. to bring about the presence of an adequate and critical mass of women at the decision making levels.

PART I
NATIONAL CONSULTATION
ON
WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

Organized by
THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

MARCH 7, 2003
VIGYAN BHAWAN, NEW DELHI

BACKGROUND NOTE

BACKGROUND PAPER ON WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES INCLUDING BANKING & INSURANCE SECTOR DURING NATIONAL CONSULTATION HELD ON 27.01.2003

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1) PSU PROFILE :

PSU represents the single largest organised sector spread over the entire length and breadth of the country touching and influencing the lives of the entire population in the country and of all categories. Though the Public Sector as a whole is undergoing structural changes in as much as the rest of the economy in India for the past one decade, it still occupies the center stage impacting the economy. Contribution of the public enterprises in the development process is well documented. Their presence in the remotest corners of the country and difficult areas have largely been responsible for attracting private investment in subsequent years and is now contributing to the smooth transition during the disinvestment process in select Enterprises.

The total investment in the Public Sector as of 31st March, 2001 was about Rs. 274114 Crores, and contribution to the exchequer was Rs. 56157 Crores by way of Excise Duty, Customs Duty, Corporate Tax, Interest on Central Govt. Loans, Dividend & other Duties & Taxes. They comprise of 250 Enterprises (excluding 6 Insurance Companies and 2 Financial Institutions) representing wide varieties of sectors such as Construction, Steel, Minerals & Metals, Coal & Lignite, Power, Petroleum, Fertilizers, Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals, Heavy Engineering, Medium & Light Engineering, Transportation Equipment, Consumer Goods, Agro-Based Industries, Textiles and whole lot of services such as Trading & Marketing, Transportation, Contract & Construction Services, Industrial Development and Technical Consultancy, Tourist, Financial, Telecommunication etc.

The number of operating enterprises has increased from 232 as on 31st March, 2000 to 234 as on 31st March, 2001. During the year 2000~2001, 16 new public enterprises have been added in the list of CPSEs and 6 enterprises deleted due to either divestment of Government equity resulting in the reduction of Government's share holding to below 51% or closure of the PSEs. (Table I)

HUMAN RESOURCES :

As on 31st March, 2001, the Public Enterprises employed over 17.42 Lacs people. The average per capita has increased over the years as given in Table II.

With a view to respond to the markets and improve competitiveness, the public enterprises took several measures and continue to take measures including employees' productivity. The structural changes required to be brought about by the Public

Enterprises to sustain in the market place and be competitive includes among other measures the voluntary retirement scheme. Consequently, it has brought down the number of employees in PSUs in the last decade from 21.79 Lacs (1991~92) to 17.42 Lacs (2000~2001) whereas the average per capita emolument has been steadily increasing. Steepest rise in 2000~2001, an increase of 30% over the previous year.

1.1 REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN :

As on 31st March, 2001, there were in all 99,000 women work force as compared to 89877 as on 31st March 1991 (Table III). There has been marginal increase in number of women employees in absolute terms as compared to over all reduction of the number of employees in PSUs during the same period from 21.79 Lakhs to 17.42 Lakhs (4.37 Lakhs reduction). Women in PSU constituted 5.68% of the total Work Force as on 31st March, 2001 as compared to 4% as on March 1991. Most encouraging development in this direction has been increase in the Managerial & Supervisory categories of women employees (Table IV) from 11,158 as on 31st March, 1991 to about 20,905 as on 31st March, 2001 (87.35% increase). The sectors where there has been pronounced changes for the better in the profiles of women employees in the Managerial & Supervisory categories during the same period are Power, Petroleum, Fertilizers, Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals, Consumer Goods, Textiles, Trading & Marketing Services, Contract and Construction Services, Financial Services, Coal & Lignite. Remarkable and outstanding improvements in women moving into Managerial & Supervisory positions have been seen in Transport Services & Tourist Services during the same period. In the Textile Sector, the number of women have increased from 23 to 409 and in the Transportation Services from 845 to 2,690 during the same period (Table IV a).

On the other hand, there has been decline in the number of women in the Managerial & Supervisory categories in the last one decade in Agro Based Industries & Tele-Communication Services. No significant improvement in the nos. in Steel, Medium and Light Engineering, Heavy Engineering sectors.

1.2 WOMEN IN FINANCIAL SERVICES :

The contribution of the service sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had registered the highest growth rate and has increased from 7% to over 8% per annum in the post reform years. Among the various components of the services sector, financial services, real estate and business services have grown at a rapid rate of 9 to 10% per annum since mid-eighties. These services include a number of activities both in the organised and unorganized sectors, such as banking, provident and insurance services, activities of the financial institutions like finance and investment corporations, mutual funds, non-banking financial companies, chit funds, security operations, real estate, legal and business services etc. informal lending activities, services provided by the agents for the insurance corporations, stock exchanges and other financial institutions, have contributed significantly to the growth of income as well as employment.

Among the financial services, banking and insurance activities have been growing the fastest in terms of contribution to GDP. These sectors have also been the major source of employment in view of their vast network, particularly for educated middle class women. Several features of services in banks and insurance like the non-manual nature of working, security and high salary levels, fixed working hours, suiting the domestic schedule, stationary nature, respectability attached to the job, combine to make it a “women-friendly” occupation. In the recent past, however, the employment–intensity of banks and insurance sector has declined.

TRENDS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR :

The Table-V below points out that the rate of growth of employment in the financial services in the public sector has gradually tapered off between 1983 and 1999 for women as well as for all persons and the rate of growth of employment in private sector picking up significantly in the post-reform period (1994 to 1999). The share of the organised sector as a whole in the total employment as well as employment of women in financial services sector has come down from 48% in 1983 to 33% in 1999 and within the organised sector, the share of public sector has also slightly declined from 81% to 78%. Within the financial service sector, there had been significant developments (Table VI). The deposit activities i.e. Normal Banking Activities, had declined in importance more in the case of women. Life Insurance and miscellaneous business services had been the major gainers, particularly in the case of women. Further scrutiny of the miscellaneous business services indicated the data processing activities and business management consultancy services improved their shares significantly in the case of women. Banks and Insurance (Life and non-life) account for over three-fourth of the total employment in the financial sector.

The data show that the share of women in employment improved as one moves from rural to semi-urban to urban and metropolitan areas. This phenomenon, coupled with the fact that the public sector banks have a substantially larger spread in the rural areas, would to some extent explain the differences in the intensity of women employment in different groups of banks. Even among the public sector banks, there are differences between individual banks. For instance, the public sector banks originating from Southern Region, such as the Andhra Bank, Canara Bank, Corporation Bank, State Bank of Travancore and Syndicate Bank have significantly higher proportion of women than the banks from the other regions (Table VII).

Data available from the Reserve Bank of India shows that there were 10.06 Lakh employees in all the scheduled commercial banks as on 31st March 2000 over 85% of whom were in the public sector led by the State Bank of India and its associates. This included 1.38 lack women. The Table VIII brings out total employment in scheduled commercial banks as on March 2000. The data reveals that Clerical staff accounted for half the employees in the scheduled banks. Among women employees, however, about three-fourth were clustered in the clerical categories. The percentage of officers which was about 29% for all employees, women constituted only 13.7% whereas in the foreign

banks, women officers accounted for 54% of all female staff. The location of these banks being mainly in the metropolitan area, the working conditions and higher emoluments attracted many qualified women. These banks still prefer women officers.

Regional distribution of the women employees in the banks can be seen in Table IX. Western region account for 10.3% followed by the banks in the Southern Region (8.4%), Northern Region (6.3%) and low in Central (2.2%), Eastern Region (3.3%) and North-Eastern Regions (3.6%).

Reserve Bank of India has been publishing separate information on women employees from 1996.

Table X shows percentage of women among bank employees by category. While the share of women among various categories of employees has constantly improved over the entire period 1990~2000, there appears to be a quantum jump in the share of female employees since 1997 in the public sector banks.

INSURANCE :

In the Life Insurance sector, the total employment of the LIC has increased from 88,000 in 1990 to 1.23 lacs in 2000, remaining almost stagnant since 1994 with some decline in the recent years (Table XI). Almost one in five of the life insurance employees is a women – a proportion much higher than in the public sector banks. The Location of the offices perhaps may have something to do with proportion.

In the non life insurance business with General Insurance Corporation and its four subsidiaries, having the monopoly, the employment level had tended to stagnate since the reforms began but the share of women has improved from 12% to 14% over the last decade.

Experience in the recent past shows that in spite of the forces at work in banking that have a negative impact on employment growth, the total employment of women in the organized segment in the financial sector as a whole (including the various types of legal and business services covered by the Industrial Classification in this sector) would grow fairly fast. This implies a shift from the areas like banking to areas like, in particular, information technology-based business services, such as e-commerce and Internet services. There would also be substantial growth of employment in the unorganized segment in the financial sector, including self-employment. Some of the areas are agencies for insurance, securities, mobilization of small savings, small establishments offering various types of business services, etc. The future expansion in banks and insurance alike will be more in selling the products rather than in keeping accounts which will increasingly be the responsibility of the machines. Development of communication and managerial skills and aptitudes for teamwork would, therefore, be as important as development of IT skills.

Against this scenario that is thus unfolding, an appropriate strategy for strengthening the participation of women in the banking and other activities in the

financial sector has to be evolved comprising measures to a) consolidate and strengthen the present employment in the banks and insurance companies, b) enlarge the participation of women in other organized segments of the financial sector, and c) expand opportunities in the informal and self-employment components and improve the quality of such employment. It is primarily the threat of transfer on promotion, particularly to the rural areas that has been inhibiting the career aspirations of the female employees. The spate of applications from bank employees in response to the VRS is said to be due in a large measure to this threat.

Bank managements have to make a conscious effort to ensure equal, if not more, opportunities for proper career development and in service training for their female employees. Training is all the more essential in the changing technological and organizational milieu in the banks requiring considerable enhancement of IT and interpersonal skills on a continuing basis.

Time management in the face of the dilemma between domestic duties and office work is one of the problems faced by the women employees. It could be considered if at least in some of the bank operations not involving direct public contact, flexi-time principle might be useful. Provision of childcare facilities in large banks with substantial number of women employees would also be helpful. Relaxation of age limits for the entry of women so that they could take up employment after going through child bearing stage and allowing the existing employees to re-enter employment after child care for a couple of years would also promote higher levels of female participation in financial institutions.

A possibility that can be explored is for the banks themselves to organize intensive pre recruitment programmes especially for qualified women from rural areas and encourage their participation in the recruitment process through appropriate career guidance programmes. If the share of women in the rural financial institutions could be raised even by a few percentage points, the overall impact will be phenomenal. Future jobs in the banking, as well as in other sectors, will involve more of aggressive selling of the products in a fiercely competitive market and less of processing of transactions which will increasingly be technology driven.

1.3 WOMEN IN RAILWAYS :

As on 31st March, 2001, the total number of employees in the Railways were 15,45,308 as compared to 15,77,192 total employees as on 31st March, 2000. Women accounted for 77203 (4.9%) (Table XII). Analysis of the data reveals the following :

- a) Over Three-Fourth of Women are in Clerical / Unskilled category.
- b) Women Executives constitute 1.24% & Southern Western Central Region account for one third.
- c) Largest segment of women Offices category is in Board Office & other offices.
- d) Highest number of women employees are in Southern Region followed by Central/ Western Region.

- e) Though there is marginal reduction in the number of women employees, there has been increase in the number of women officers from 895 (2000) to 953 (2001). Interestingly this increase is in Southern Railways.
- f) The positive aspect is the presence of Women at the Board level (Table XIII a - XIII d).

1.4 WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING :

Though from the table, it is quite heartening to note the increase in the no. of women in the Managerial & Supervisory categories, their presence at the Board level and at the level of the CEOs is insignificant. As on 31st March, 2000, out of the 209 positions of the Chief Executives in Public Enterprises, there were only '2' women CEO's which infact has come down to '1' as on 31st March, 2001. The situation is not very encouraging even in the terms of representation of women at the board level.

This is the most disturbing feature in the Management of PSUs and achieving the gender equity. Even in the Banking and Insurance Sectors wherein there is much larger representation of women, hardly one or two women could reach the top slot, barring an exception in new emerging Private Sector Banks like ICICI where three out of four at the Board level are women.

Decision making positions represent those categories of women who are involved in the Policy Formulation, Managerial Cadre in an Enterprise. Today we have highly qualified women having backgrounds in Engineering, Science, Technology, Accountancy, Management, Administration, Personnel, Medicines etc. but their presence in the higher echelons in an enterprise is not visible.

1.5 WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL WORK FORCE :

Even though women today represent over 40% of the global work force and have gradually moved up the hierarchical ladder of enterprises, their share of management positions remains under a measly 20%. The higher the position, the more glaring is the gap. Surveys reveal that even in the largest of organizations, the percentage of women in top positions is limited to 2-3%, worldwide.

The percentage of women in administrative and managerial jobs worldwide varies widely, from 43% in the US and Australia, 33% in the UK, the Philippines and Norway, and 17% in Sri Lanka, to 9% in Japan and a mere 2.3% in India. It is interesting that the percentage of women managers in the US has been steadily rising, from 26% in 1980 to about 42% now. However, women hold only 2.4% of the top most management jobs and account for a meager 1.9% of the highest offices and director-level jobs. The bottom line is that women tend to remain at the lower and middle echelons of decision making, with top management jobs still largely out of their reach.

There is a growing recognition today about the need for placing women in positions which will contribute strategically more value for the organization and in line with their aspirations & capabilities rather than positioning them on perception.

There is also an emerging recognition to have periodical audit on women related issues. I would like to share with you a very interesting finding published a few years ago about a very progressive corporation which hired the services of an expert to know more about how the company was treating its women work force and to advise them about the policies. The study was commissioned as the Chief Executive felt that though a lot is being done by him for the women in his company but he felt that he has not been appreciated and those women who stand to profit most from the help, do not seem to be grateful. High turnover of women within the managerial ranks and the gender related issues bothering the Chief Executives, distracting and becoming obstacles to accomplishing the most important objective in the company : to make better products and to run the company more profitably. This interesting study has brought out certain fundamental issues which seems to apply in most situation even today. The various aspects of working towards gender equity issues highlighted were :

The solution is not merely instituting some “feel good” policies. The solution is “fundamental change”. It is a revolution in thought and action that will have a terrific impact, an impact that can be measured in monetary terms.

Simply counting women employees, vice presidents, or board members is not an effective way to appraise corporate performance. We realize that setting arbitrary numerical objectives can produce spurious accounting, which in turn produce false reassurances, while chronic underlying problems go unaddressed.

It is a geometric truth that if you divide any pyramid into four slices of equal height, the top slice will contain 1.5% of its volume, the next slice will contain 11%, the third slice will contain 29.5%, and bottom layer will contain 58%.

What is wrong with this picture ? Over the years, the Company makes an effort to recruit bright, promising men and women to join company’s management ranks. Search for talent in the best undergraduate and business schools in the land, schools in which there are more women in attendance every year. Women at the Company are found to be strong in basic leadership traits like intelligence, energy, and analytical ability because the work standards are exacting and each company expects to hire only the best people. And yet women languish after they are hired. What does this segregation, intended or not, cost the Company ? How it hurts ?

By not mobilizing the best people at the top, not maintaining quality at every level, treating a big portion of employees as dead weight, putting a lid on the contribution individual women can make under valuing promising people who wish to take a role in family care, failing to create beacons for the best women entering the workplace, not capitalizing on a tremendous opportunity, recruiting and training money is wasted.

Important points suggested after investigation to the company Chief, was Acknowledge Maternity, Provide Flexibility at Work Place, Learn how to measure productivity instead of counting hours spent at the Work Place, Provide Training, Improve Environment.

Quite some time back, there was another interesting study conducted by the Bank of Montreal, Canada with startling findings. They discovered in this study that the perception about the women's capability, their handicaps and choices are quite different than what the reality was. The study took an year's time, conducted and supervised by the senior most women officer in the Bank with a team and the bank cooperated in implementing the suggestions which were primarily in the nature of positioning women for various assignments and portfolio, according to their qualification, aptitude and ability to generate results. At the end of the one year period, the bank experienced tremendous growth in commercial terms. Therefore, the conclusion highlighted the need for looking at this segment of Human Resource with a greater degree of sensitivity for the organization to derive the maximum gains commercially. Intelligence, innovativeness, commitments, ability to work hard is not gender sensitive.

1.6 FORUM OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR :

The Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) in collaboration with Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), organised a national convention of women in public sector-during October 1989 in New Delhi. The convention was attended by 500 women delegates from all over India who put in their suggestions for the growth of women in public sector. They also felt the need to create a National Network, a support system that would enable them to transform these suggestions into reality with the help of the Public Enterprises and concerned agencies. Thus a Forum of Women in Public Sector (WIPS) was created under the aegis of SCOPE on 12th February, 1990 having a Central Apex Forum in Delhi and four regional Forums in Bombay (Western Region), Bangalore (Southern Region), Calcutta (Eastern Region) and Delhi (Northern Region) respectively. The formation of WIPS represents the first ever initiative made by the single largest organised sector in focusing the issues related to advancement of women. While on the one hand women have to take initiatives themselves to meet the job challenges and sustain career growth, managements of the enterprises also need to recognize the changing profile of the work force in enterprises and provide appropriate environment for their advancement and growth.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES : WIPS

- A) To promote the growth and development of Women in Public Sector.
- B) To assist the Public Undertakings in optimizing the full potential in women employees and,
- C) To play a catalytic role in improving the status of women in and around Public Undertakings.

Effective intra and inter-networking amongst the Public Undertakings was considered a pre-requisite for meeting the goals. In the first phase, some 200 Central Undertakings were contacted and were requested to nominate coordinators/representatives from

corporate office/regional and project units and an aggressive membership drive was launched from the mid 1990. There has been overwhelming response and spontaneous support from the Public Undertakings. Today this vibrant organization has over 10,000 members. It was considered necessary to have a national level interactive session with the coordinators/representatives of all the undertakings and regional forums to streamline the thinking which reflect the thinking of a wide cross section of women employees in the undertakings. The National Meet was organised on the 17th – 18th January, 1991 at Delhi which was attended by 300 delegates and a broad set of recommendations were arrived at. Since then National Meet of WIPS is an Annual Feature on 12th & 13th February. Based on these recommendations, a time bound Action Plan was drawn which include :

DATA BASE :

Authentic data base is a pre-requisite for meaningful appraisal of the status of women. A special task force was formed to coordinate. A model data sheet, prepared in close collaboration with the Computer Maintenance Corporation (CMS), was sent to individual enterprises through the Regional fora. The “WIPS CELL” in each enterprise collects comprehensive information on the profile, level and growth trend of the women employees in the respective enterprises. With a view to ensure continuous updating of data on women in PSUs in a comprehensive manner, the matter was taken up with the Department of Public Enterprises, (DPE) to incorporate a separate segment in the Human Resources Chapter in the Annual Survey of PSEs published by them. This was agreed by DPE and data was introduced by DPE from the year 1990~1991.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION :

It is important that various information dissemination activities, including training programmes, placement available etc. is shared within and among the enterprises.

Case Studies of successful Role models, and effective impact creating experiences of Human Resources Development in various enterprises need to be shared among the enterprises and among the Forums. Creation of a network at every level has been undertaken.

Organised dissemination of information was planned through “newsletters” by Regional Forums, symposiums and seminars which are organised periodically to ensure that information percolates to all cadres within and outside the enterprises. Apart from local and regional network national and international network has been initiated with institutions of excellence engaged in management development, entrepreneurship development and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

ATTITUDE SURVEY :

Attitude surveys have been initiated at the enterprise level for better appreciation of the aspirations, goals capabilities of the women employees and the constraints in their career advancement for relevant policy interventions by enterprises.

TRAINING :

The data base and the attitude surveys provide valuable inputs for the training requirements of the women employees. The training requirement is coordinated at the enterprise, Regional and Apex level. It is essential that professional, managerial and personal – development training is imparted in a planned manner at different levels.

Enterprise specific, sector and industry specific professional training and general management training is offered at the enterprise level. Every year WIPS identifies the issues that will require special attention in general and specific area through the feed back from the respective enterprises and organises training programmes.

Training programme meant for self-development of women employees are offered by the WIPS Apex Forum periodically in collaborations with other professional agencies. Some of the areas which need special attention such as communication skills, public speaking, strategic management and career development is being organised at various levels by the WIPS regional forums as well as the Apex Forum in order to cover large number of employees.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING :

Considering the vast scope that is emerging for entrepreneurship development in the small scale sector, women employees who wish to seek premature retirement and take up entrepreneurial venture, entrepreneurship development programme (EDP) are offered by WIPS. Depending on the need and scope, the EDP may be product specific or a general one or they may be either encouraged to start ancillaries for supplies to the Public Undertakings.

The PSUs could collaborate with National Institutes like Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad, National Institute of small Business and Entrepreneurship Development (NISBED) Delhi, State Level Institute of Entrepreneurship Development and Voluntary Organisations such as Association of Women Entrepreneurship of Karnataka (AWAKE) engaged in entrepreneurship development, exclusively for women at regional or sub-regional levels.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS :

Another important support to encourage women to sustain in their employment is setting up Day Care Centres/Crèche by the PSUs. This is being taken up as an essential requirement rather than treating it as a welfare measure since in the long run such measures will enable women to optimize their contribution to the Enterprise. Between 1991~2000, there has been 5% growth on the support systems in the PSEs.

“WIPS CELL” :

“WIPS CELL” have been set up at the enterprise level. The “WIPS CELL” need to have close rapport with the Top Management in the enterprise to get full support and

cooperation. They also need to develop a rapport with the local Govt. authorities and other voluntary agencies to undertake many more supportive activities to enhance the status of women in and around public undertakings.

PERFORMANCE AWARD :

The performance award scheme for Public Enterprise given annually should include advancement of women as one of the important criterion for assessment. WIPS announces performance award to various PSUs, WIPS Cells in Enterprises, to recognize the effort in implanting the Action Plan. Growing acceptance that the Women's Management abilities are valuable resources that no society or business can afford to ignore is gaining ground.

TASK FORCE CONCEPT :

To ensure implementation of the various plans within the time frame stipulated in the Action Plan 1991-1992, Task forces are formed. The findings of the Task Force is shared at time of the Annual Meet.

ACHIEVEMENT

5% growth in number of day care centers, 10% growth in training received by women, generation of Basic Data on Women by Department of Public Enterprises annually and increase in number of managerial positions, enhancing self confidence in women & increase in general awareness in women & women entering unconventional assignments.

The analysis of the data brings out the relatively low representation as a whole in public sector, public sector banks and insurance as well as railways. However the entry of private and foreign banks is changing the profile rather fast & women are making their presence slowly but steadily in managerial category.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS :

Success Strategies are discussed & shared amongst women in PSUs during the interactive sessions. These strategies are :

There is no standard prescription for success. To succeed, a woman must evolve an integrated self managing mechanism that encompasses work, home and the environment, manage her time better, develop new skills, improve her participation in professional meetings and network effectively.

(i) Identify Career Goals

Clearly identify personal career goals at an early stage, besides understanding organizational requirements in depth. Develop the ability to grasp the nature of qualifications, skills and experience required for different positions in career graph.

(ii) Take Risks

Taking a risk early in career could do the trick when it comes to being considered for a top job later on. The ability to change jobs smartly, to take up new assignments, or to switch over to a completely different business aspect, demonstrates your risk-taking ability, besides broadening your experience.

(iii) Improving Visibility

Employers' preconceived notions about women, such as their supposed inability to put in long hours at work or travel out of their home town, their frequent absence from work due to domestic compulsions. Women of crucial and challenging assignments leading to loss in visibility. Very few women are seen at professional seminars or discussions, and fewer still participate in activities that are organized after office hours. So, the name of the game is: work smart, but play well too!

(iv) Information Management

It never pays to close yourself into a cocoon and isolate yourself from what's happening around you. In these complex times, you need deliberate strategies to collect "intelligent" information, to find out what is happening within and outside the organization, and to develop contacts with those who matter. If you fail to do so, you could well end up like the competent and well-respected senior woman officer of a large insurance company who missed her promotion twice and finally had to resign, because she had no clue about the organizational realpolitik.

(v) Continuous Self Development

Improve yourself constantly, to steer smoothly in the Competitive Business Environment. Upgrade your skills and competencies, learn how to behave in different situations and master the techniques of survival at the work place.

(vi) Market Yourself

Develop deliberate strategies to market yourself. Make your presence felt, both at work and at professional gatherings out of the office. Don't get bogged down by your own perception of how a woman should or should not behave, or what a woman can and cannot do. Get your organization to provide you exposure through training and development.

2. PLAN OF ACTION :

Gender inequality in education & training ; reinforced by social attitudes, has largely contributed to occupational segregation, whereby men & women are streamed with different trades, profession & jobs. This is referred to as horizontal segregation. Significant changes in women's occupational profiles have, however, taken place during the last decade. Not only men & women have different jobs, there are differences in

the extent to which they are represented in the hierarchy of positions. Even in occupation dominated by women, men normally occupy more skilled & responsible & better paid positions. For example teaching profession. Majority are women while the top administrators are men. Similarly in health field. This is referred as vertical gender segregation.

GENERAL CONSIDERATION

- (1) New approaches to education system from an early age & develop a positive view of women's economic role, their capacity in decision making level & their effectiveness in achieving business objectives.
- (2) In view of continued occupational segregation & problems for qualified women moving to top levels in organizations, there is need for a joint effort by Governments, employers & associations in removing barrier for career advancement. This is crucial for Enterprise Competitiveness, general well being of society and optimizing the full potential of women in terms of knowledge skills, increasing levels of education & experience, large share of labour market, creativity & commitment.
- (3) Cultural biases, gender stereotypes and attitudes against women coupled with their not being viewed as primary income-earners are major road blocks in women's advancement. Consequently when a woman chooses not to accept a high level post, it is often assumed that all women would choose the same. Furthermore, the absence of clear job descriptions for higher echelon jobs, the existence of informal male networks, also tends to exclude women from top jobs.
- (4) Time management between work and family is a key gender issue. It often forces women into having to make difficult career and family choices. In that regard age and age discrimination is a critical concern. Often the period most significant for career development is when many women would be also involved in rearing a family and/or caring for aged family members. At the age a women is able to devote more time to work, she may be considered as too old for career advancement, even though she may have acquired many skills and be highly motivated.
- (5) Accordingly, effective human resource management reflected in career planning, adequate record keeping, formal systems for recruitment and clear job descriptions free of gender bias for higher echelon jobs, affect women positively, and also men and therefore enterprise effectiveness in general.
- (6) As a consequence of the common preconceptions of women's and men's roles, men are often perceived to be main earners and so are available both for working the long hours and for engaging in after-work socializing, which are often expected of managers. Because women are traditionally assigned the major share of family

responsibilities, it is often assumed that they are less committed or less willing to take on managerial roles involving long hours and traveling. Such preconceptions do not correspond to changing realities of today's world. Today women are providing an increasingly essential part of household income and, in some cases, the primary source. Up until now women, in some cases, have been managing demanding jobs and family care, despite the lack of adequate provision for child and elder care. In order to allow more women to enter managerial positions, support structures need to be established where there are none and strengthened where they are weak.

- (7) Men today are also interested in a better quality of life in terms of more involvement in family life and a more healthy lifestyle. This implies working less stressful time schedules or having more flexible working time arrangements. When women or men, opt to work part time at managerial levels, they should not be excluded from training opportunities and promotion considerations.
- (8) Supportive work environments and role models are crucial for women to enter, remain and advance in non-traditional jobs and to build a critical mass of women at higher levels in an enterprise. Education and awareness-raising for all are very important attitudinal changes and for women to acquire leadership roles. Assertiveness, decision making and multi-skill training help women to break down barriers to management jobs.
- (9) The dynamic changes being precipitated by global competition, market changes and technology provide increased opportunities for women to play strategic roles and therefore the values, mission and culture of the emerging new enterprises must reflect this reality and support the integration of equal opportunities in hiring, training and promotion prospects.
- (10) Regulatory mechanism and legal frameworks are necessary to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender. Affirmative actions and guidelines should be implemented to genuinely change attitudes while taking existing diversities into account. Enterprises, institutions and governments should take appropriate steps to ensure that employees are aware of obligations and right stemming from fundamental rights, equal employment laws, where applicable, and related legal requirements.
- (11) Recruitment and promotion procedures and criteria should be transparent and based objectively, on competence and merit, and not result in discrimination in practice. For this, it is essential that clearly defined job descriptions are established free of gender bias and that there is an objective system of job evaluation, and a well structured management performance appraisal system. It is good for enterprises, institutions, organizations and governments to set targets and goals and to monitor progress.

- (12) Women should be given opportunities for strategic assignments and job rotation to improve their promotion prospect to higher echelons of management. Upward mobility and career progression should be more flexible to allow women more opportunities based on their ability and competence. Career and succession planning and the tracking of women in enterprises and organizations help them gain visibility and experience, as well as provide a mechanism for monitoring their progress. Adopting objective policies of internal recruitment combined with the necessary job and coping skills training can give more opportunities to women to advance in their career.
- (13) Positive action and equal opportunities policies play an important role in leveling the playing field and ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for women in recruitment and promotion. These policies and actions help women bridge the gender gap through providing special training or assistance with family care needs. For those aspiring for management jobs, equal access to assertiveness and leadership training, as well as the development of decision making skills are especially relevant. Learning and on the job training should be accessible to women and men on the same terms.
- (14) More flexible working hours, adequate child and elder-care facilities and arrangements. A good balance between managerial and family / private life responsibilities not only benefits the health of the individual, the family and therefore society, but may well contribute to more creative and efficient management styles and better business decisions and results.
- (15) Ensuring women's equal access to networks both formal and informal, not only in the enterprise but beyond, can provide support and visibility, and as well be a source of invaluable information. Mentoring women, not only by other women, but also by men, could provide advice and assistance in copying skills as well as on business strategies, leadership, public speaking, assertiveness and team building skills. The benefits to the enterprise of a mentoring programme include increased job satisfaction, efficiency, creativity and reduced staff turnover.
- (16) Diversity management conceived in response to specific needs, career aspirations, contributions and lifestyles of the workforce, can be an important strategy to promote women to the top and may be good for business. As this is a new and evolving concept, however, further consideration into this new managerial approach, taking into account the cultural and social context and implications, should be given. When analysing the subject of diversity management and equal employment opportunities approaches, the focus should be on the actual results.
- (17) Commitment of top executives to gender equality, making middle managers aware and accountable and adopting a range of measures vital for ensuring the success of equal opportunities policies at the enterprise level. Recognition of best practice

through awards at the national level can be important incentives to enterprises in promoting women.

- (18) As running their own business is a potential area for opportunities for women, they should have access to business skills training and entrepreneurship development.
- (19) Information and technology are driving change and defining competition today. There is a need for a free information flow. Accordingly, more accurate researches and databases are critical for tracking women in management and for measuring and monitoring statistical information on the movement of women into higher level management positions. Such data should not be merely numerical, but also qualitative in order to capture changes related to specific gender concerns. Adequate databases and continuous updating are essential for internal accountability and compliance with law.
- (20) The development and dissemination of guidelines, as well as the publication of success stories and awards on best practices are important for encouraging interest in women in management issues. Information sharing, counseling centers to encourage women to take up non-traditional occupations and to move faster up the career ladder are critical for women themselves, as is information sharing among entrepreneurial women.
- (21) The governments, enterprises and employees' associations have an important role to play in raising awareness, developing strategies, sharing information, monitoring, implementing and strengthening equal opportunities for women. A tripartite approach is particularly strategic, especially for countries in transition and developing countries. Government, Enterprises and Associations need to find common ground and goals to improve the situation of women at work. These can include the promotion of relevant training so that women in management obtain a broad experience across the enterprise, as well as working time and dependant care arrangements to harmonize work and family life. Promoting policies on the prevention of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination is also important. In addition, enlisting support from educational institutions and the mass media can ensure a more effective promotion of gender equality.
- (22) Organizations are encouraged to carry out surveys and publicly promote best practices, demonstrating women's economic contribution and their effectiveness in implementing business strategies.
- (23) Governments should ensure that equal opportunity policies and measures are integrated in the general and vocational educational system to overcome stereotypic roles of men and women and create the opportunities for a wider range of occupational choices, especially in non-traditional areas.
- (24) Governments should set an example by implementing equal opportunity policies. More women should be appointed to high level positions.

3. SUMMARY AND SUGGESTED POINTS FOR DISCUSSIONS :

There are growing number of women opting for higher levels of education and are well represented in the areas of Science, Engineering, Technology, Medicines, Management etc. This proportion is constantly on the rise. However, their share in the Supervisory and Management positions in the public sector continues to be dismally low. Women are moving slowly in the corporate ladder and making their presence felt in diverse occupations. Their proportion in the financial sector has demonstrated remarkable growth. However, occupational segregation both horizontally and vertically remains a major problem. Though the proportion of women in the executive position has been on the increase, most of them seems to be clustered at lower level and in less vital areas. The access to top managerial job remains severely restricted.

Factors contributing to the slow pace of change is also perhaps due to the traditional views of men and women's social roles, even though in practice there have been far-reaching changes in women's participation in the labour market. This is largely from the recognition of the fact that primary responsibility for family care and welfare is that of women. They affect the choices for study courses and the type of jobs they seek as well as offered. At the same time, educational systems, mass media and recruitment and promotion procedures also have often institutionalized certain gender biases and unwittingly continue to perpetuate discriminatory practices with regard to women. The data presented in the paper brings out the efforts by the Government, Enterprises/Organizations & women themselves for the advancement of women. One of the greater challenges, however, is still how to make the structures and dynamics within an Organization more conducive and sensitive to gender equality concepts and practice. It is critical, therefore, to ensure that a greater proportion of women participate in decision making functions in all those areas that are relevant to economic development.

Table I**PUBLIC ENTERPRISES – CATEGORYWISE**

	Category	Total Enterprises As on 31.3.2001
I	Enterprises under Construction	16
II	Enterprises Manufacturing/Producing Goods	
1.	Steel	7
2.	Minerals & Metals	10
3.	Coal & Lignite	9
4.	Power	4
5.	Petroleum	13
6.	Fertilizers	8
7.	Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals	21
8.	Heavy Engineering	13
9.	Medium & Light Engineering	26
10.	Transportation Equipment	12
11.	Consumer Goods	12
12.	Agro-Based Industries	4
13.	Textiles	17
	Total II	156
III	Enterprises Rendering Services	
1.	Trading and Marketing Services	18
2.	Transportation Services	9
3.	Contract & Construction Services	10
4.	Industrial Development and Technical Consultancy Services	14
5.	Tourist Services	10
6.	Financial Services	7
7.	Telecommunication Services	2
8.	Section-25 Companies	8
	Total III	78
	Grand total (I+II+III)	250

Source : Public Enterprise Survey 2000~2001 published by the Dept. of Public Enterprises.

Table II**EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE ANNUAL EMOLUMENTS**

Year	No. of Employees (in Lakhs)	Average Annual per capita Emoluments (Rs.)	% increase in Average Annual Emoluments
1	2	3	4
1991-92	21.79	56508	14.90
1992-93	21.52	64983	15.00
1993-94	20.70	72043	10.86
1994-95	20.62	82517	14.54
1995-96	20.52	106876	29.52
1996-97	20.08	110662	3.54
1997-98	19.59	129987	17.46
1998-99	19.00	147482	13.46
1999-00	18.06	168339	21.83
2000-01	17.42	219546	30.42

Source : Public Enterprise Survey published by the Dept. of Public Enterprises.

Table III**TABLE OF PSU WITH TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN IN THE
WORK FORCE IN 1990-91 & 2000-2001**

S.No.	Categories	1990-91	2000-2001
1.	Enterprises Under Construction	47	128
2.	Steel	11191	11160
3.	Minerals & Metals	3199	2985
4.	Coal and Lignite	16025	32824
5.	Power	243	2283
6.	Petroleum	5840	7342
7.	Fertilizers	2154	2099
8.	Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals	1801	2120
9.	Heavy Engineering	6077	4097
10.	Medium & Light Engineering	15291	14752
11.	Transportation Equipment	2841	2683
12.	Consumer Goods	2540	1199
13.	Agro Based Industries	267	134
14.	Textiles	3485	3175
15.	Trading and Marketing Services	1596	4268
16.	Transportation Services	2800	3114
17.	Contract & Construction Services	225	415
18.	Ind.Dev.&Tech. Cons. Services	1157	1520
19.	Tourist Services	1	1331
20.	Financial Services	357	712
21.	Telecommunication Services	12531	453
22.	Others	209	320
	Grand Total	89877	99114

Source : Public Enterprise Survey published by the Dept. of Public Enterprises.

Table IV**BREAK UP OF TOTAL WOMEN EMPLOYMENT**

S.No.	Categories	Managerial & Supervisory	Total
1.	Enterprises under Construction	11	47
2.	Steel	788	11191
3.	Minerals and Metals	184	3199
4.	Coal and Lignite	1410	16025
5.	Power	48	243
6.	Petroleum	1392	5840
7.	Fertilizers	294	2154
8.	Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals	198	1801
9.	Heavy Engineering	1022	6077
10.	Medium and Light Engineering	2932	15291
11.	Transportation	348	2841
12.	Consumer Goods	136	2540
13.	Agro- Based Industries	14	267
14.	Textiles	23	3485
15.	Trading and Marketing Services	353	1596
16.	Transportation	845	2800
17.	Contract and Construction Services	41	225
18.	Industrial Dev. And Tech. Consultancy	241	1157
19.	Tourist Services	0	1
20.	Financial Services	112	357
21.	Telecommunication	721	12531
22.	Section 25 Companies	45	209
	Grand Total	11158	89877

Source : Annual Public Enterprises survey: 1990-1991

Table IV (a)**BREAK UP OF TOTAL WOMEN EMPLOYMENT**

S.No.	Categories	Managerial & Supervisory	Total
1.	Enterprises under Construction	29	128
2.	Steel	259	11161
3.	Minerals and Metals	416	2985
4.	Coal and Lignite	2636	32824
5.	Power	581	2283
6.	Petroleum	3144	7342
7.	Fertilizers	679	2099
8.	Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals	438	2120
9.	Heavy Engineering	1270	4097
10.	Medium and Light Engineering	3121	14752
11.	Transportation	536	2683
12.	Consumer Goods	216	1199
13.	Agro- Based Industries	11	134
14.	Textiles	409	3175
15.	Trading and Marketing Services	1162	4268
16.	Transportation	2690	3114
17.	Contract and Construction Services	206	415
18.	Industrial Dev. And Tech. Consultancy	775	1520
19.	Tourist Services	1077	1331
20.	Financial Services	308	712
21.	Telecommunication	149	453
22.	Section 25 Companies	93	320
	Grand Total	20905	99114

Source : Annual Public Enterprises Survey 2000-2001

Table V**GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT IN FINANCIAL SERVICES, INSURANCE,
REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

(Lakhs)

Year	Total				Employment of Women			
	Total	Organized Sector			Total	Organized Sector		
		Public	Private	Total		Public	Private	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1983	22.30	8.72	2.07	10.79	1.40	0.87	0.15	1.02
1987-88	27.70 (4.4)	10.95 (4.7)	2.38 (2.8)	13.33 (4.3)	2.60 (13.2)	1.23 (7.2)	0.22 (8.0)	1.45 (7.4)
1993-94	36.60 (4.8)	12.73 (2.5)	2.82 (2.9)	15.55 (2.6)	4.30 (8.8)	1.59 (4.4)	0.32 (6.4)	1.92 (4.7)
1999-2000	49.80 (5.3)	12.94 (0.3)	3.58 (4.9)	16.52 (1.7)	5.70 (4.8)	1.79 (2.4)	0.56 (11.8)	2.34 (3.4)

(Figures in brackets are the annual growth rates over preceding periods)

Source : NSSO Surveys & Employment Reviews-Ministry of Labour

Table VI

**STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN FINANCIAL SERVICES
IN THE ORGANIZED SECTOR**

(Percentages to total in each column)

S.No.	Activity	All Persons		Women	
		1985-86	1995-96	1985-86	1995-96
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	Deposit activities	75.4	70.4	75.8	65.6
2.	Other credit and banking activities	4.5	6.0	2.8	4.8
3.	Securities & other financial services	0.6	1.0	0.6	1.5
4.	Total Financial Services (1+2+3)	80.4	77.3	79.3	71.9
5.	Provident Services	1.5	1.5	2.3	2.0
6.	Insurance (Life)	5.8	7.7	6.0	11.1
7.	Insurance (Other than life)	4.0	5.1	4.6	6.0
8.	Total provident and insurance services (5+6+7)	11.3	14.3	12.9	19.1
9.	Legal services	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.3
10.	Real estate, renting & leasing, lotteries and other business services	7.6	7.5	6.9	7.7
11.	Total financial, insurance, real estate, legal, and business services	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : Employment Reviews, 1985-86 and 1995-96, Ministry of Labour

Table VII**SHARE OF WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT IN BANKS**

Name of Bank	Total Employees	Women Employees	% of Women
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
a) State of Bank of India & its Associates			
State Bank of India	2,36,993	24,361	10.3
State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur	15,046	1,001	6.6
State of Bank of Hyderabad	14,269	1,806	12.6
State Bank of Indore	6,831	629	9.2
State Bank of Patiala	13,108	1,631	12.4
State Bank of Saurashtra	7,993	951	11.9
State Bank of Travancore	13,049	3,589	27.5
b) Other Public Sector Banks			
Allahabad Bank	22,606	1,828	8.0
Andhra Bank	14,603	3,106	21.3
Bank of Baroda	45,935	6,107	13.3
Canara Bank	54,703	11,155	20.4
Central Bank of India	49,702	6,429	12.9
Corporation Bank	9,615	2,322	24.1
Dena Bank	15,109	2,031	13.4
Bank of India	52,518	7,431	14.1
Indian Bank	26,994	3,871	14.3
Bank of Maharashtra	16,596	3,138	18.9
Oriental Bank of Commerce	14,238	1,820	12.8
Indian Overseas Bank	28,347	4,385	15.5
Punjab & Sind Bank	12,167	866	7.1
Punjab National Bank	65,705	7,980	12.1
Syndicate Bank	36,266	7,732	21.3
UCO Bank	32,903	2,896	8.8
Union Bank of India	30,901	4,775	15.4
United Bank of India	22,041	1,343	6.0
Vijaya Bank	14,138	2,698	19.0
All Public Sector Banks (a+b)	8,86,582	1,17,509	13.2

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
c) Indian Private Sector Banks			
City Union Bank	1,376	198	14.3
Global Trust Bank	1,085	306	28.2
ICICI Bank	1,342	543	40.5
IDBI	331	77	23.2
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	2,049	236	11.5
The Benares State Bank	1,390	97	6.9
The Laxmi Vilas Bank	1,996	281	14.0
The Nedungadi Bank	1,651	16	0.9
The Ratnakar Bank	555	44	7.9
The Sangli Bank	2,271	337	14.8
The South Indian Bank	3,770	845	22.4
The United Western Bank	3,393	210	6.2
Times Bank	639	253	39.6
Vysya Bank	5,721	945	16.5
d) Foreign Banks			
Sonali Bank	42	6	14.3
Arab Bangladesh	18	7	38.9
Dresdener Bank AG	47	13	27.6
Oman International Bank S.A.O.G	75	21	28.0
Barclays Bank PLC	65	25	38.5
Bank of Tokyo	323	106	32.8
BSBC	2,512	924	36.8
ANZ Grindlays	3,251	973	29.9
American Express Bank	434	134	30.9
Citibank	1,288	491	38.1

Source : Indian Banking Year book 1998 reproduced in *Equal Remuneration in India Law and Practice on Gender Based Wage Differentials with Special reference to the Banking Sector*, ILO, August 2000. The data relate to 1998, except for The State Bank of India, Andhra Bank, Punjab National, Global Trust Bank, ICICI Bank, Times Bank, ANZ Grindlays Bank, American Express Bank and Citibank which had been updated to 2000.

Table VIII

**DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES OF SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS
ACCORDING TO CATEGORY MARCH 2000**

RURAL

BANK GROUP	TOTAL EMPLOYEES				OF WHICH : FEMALES			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State Bank of India and Its Associates	12,662	19,907	14,601	47,170	332	1,527	880	2,739
Nationalized Banks	26,047	42,373	25,117	93,537	645	3,277	1,901	5,823
Foreign Banks	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Regional Rural Banks	18,964	16,245	11,789	46,998	181	642	42	865
Other Scheduled Commercial Banks	1,802	3,356	1,522	6,680	81	296	48	425
All Scheduled Commercial Banks	59,475	31881	53,029	194,385	1,239	5,742	2,871	9,852

SEMI-URBAN

BANK GROUP	TOTAL EMPLOYEES				OF WHICH : FEMALES			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State Bank of India	19,877	46,748	24,390	91,015	616	7,014	1,853	9,483
Nationalized Banks	26,078	51,718	22,394	100,190	1,078	8,002	2,334	11,414
Foreign Banks	10	12	5	27	1	4	-	5
Regional Rural Banks	5,883	5,931	2,577	14,391	246	849	71	1,166
Other Scheduled Commercial Banks	5,291	8,949	3,517	17,757	406	2,015	347	2,768
All Scheduled Commercial Banks	57,139	113,358	52,883	223,380	2,347	17,884	4,605	24,836

URBAN/METROPOLITAN

BANK GROUP	TOTAL EMPLOYEES				OF WHICH : FEMALES			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State Bank of India	42,913	88,886	36,214	168,013	2,168	20,606	2,923	25,697
Nationalized Banks	105,431	185,722	70,826	362,029	8,341	48,898	7,092	64,331
Foreign Banks	8,867	4,447	1,261	14,575	2,403	1,988	37	4,428
Regional Rural Banks	2,358	2,356	903	5,617	143	566	422	751
Other Scheduled Commercial Banks	15,156	17,431	6,045	38,632	2,292	5,193	432	7,917
All Scheduled Commercial Banks	174,775	298,842	115,249	588,866	15,347	77,251	10,526	103,124

ALL INDIA

BANK GROUP	TOTAL EMPLOYEES				OF WHICH : FEMALES			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State Bank of India	75,452	155,541	75,205	306,198	3,116	29,147	5,656	37,919
Nationalized Banks	157,606	279,813	118,337	555,756	10,065	60,177	11,327	81,568
Foreign Banks	8,877	4,459	1,266	14,602	2,404	1,992	37	4,433
Regional Rural Banks	27,205	24,532	15,269	67,006	570	2,057	155	2,782
Other Scheduled Commercial Banks	22,249	29,736	11,084	63,069	2,779	7,504	827	11,110
All Scheduled Commercial Banks	291,389	494,081	221,161	1006,631	18,933	100,877	18,002	137,812

Source : Banking Statistics, 2000, Reserve Bank of India.

Table IX

**STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES OF SCHEDULED
COMMERCIAL BANKS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY MARCH 2000**

REGION	TOTAL EMPLOYEES				OF WHICH : FEMALES			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total	Officers	Clerks	Sub-ordinates	Total
Northern Region	53,396	84,216	39,499	177,111	3,374	15,263	3,444	22,081
North Eastern Region	6,548	10,768	5,654	22,970	238	1,604	355	2,197
Eastern Region	45,742	78,096	38,420	162,258	1,510	6,654	1,937	10,101
Central Region	46,460	70,875	36,923	154,258	1,031	5,947	1,935	8,913
Western Region	56,963	105,927	45,137	208,027	5,898	31,717	3,417	41,032
Southern Region	82,280	144,199	55,528	282,007	6,882	39,692	6,914	53,488
All India	291,389	494,081	221,161	1006,631	18,933	100,877	18,002	137,812

Source : Banking Statistics 2000, Reserve Bank of India

Table X**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES BY CATEGORY**

Year (March of)	Public Sector Banks				Private Sector Banks			
	Officers	Clerks	Sub- staff	All	Officers	Clerks	Sub- staff	All
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1990	3.4	15.9	5.5	10.4	4.4	15.4	4.2	10.4
1991	4.0	17.6	5.7	11.4	3.7	14.6	3.1	9.6
1992	4.4	19.2	8.5	12.9	5.3	20.7	7.3	14.1
1993	4.4	19.0	7.4	12.5	4.9	20.6	9.2	14.2
1994	4.6	19.4	6.8	12.6	5.0	21.4	8.9	14.6
1995	4.7	19.5	7.2	12.8	5.3	21.2	11.5	15.0
1996	5.0	19.7	7.3	13.0	6.0	21.9	9.4	15.0
1997	5.2	21.0	9.6	14.2	7.0	22.9	9.2	15.7
1998	5.2	21.0	10.5	14.4	7.0	23.2	22.0	18.2
1999	5.3	21.2	10.4	14.4	7.4	24.0	12.0	16.7
2000	5.4	21.2	10.6	14.5	7.1	24.1	9.5	16.1

Based on data collected from the Indian Banks Association. The data relate to member banks only.

Table XI**EMPLOYMENT IN LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION**

Year (1 April of)	No. of Employees						No. of Agents
	Class I Officers	Development Officers	Supervisory & Clerical Staff	Sub-staff	Total in LIC	Total in Insurance Sector	Active Agents
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1990	10,133	14,107	53,802	10,191	88,243		
1995	13,937	17,617	77,591	12,265	1,21,410	5,44,895	5,19,504
1996	14,029	17,897	80,964	12,846	1,25,736	5,37,117	5,13,897
1997	14,060	18,332	81,458	12,770	1,26,620	5,60,636	5,33,133
1998	14,520	18,832	80,061	12,206	1,25,619	5,91,198	5,58,517
1999	15,811	18,111	78,897	11,566	1,24,385	6,28,301	5,98,217
2000	16,222	19,474	76,804	10,367	1,22,867	7,14,615	6,83,190

Source : Annual Reports of Life Insurance Corporation for various years

Table XII**RAILWAY EMPLOYEES**

Group-wise break-up	As on 31-03-2000	As on 31-03-2001
Group A	7,722	7,862
Group B	6,863	6,970
Group C :		
(i) Workshop & Artisan	3,34, 837	3,30,129
(ii) Running	87,572	84,671
(iii) Others	4,86,194	4,85,518
Group D :		
(i) Workshop & Artisan	1,72,747	1,68,166
(ii) Others	4,81,257	4,61,992
Total	15,77,192	15,45,308

Revised

Department-wise break-up	As on 31-03-2000	As on 31-03-2001
Administration	50,030	49,237
Accounts	30,821	30,342
Engineering	4,17,548	4,04,554
Signal and Telecom	74,715	76,327
Transportation	1,79,002	1,76,988
Commercial	1,15,292	1,13,672
Mechanical Engineering	3,78,315	3,68,078
Stores	34,632	34,361
Electrical	1,69,701	1,66,590
Medical	53,784	52,400
R.P.F	55,710	55,683
Railway Board/other Railway Offices, including RPSF	17,642	17,076
Total	15,77,192	15,45,308

ANNUAL REPORT- INDIAN RAILWAYS

Table XIII (a)**RAILWAY FEMALE EMPLOYEES**

As on March 2000

Department	Group 'C' Staff									
	Other than Workshop and Artisan Staff									
	Officers (Groups 'A' & 'B')	Workshop and Artisan Staff	Clerks	Steno- graphers	Nurses	Teachers	Others	Workshop and Artisan staff	Other than Works hop and artisan staff	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Administration	88	1	6291	523	7	2029	611	5	2387	11,992
Accounts	122	1	4180	139	—	—	564	28	716	5750
Engineering	1	213	2122	130	12	14	871	1759	6404	11,526
Signal and Telecommunication	9	113	655	76	—	—	257	127	654	1891
Transportation	5	6	1099	40	—	4	548	—	2865	4566
Commercial	15	—	1901	60	—	17	2306	—	4293	8592
Mechanical Engineering	6	1878	1952	123	63	14	385	3091	1911	9423
Stores	14	38	1599	55	—	—	275	80	1165	3226
Electrical	8	412	1249	92	—	—	538	706	784	3789
Medical	497	—	655	36	4269	17	955	75	8421	14925
Rly. Protection Force	5	—	228	15	—	3	211	—	91	583
Railway Board & other Railway Officers	125	1	332	241	10	4	73	—	184	970
Total	895	2663	22263	1580	4361	2102	7594	5871	29874	77203

ANNUAL REPORT- INDIAN RAILWAYS

Table XIII (b)**RAILWAYS – FEMALE EMPLOYEES**As on 31st March 2000

Railway	Group 'C' Staff									
	Other than Workshop and Artisan Staff									
	Officers (Groups 'A' & 'B')	Workshop and Artisan Staff	Clerks	Steno- graphers	Nurses	Teachers	Others	Workshop and Artisan staff	Other than Works hop and artisan staff	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Central	125	62	3568	252	485	180	496	807	4204	10185
Eastern	102	110	2322	59	687	121	526	360	1967	6254
Northern	156	117	2779	210	521	161	913	190	2556	7603
North Eastern	23	10	631	7	283	77	167	242	1318	2758
Southeast Frontier	33	18	1,396	42	345	87	121	64	1546	3651
Southern	63	465	3,338	271	499	199	1,563	1098	3561	11057
South Central	75	133	1750	157	361	421	447	359	2667	6376
South Eastern	60	1526	2204	86	500	502	2006	1852	4614	13550
Western	97	19	3088	175	494	290	850	796	6510	12319
Chittaranjan Locomotive Works	4	44	136	2	67	—	259	34	203	749
Diesel Component Works	3	36	85	8	10	1	16	8	30	196
Diesel Locomotive Works	5	9	65	6	35	59	16	—	141	333
Integral Coach Factory	15	71	391	33	16	—	95	49	295	965
Wheel & Axle Plant	5	7	68	13	15	—	25	5	31	159
Rail Coach Factory	3	35	105	18	33	—	23	7	47	271
Rly. Board and other Rly. Offices	125	1	332	241	10	4	73	—	184	970
Total	895	2663	22263	1580	4361	2102	7594	5871	29874	77203

ANNUAL REPORT- INDIAN RAILWAYS

Table XIII (c)**RAILWAYS – FEMALE EMPLOYEES**31st March 2001

Railway	Group 'C' Staff									
	Other than Workshop and Artisan Staff									
	Officers (Groups 'A' & 'B')	Workshop and Artisan Staff	Clerks	Steno- graphers	Nurses	Teachers	Others	Workshop and Artisan staff	Other than Works hop and artisan staff	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Central	119	88	3,419	217	468	168	583	815	4,641	10,518
Eastern	95	102	2,069	62	645	147	492	554	2,446	6,612
Northern	145	126	2,806	209	534	160	926	193	2,655	7,744
North Eastern	36	1	615	7	269	89	160	130	1,400	2,807
Southeast Frontier	47	14	1,090	33	269	68	102	54	1,303	2,980
Southern	123	412	3,342	244	456	188	2,203	1,026	3,245	11,239
North Central	70	704	2,076	108	374	188	484	1,159	2,808	8,550
North Eastern	80	1,180	1,800	71	170	475	1,647	1,502	3,502	11,125
Western	93	102	2,438	153	481	243	1,535	879	5,367	11,291
Chittaranjan Locomotive Works	4	58	144	1	65	—	255	35	196	758
Diesel Component Works	3	35	82	8	10	1	15	8	31	193
Diesel Locomotive Works	4	7	53	17	36	54	18	—	135	324
Integral Coach Factory	9	10	313	33	35	—	222	109	250	981
Wheel & Axle Plant	9	7	52	16	14	—	33	7	36	174
Rail Coach Factory	4	44	107	18	40	—	28	5	59	288
Rly. Board and other Rly. Offices	113	—	194	241	10	4	73	—	184	819
Total	953	2,980	20,699	1,438	4,077	1,985	8,776	6,866	28,638	76,412

ANNUAL REPORT- INDIAN RAILWAYS

Table XIII (d)**RAILWAY FEMALE EMPLOYEES**As on 31ST March, 2001

Department	Group 'C' Staff									
	Other than Workshop and Artisan Staff									
	Officers (Groups 'A' & 'B')	Workshop and Artisan Staff	Clerks	Steno- graphers	Nurses	Teachers	Others	Workshop and Artisan staff	Other than Works hop and artisan staff	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Administration	104	-	5,789	498	2	1,941	1,025	53	2,051	11,460
Accounts	119	1	3,679	131	—	—	784	20	579	5,313
Engineering	3	163	2,052	117	9	15	893	2,028	5,750	11,030
Signal and Telecommunication	12	154	636	76	—	—	239	166	603	1,886
Transportation	7	5	1,079	37	—	4	703	243	1,839	3,917
Commercial	27	—	2,358	46	—	—	2,437	43	4,001	8,912
Mechanical Engineering	6	1,594	1,735	105	50	8	719	2,928	2,079	9,224
Stores	15	47	1,403	66	—	—	135	201	937	2,804
Electrical	7	1,046	1,072	71	—	—	587	701	872	4,326
Medical	534	—	476	38	4,006	13	849	48	9,655	16,054
Rly. Protection Force	6	—	229	12	—	—	332	—	88	667
Railway Board & other Railway Officers	113	—	194	241	10	4	73	—	184	819
Total	953	2,980	20,699	1,438	4,077	1,985	8,776	6,886	28,638	76,412

ANNUAL REPORT –INDIAN RAILWAYS

Report of the 1st round of National Level Consultation held on Women in Governance - PSUs on 27th January, 2003 at IIC, New Delhi

The National Commission for Women organised the National Level Consultation on 27th January, 2003. Invitations were issued to women from wide cross section of Public Undertakings, Public Sectors, Banks & Insurance. The Background Note was prepared by Dr. Reena Ramachandran, Director General, Fortune Institute of International Business. Prof. Karuna Chanana, Professor, Jawahar Lal Nehru University with vast experience in dealing with women's issues and Ms. Mythilli Rangarajan, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Senior most women in SBI, were invited to be discussants and make critical observations on the Background Note for Consultation.

The opening session was chaired by the Chairperson, NCW – Mrs. Poornima Advani and the panelists were Mrs. Uike, Member, NCW, two expert invitees– Prof. Karuna Chanana & Mrs. Mythilli Rangarajan.

Dr. Poornima Advani gave the welcome address briefly explaining the purpose of the consultation meet and the parameters of the discussions that would follow.

The objectives of the meet being :

1. To get first hand information for policy recommendation;
2. To aim at better, gender sensitive Government; and
3. Document good examples e.g. positive discrimination.

Ms. Uike briefly explained the NCW's concern for women in rural sector and handicapped women & requested the participants to deliberate on this issue.

Dr. Reena Ramachandran presented the background paper providing statistical analysis of women representation in PSUs, Financial Services & Railways. Various strategies were discussed evolving a plan of action for improving the critical mass and greater women representation at the decision making level. Following were the consideration for the plan of action :

1. New approaches to education system from an early age & develop a positive view of women's economic role.
2. Joint efforts by Governments, Employers & Associations required in removing barriers for career advancement.
3. Proper job descriptions & spelling out skills required for top management jobs.
4. Mentoring not only by women but by men.
5. Diversity Management as an important Strategy.

Observations by Experts :

- Southern Region & Maharashtra stand out as far as "Women in higher education" is concerned vis-a-vis to Northern Region. This is a reflection of Social practices in these regions.
- Concept of Informal visibility & formal visibility. Women should not shy away from "Informal Visibility".
- Traditional skills of women are put to use in Organizations. E.g. Public Relations/ Desk Jobs.
- Child Care facilities/policies should be gender neutral. Associating this with women should be stopped.
- Flexi time should be considered. This has been considered in the west now because "space" is a limitation.
- Women should get 5 years of Sabbatical Leave.
- There are certain 'internal' as well as external barriers for women.
- Predominance of women employment in Foreign Banks because younger generation is more career oriented, more focussed, market & project themselves.
- Another point was "can we build a Cadre of rural women to manage rural areas. Product selling & marketing of Banking services can be done by this Cadre.
- Formalizing the "sabbatical" concept would help women.
- Ms. Rangarajan agreed with Dr. Reena Ramachandran on the strategies of success for women viz – Identification of career, Improving Visibility, Taking risk early in life, Information Management, Continuous Self Development & Marketing yourself.

This was followed by active participation and deliberation on the following each point listed for discussion in the preceding Background Note.

SUGGESTED POINTS FOR DISCUSSION :

- 1. How can information/data collection be improved for tracking women's progress in managerial job?**
- 2. Where are the main obstacles to women career development in the enterprise?**
- 3. What workplace strategies have been successful in promoting women to management positions?**
- 4. How should enterprise or corporate "cultures" (management style, work systems, working time, attitudes, etc.) be changed to better accommodate the**

needs of women and allow them to contribute better, their knowledge and talent? How should women be helped to cope and manage better in existing structures?

5. What policy intervention by the Government and Enterprises are required to improve the career opportunities for women?
6. To what extent have approaches such as diversity management, had an impact on women's status.
7. How has the concept of positive action been understood and used to promote women in professional and managerial jobs?
8. What are the most effective measures in addressing segregation by gender (men's job versus women's job) and in particular, the issues of men being perceived as more suitable than women for managerial job?
9. What is the role played by enterprise and women's association to promote women in management/governance?
10. Should the concept of reservation be introduced in Public Sector?

Suggestions/Recommendations arising out of the Interaction during the Consultation are enumerated below for appropriately incorporating in the Document to be prepared for final round of National Consultation on 7th March, 2003.

Recommendations :

Gender inequality in education & training; reinforced by social attitudes, has largely contributed to occupational segregation, whereby men & women are streamed with different trades, profession & jobs. This is referred to as horizontal segregation. Significant changes in women's occupational profiles have, however, taken place during the last decade. Not only men & women have different jobs, there are differences in the extent to which they are represented in the hierarchy of positions. Even in occupation dominated by women, men normally occupy more skilled & responsible & better paid positions. For example teaching profession. Majority are women while the top administrators are men. Similarly in health field. This is referred as vertical gender segregation.

The recommendations have been categorized in terms of those to be implemented at the Enterprise Level, those requiring Policy Intervention at the level of Government and those where women themselves need to handle. These recommendations are being made keeping in view the need for improving the critical mass of women at Managerial and Supervisory Level in various sectors and enhancing their presence in the Decision making Level.

A. ENTERPRISE LEVEL :

1. Information and Data Collection :

- 1.1 The Annual Report of Public Undertakings, Banks, Insurance and Railways need to have information on women, both quantitative & qualitative.

The format for such data should be redesigned so as to get relevant information at all levels of positions held by women.

- 1.2 Effective Human Resource Management reflected in Career Planning, adequate record keeping for tracking out the career advancement of women is considered crucial. Education and awareness raising for all are very important for attitudinal changes for women to acquire leadership role.

2. Training :

- 2.1 Gender Sensitization programme for men should be compulsory right from the induction stage which would continue to the Top Management Level.

- 2.2 Training for women in capacity building, assertiveness, Decision Making, Public Speaking, Team Building skills and multi-skill training help women to break down barriers to Management Jobs.

- 2.3 Special programmes to be designed for business skills, training and entrepreneurship development.

- 2.4 Enterprises to carry out surveys and publically promote best practices.

- 2.5 Introduce "Equal Opportunity Policy" as one of the primary objective of the enterprises and commitment of Top Executive to gender equality, Middle Managers aware and accountable and adopting a range of measures vital for ensuring the success of equal opportunity policy at the enterprise level.

3. Job Clarity & Career :

- 3.1 Recruitment and promotion procedures and criteria to be transparent and based objectively on competence and merit. Clearly defined job description is required to be established.

- 3.2 Deliberate efforts by giving women opportunities for handling critical assignments and job rotation to improve promotion prospects to higher echelons of Management. Targets and goals need to be set for tracking career advancement of women with an in-build system of Monitoring implementation.

4. Support System :

Many women opt out of challenging assignments due to Inadequate or non availability of support systems/facilities. These are essential not only for women

but also for working men. Setting up Day care centers as an essential facility should be made mandatory. The activity could be outsourced.

5. **Flexible Working Hours :**

Flexible working hours for all employees with small children with a view to facilitate greater demand of time that women need to handle during child bearing and subsequent stage. Enterprises can device appropriate mechanism depending upon the profile of their work force.

6. **Gender Audit :**

Enterprises should develop a self audit mechanism for achieving gender equality and implementation of the various strategies to achieve this end.

7. **Recruitment and Promotion :**

The 1986 instructions be noted and implemented. The selection panel to necessarily have a women representation; if not available within the enterprise then by inducting from outside.

8. **Sabbatical Leave :**

It could be unpaid leave of absence, maximum twice in the entire service, for a total period of five years, for those who have put in a minimum period of service, say 3 years, in the company. It assures lien to her job, enabling her to return to her job at the stage where she left and not force her to quit the job permanently. Enterprises to evolve appropriate policies.

9. **Mentoring :**

Ensuring women's equal access to networks both formal and informal, not only in the enterprise but beyond, can provide support and visibility, and as well as be a source of invaluable information. Mentoring women, not only by other women, but also by men, could provide advice and assistance in copying skills as well as on business strategies, leadership, public speaking, assertiveness and team building skills. The benefits to the enterprise of a mentoring programme include increased job satisfaction, efficiency, creativity and reduced staff turnover.

B. AT THE LEVEL OF WOMEN :

1. **Identify Career Goals :**

Clearly identify personal career goals at an early stage, besides understanding organizational requirements in depth. Develop the ability to grasp the nature of qualifications, skills and experience required for different positions in career graph.

2. **Take Risks :**

Taking a risk early in career could do the trick when it comes to being considered for a top job later on. The ability to change jobs smartly, to take up new

assignments, or to switch over to a completely different business aspect, demonstrates risk-taking ability, besides broad barring experience.

3. **Improving Visibility :**

Employers labour under preconceived and very often, mistaken, notions about women, such as their supposed inability to put in long hours at work or travel out of their home town, their frequent absence from work due to domestic compulsions. These preconceived notions go a long way in depriving women of crucial and challenging assignments, which in turn leads to a loss in visibility. Very few women are seen at professional seminars or discussions and fewer still participate in activities that are organized after office hours. So, the name of the game is : work smart, but play well too!

4. **Information Management :**

In these complex times, women need deliberate strategies to collect "intelligent" information, to find out what is happening within and outside the organization, and to develop contacts with those who matter.

5. **Continuous Self Development :**

Improve constantly, to steer smoothly in the Competitive Business Environment. Upgrade skills and competencies, learn how to behave in different situations and master the techniques of survival at the work place.

6. **Market Yourself :**

Develop deliberate strategies to market yourself. Make your presence felt, both at work and at professional gatherings out of the office. Don't get bogged down by your own perception of how a woman should or should not behave, or what a woman can and cannot do. Make efforts to sensitize organization to provide you exposure through training and development.

C. AT THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT :

1. **Data Base :**

To make mandatory the publication of data on women both quantitative and qualitative (the recruitment, promotion, training both within the country and abroad, critical gender ratios) in the annual survey of Public Enterprises published by the Deptt. of Public Enterprises, the annual reports of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance, Department of Women and Child Development. Publishing data and updating to be made a statutory requirement.

2. **Job Clarity :**

Instructions to be issued by the Department of Public Enterprises for job description to be clearly spelt out for different levels of Management to facilitate women

understanding the job criteria & have better appreciation & prepare themselves for such positions.

3. **Gender Audit :**

Compulsory system for gender audit by external agencies like National Commission for Women.

4. **Recognition for Best Practices :**

Recognition of best practices by instituting Awards at the national level can be an important incentive to enterprise in promoting women. Special recognition for enterprises contributing to growth and development of women during Annual Excellence Award organised by the Department of Public Enterprises/SCOPE.

5. **National Policy on Women :**

The National policy on Women to take into account, adequate support system, flexible work system, and adequate programmes for skills, training and upgradation of knowledge, special recognition of contribution by women.

6. **Awareness Creation :**

NCW to devise a system to develop Case Studies and a system for presentation of role model for awareness building. Mass media help to contribute in this direction.

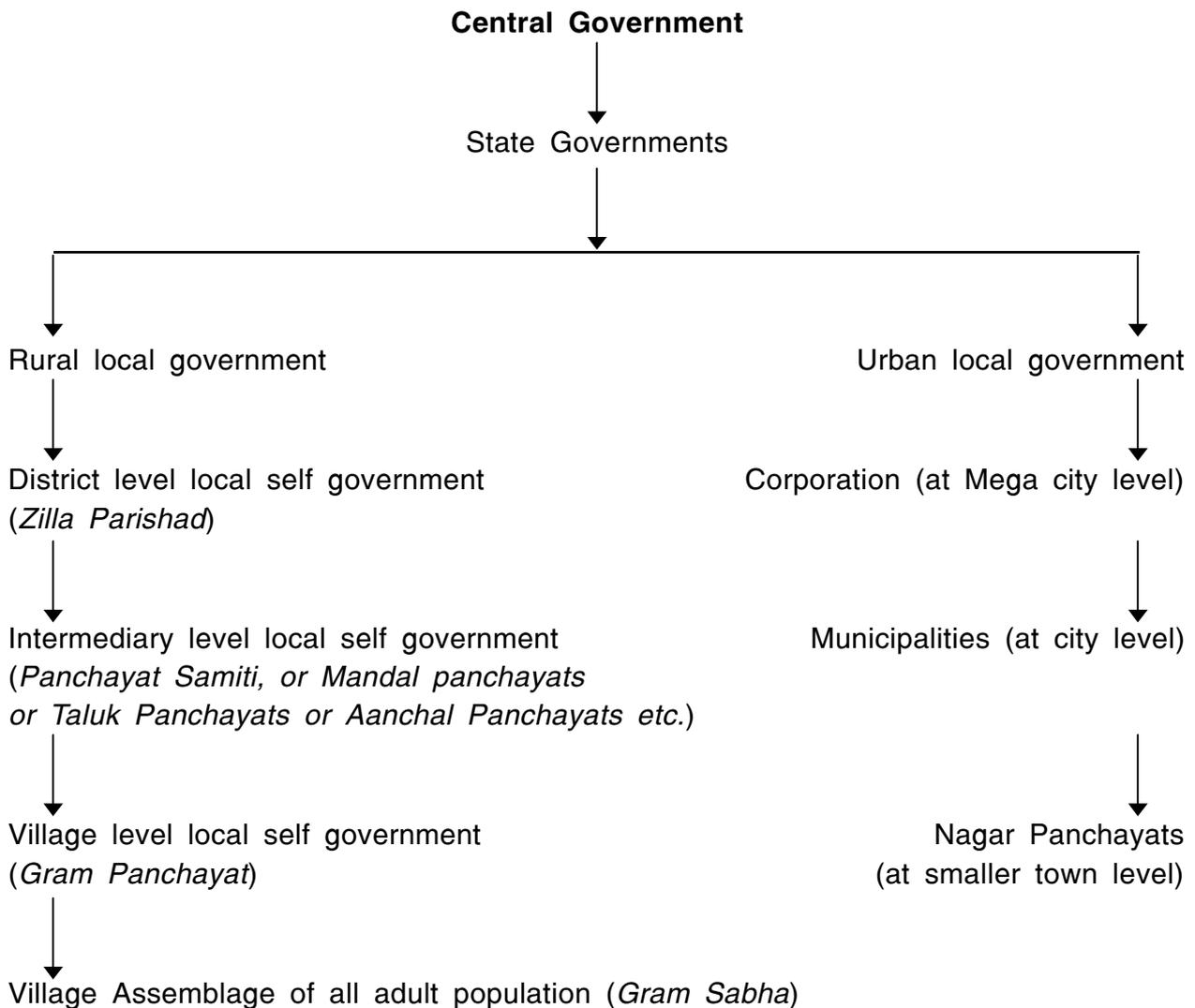
6. **Reservation for Women :**

Implementation of the various suggestions is expected to contribute enormously toward achieving gender equality but the process is long. Women constitute valuable component in the society and the work force and maximizing their contribution to the growth of the economy and the general well being of the society can not be under-estimated. The experience of Panchayat Raj with 1/3rd representation of women is well recognised. It is, therefore, imperative that a similar approach is adopted for ensuring fair representation of women which would go a long way in improving the critical mass and the visibility of women in the decision making level.

BACKGROUND PAPER ON WOMEN IN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT PRESENTED DURING NATIONAL CONSULTATION HELD ON 07.02.2003

By PROF. SUSHEELA KAUSHIK
Delhi University

STRUCTURE OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT



India has initiated the unique experiment of giving its women the special quota of one third of total membership and chairpersonship in the local self-government bodies. It has thereby enabled the women from the grass roots to participate in governance and play leadership roles. It is indeed a bold measure, particularly because India is still an underdeveloped country, with the Gender Empowerment Measure remaining at a low level of 0.24 (101 among the 173 states in 2000). The affirmative action is based on the conviction that participation in decision making and governance would lead to better gender development; that the political empowerment of women will lead to better

formulation of development; that it will accelerate social and national development policies and that it will bring about an alternate political culture. The Beijing Conference too had underlined that without such a sharing in the political power, the objectives of peace, equality and development for women will be hard to achieve.

With the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1993), enhancing the powers of the local self governments and enlarging the representation to include the people from the weaker sections, equality of opportunity in decision making has become accessible to women from rural and backward areas. This has offered women of all castes, classes and regions, an immense opportunity to have a say in the decisions which affect not merely their lives but also the area in which they reside and the nation to which they belong. With this nearly one and a half million women are participating in the decision making process and many more are exercising their citizenship rights as voters and candidates.

Such a participation and its enabling mechanisms in the form of quota and reservation, has been based on some fundamental concepts of democracy and participatory decision making. It firmly believes in the application of the truism that self government is any day as important as good government, and its extension to include the women who constitute nearly 50 percent of the population. In the process, it also confirms the objectives of participation of women in politics and governance so as to achieve various aims like

- To achieve gender balance and gender equality in local government; and through its impact, in the community as a whole.
- To promote the greater participation of women leaders so as to enable them to play a positive and crucial role in realising good governance and bringing about a transformative politics.
- To ensure that the women (and through their role, the men) councillors adopt affirmative and developmental actions to enable the women in poverty and marginalised groups benefit from good governance.

Such objectives, in turn, are based on the belief widely shared by the people, in particular the common women, that if women are in decision making levels in politics and administration, they would be able to focus on issues concerning women. Such an attention will go beyond the normal concerns like road construction, power and water, and reach out to the special issues of women in more than ordinary, and difficult circumstances. Issues which are usually taken casually, ignored or marginalised will move centre stage to demanding attention, policies and solutions. In turn, if sufficient number of women representatives take up the concerns of women, they may succeed in transforming them into social issues rather than be dismissed as peripheral issues which concern women only.

Such an attention will help to make the villages and cities more friendly and liveable for the women, which today is lacking. In general, the cities are believed to

be freer and better places for women than the rural areas where women are bogged down by the patriarchal familial forces, customs and practices, restricting their movement with class and caste prescriptions. Lack of opportunities for skill training and income generation make villages bleak for women. Many women, alongwith other family members, often move to cities with hopes and aspirations of a brighter future. However often life in cities does not come upto such expectations; it only multiplies their problems and make them join the groups of marginalised women in the urban area.

Background to Women's Participation :

The Amendments streamlined the functioning of the local governments by putting it firmly on its grooves. Towards this, it stipulated the appointment of a State Election Commission and a State Finance Commission and also laid down the term of the local governments, their re-election without a gap, and the conditions for their suspension. It, above all, talked about devolution of powers and functions under Schedules 11 and 12 respectively and required the states to gradually decentralise by transferring (29 and 14) areas to the local bodies. There was also the mention of committee system, and the state legislations were expected to prescribe the committees. Following this, all the states had enacted their conformity legislations, amending their existing local government Acts.

The Acts provide for certain other far-reaching steps.

- (i) Reservation of seats for women and people of lower caste /class and tribals, as members and chairpersons.
- (ii) States to provide for reservation for membership and chairperson posts to citizens of other backward classes (OBC), if they choose to do.

In addition under the 74th Amendment called the Municipalities Act, there is a provision for District Planning Committees (DPC). This is a combined Planning Committee for rural and urban areas. Every DPC, on the basis of proposals from the ward committees of the rural and urban areas, will prepare a draft development plan for the district and forward it to the Government of the State.

While all the States amended Acts their and incorporated the five mandatory provisions, many added on other significant features, such as functions and powers of *Gram Sabha* (Village Assembly of all eligible voters), method of elections of chairpersons to the village bodies, reservation of additional percentage and post for women, reservation for OBC, constitution of *nyay* panchayats (judicial bodies), financial procedures, formation of committees, procedures for no-confidence motion etc. This has lent a variety of practices among the states. These features have much relevance for the effective participation and functioning of women in the local government bodies.

The quota system has been a great boon for the women, especially in rural India. It enabled more women to come forward and to contest, and assured their election to at least one third of the total membership and chairperson posts. Even in the cities

where urbanisation and modernisation have enabled more women to be developed and be more free, the number of women contesting for parliament or state legislatures or getting elected, has been a bare minimum. The mandatory provision, thereby had brought millions of women to enter the election fray, learn their tasks on hand, sustain themselves in politics if they wish to, and move upward if they can.

In reality, as per the available figures in 1999 after the first round of elections, there were almost one million women (Bihar not included) who had come in as members and chairpersons in rural India. This had exceeded the estimated figures (0.8m) in rural India. In addition, there are nearly 23,000 women elected as members and chairpersons in the urban municipalities and corporations. Thirty of them are Mayors of big cities.

There were about 370,000 S.C. and about 30,000 S.T. members; they constituted 16.73 and 7.95 percent respectively by way of the total S.C., S.T. population. Thereby the S.C. and S.T. representation had somewhat exceeded the stipulated target of 15.5 and 7 for the two groups. One would expect that at least one third of them would be women. In general women constituted 31.1% total members and 35.38 % total chairpersons in the panchayat system. The figures showed that women, S.C. and S.T. together constituted 47.53 percent of the total members in the three layers of the local government. Obviously some members, from all the groups, may have come from general seats too.

Women's Participation in Panchayat Raj (2000)

Panchayat bodies	Members (Percentage)			Chairpersons (Percentages)		
	Women	S.C.	S.T.	Women	S.C.	S.T.
Village level	31.37			40.10		
Intermediate level	29.71			33.75		
District level	31.80			32.28		
Total	31.1	16.73	7.95	35.38		

While most of the States have observed the Constitutional stipulation on reservation, it is seen that on the whole, the number of women who got elected fell short of the minimum 33.3 percent; it amounted to only 31.37 percent in village level, 29.71 percent at the intermediary level and 31.80 percent at the district level. The picture was slightly better for the post of chairpersons.

The phenomenon of such a large number of women entering for the first time politics and electoral fray, which have been always held as "a dirty game" and a male preserve, would not have been possible but for the quota system and reservation. The quota system, indeed, heralded a veritable silent revolution in the rural side of India. By opening up the possibilities to the illiterate rural women who constitute the bulk of

women in India, the political positions and decision making power, the quota system threw up the potentials of the latent women power, knowledge and skills, to bring about a transformed governance and alternate political process. A changed political culture that would be based on gender equality, equity and common dignity is bound to bring about a qualitative change in the political order, in the women's lives and agenda for their own development as well as of the society.

Besides the election of the world's largest body of local governors, the local elections also threw up another interesting feature.

In the case of the rural self government there emerged also instances of the phenomenon called "all women panchayats", where all the elected members and chairpersons were women. While Andhra Pradesh elected thirteen such village bodies, Maharashtra followed this in the 1984 elections, with nine all women panchayats.

In the process the women have been able to promote not merely their own agenda, but also help in the local governments emerging as the nodal points in India's democratic political system. The two Amendments of the Constitution thus had initiated a new era in Indian politics; it may well challenge the existing power structures. The elements of social justice as represented by the presence and participation of the hitherto deprived sections, may, challenge the existing power structures. It hence needs constant watch and protection, by the civil society organisations and activists who need to not merely monitor them, but extend support by way of capacity building, information supplying and political lobbying.

Women in Governance :

The participation in local government has many interesting possibilities, especially after the emergence of a critical mass of women and weaker sections. In fact the real experience and struggle to exercise power and bring about the much needed decisions and alternate ways of enforcing them, start after they get elected with the reservation assuring them of a place.

The performance of women in local government, their achievements, some of the best practices and case studies, then, warrant our focussing. Their hopes and aspirations for their own future as well as the future of their areas, their understanding of politics, their prioritisation by way of agenda both as members/chairpersons, as well as women agents, deserve much attention and support.

Many women have understood and performed their political leadership roles seriously and consciously. The women have displayed a high degree of accountability and transparency. All of them are convinced about the need to maintain a high standard of ethics in politics.

Clean Politics :

The election of a million women in active politics had triggered off much hope in the country. Equally hopeful are the elected women. By emerging as leaders, they have

become optimistic that they can bring about much change. Many studies have pointed out to the women's hopes and satisfaction of having contributed to the village life. They are happy that it has lifted the women's status and dignity, as well as their own status. Such women believe that they can do much more, given another chance.

These women believe that they can and need to bring about an alternate politics and a clean public life. It is amazing that despite five years rule, almost all the women have emerged free of any stigma of corruption. The women chairpersons have, thereby stood their moral ground, even though in quite a few cases they have been pressurised and even subjected to violence. Women have thus fulfilled the faith reposed in them as clean politicians. The attempt at clean politics need to be sustained. Unfortunately, the system, by not giving them a continuity, often reverses whatever they have planned or envisaged for their community. No wonder many women desire to keep the rotation of constituencies at bay or at least to retain the reservation for one more term.

A brief look at what the women have prioritised as agenda for themselves and the local governments that they are part of, is a clear evidence that the women have aspired to bring about the social development of their area. Unlike the male preference for construction of buildings and roads, the women plan for women and child welfare centres, maternity clinics, schools etc.

However such a social development or specific women development cannot be achieved overnight, after so many years of neglect by previous local governments and state authorities. To expect the women to bring about women's empowerment and social development in a span of five years is asking too much.

Similar picture emerges when one looks at the women in urban governance. Research has pointed out to very many instances of women mayors having taken up a wide range of community issues like water and power issues, delivery of urban amenities like sanitation, slum clearance, housing and transport. Many women corporators have shown interest in micro planning process and have put forward their own view points on issues like micro credit, health, nutrition. Many municipal women have shown interest in credit and thrift societies, environment issues, education and vocational training; and mobilisation of women. The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation had started a Gender Resource Centre providing a valuable support system to women as partners in development.

The one sure impact of women entering the local governments has been the visibility of women and women's issues. Women's voices have become little more audible and the atrocities against women have received notice and some concern. While gender justice and equity are still far off, women's public role has made it a possibility. Many elected women in various part of India have not only begun to talk about justice for women, but outside of the local government's functioning, they have been actively getting involved in dealing with issues of violence against women like wife beating, dowry harassment, alcoholism and extravagant behaviour etc. One is sure that once sensitised, the women's groups will continue their leadership in such issues.

Impact :

In many villages the elected women particularly have become prominent citizens. The status seems to increase more in the developed regions than in the backward regions of the state and the nation. In the nuclear families the status seem to improve much faster. According to them political participation has definitely enhanced their status at home and outside. One wonders, however, whether this increase in status will continue even after she ceases to be a political personality. Hopefully the women, having acquired a higher status will succeed in sustaining it.

In general women's leadership in men's world has somewhat come to be accepted, though often such acceptance is forced on them by the reservation. Once reservation is removed, most men are interested in keeping the women out. Very few women have been put up in the open constituencies.

With the possibilities of emergence in politics, the women in the wider society have become bold, confident, aware of one's rights, and prepared to perform their duties as a social being. Though they faced various types of problems, most of them are very confident and are eager to continue in politics.

The local governments have created, in general, a strong base for the women to assess their own potentiality and to take higher strides in politics. Many of them got empowered, many women in the community were happy that they were able to check, if not eliminate corruption, monitor the local governments work and disseminate the messages. It helped them to know the world beyond their work and four walls.

The emergence of women in leadership position had tremendous impact on the women of their own caste as well as brought about an attitudinal change among the women and men higher castes; the latter had, previously, underestimated the women's political capacity and potentials.

The people find a marked difference in the working of local governments because the women are more honest and sincere, active and hard working in the village development activities. Corruption had also gone down and more transparency in sanctioning projects had come about.

Apart from the women who had been elected, the reservation, political empowerment and entry of many women in politics, also had the impact of raising the image of women in general.

It looks like on the whole, the change in the status of women is much more in the higher levels and as chairpersons.

Issues in Governance :

Even as women have come into decision making positions, a lot more is expected from the women as leaders. The women of India, in particular have much hopes and

expectations. The women's movement is seeking to make them focus on not merely wider political issues like bringing about an alternate political culture dedicated to removal of poverty and underdevelopment, clean and uncorrupt politics and peace and harmony among various social sections, but also the special gender issues.

In the urban scene the women councillors in particular, and the municipalities in general. Some of these special groups of women for whom the cities should be made friendly and to whom the urban government should act as special service providers are

- 1) Migrant Women / Migrant Workers.
- 2) Hawker Women.
- 3) Displaced women or refugees; displaced due to development plans, natural disasters, war and conflict situations, drought and famine etc.
- 4) Women in the unorganised sector; working conditions, credit etc.
- 5) Disabled women, single women and old age women (Security, housing, medical and insurance benefit).
- 6) Women in difficult circumstances—counselling, employment, destitute / Short stay homes, legal aid etc.

Women belonging to these sections, in turn face more than others, pressing issues concerning

- a) Housing; J.J. Colonies and Slums.
- b) Issues of food; ration cards, P.D.S.
- c) Transport
- d) Skill training and income generation
- e) Crime exploitation and insecurity.
- f) Domestic violence, sexual harassment.

Along with the women, the urban governance need to take care of the children too. Unlike in the rural areas, the urban areas are cruel witnesses to children who are destitutes and abandoned, who earn their bread by working as child labour; children who sleep in streets and work in unspeakable and intolerable circumstances, children of women in difficult circumstances like the prostitutes, broken marriages etc.

The urban governance in India have woken up somewhat to the need for health campaigns (like the immunisation camps), education campaigns, anti – pollution campaigns and campaigns against occupational hazards (like “say no plastic” and gloves to rag pickers campaigns) etc. But most of them have remained as campaigns with

much fanfare rather than converted into regular practices, based on policies, rules, regulations and punishment. It is sad to see the children loitering in streets or working in the dirt, when they should be going to schools or learning the skills for their future. They end up having neither the clean and clear air of the rural areas, nor the developmental inputs of the urban sectors.

In the rural scenario, the panchayats need to take more interest in the issues of women and children. Most panchayats do not seem to look beyond the issues of road construction, culverts, disputes pertaining to land and water; even health and hygiene, sanitation and education do not receive the necessary focus. The women have often taken up the issue of alcoholism and violence. Some have attended to the drinking water problem, as well as the maternity welfare centres. But otherwise they have lacked the initiative to work for the specific concerns of women and children. Caste based, community oriented, dowry related and patriarchal violence, child development, health, education etc. have not been the concerns of the panchayats. Often they are schemes operated and controlled by the officials.

The panchayats feel helpless in the absence of effective transfer and decentralisation by the state governments.

Having come into local government bodies in large numbers for the first time, many women have ideas and aspirations to participate in meaningful functioning and playing effective roles. However the experience of the past five years have made them understand their limitations and identify major obstructions.

Challenges :

Even as women advance to participate in power and share in leadership roles, the challenges they face continue to persist and even increase. Emerging from strong patriarchal roots and based on distorted cultural practices, the biases and discrimination against women in familial and social spheres hamper them in the exercise of their political choices and functional autonomy.

Now that the elections to local bodies have, acquired added importance and visibility there has been more violence and more money spent. Electoral corrupt practices, unaccounted money, use of criminal practices and exercise of muscle powers are on the increase. The elections stand in danger of being won by the ordinary men and women, and become the area of local elites and party selections. As they do so, it is possible that they may deter women and men particularly from the weaker sections, from contesting the elections.

Even while reservation and elections brought more and new women into politics, not many women seem to sustain themselves. Most of the women who had been members and even chairpersons had not re-contested in the next elections. Nor do they

seem to be actively associated with politics. Thereby many have become one time politicians, and withdrawn.

This clearly indicates that these women find contesting the elections is still not as easy affair. The women obviously have not yet become empowered enough to contest against males, even if of their own caste or tribe. It also implies that the society particularly men, and the political leadership have not yet got accustomed to women occupying political positions as the normal course of politics.

The nature of politics, of the patriarchal society, male behaviour, absence of other support services, violence, lack of financial resources in the government, etc. have made them somewhat despondent and disillusioned. Some have resented their male relatives trying to exploit the women's position, for their own benefit, and struggled to keep up their values.

In some cases the elections had brought down their status, by making them the victims of sexual harassment. The increased knowledge and awareness of women often make them the subject of male backlash in the form of violence, character assassination and social disapproval. It also has paved the way for their exploitation by the officials, society and the family members. Thus, along with the positive impact of women's role in politics it has the negative impact which has made the women more vulnerable in the men's world.

To these are added other disempowering processes in the politics and society. The expensive and violent elections, criminalisation, violence and insult and humiliation by the patriarchal attitude of males and bureaucrats, are disempowering the women constantly. Communal riots, threatened social order, declining public morality and civic consciousness, pornography, social insecurity etc. lead to discouraging the women and weaker sections. In the case of women belonging to the lower class, caste and minorities, their social position is an additional challenge that weakens them. Any empowerment can take place only when this series of disempowering factors are removed and dealt with. Hence political empowerment is not identical with mere reservation, elections and political participation at decision making levels. It will include and be completed only when the women are enabled to overcome all the negative forces and factors. Thus for the village women elected to the local government, empowerment, even political empowerment is a total concept and cannot be split into economic, social and political.

Such a disempowering process is worse, in the absence of any interaction of women panches, chairpersons, councillors / mayors with women agencies like SSWAB, State Women's Commissions, WDC, Mahila Kosh, CSWB, National Commission for Women etc. and knowledge about their role and activities. Their activities can not be brought to the women's constituencies. The NGOs rather than the local bodies and women members, become their messengers, implementers and monitors.

Their absence has been somewhat made up by the activities of a few voluntary organisations. With an increasing though limited space, the voluntary organisations and civil society groups have entered the field with capacity building, awareness raising, resource centres, action agenda and financial resources. Many NGOs have helped in strengthening women's groups (Mahila Mandals) and people's groups for social action.

These along with many, government supported programmes like Total Literacy Campaigns, Mahila Samakhya and other public action and social movements are targeting and seeking to strengthen the local governments for good governance. They are particularly focussing on the elected women as the change agents.

Reservation and the consequent participation at the decision making level is definitely an aspect of empowering process. But in order that it leads on to empowerment, such a process should be all round and involve other aspects too. The women in India, despite their heavy load of work and contribution to family income, are not economically empowered; they neither get a share in the income nor have a share in the property rights. Equally the women in their social life and interaction are bound down by taboos and restrictions in behaviour, movement and knowledge seeking. The political participation is thus being attempted in a social environment that is totally patriarchal and restrictive. Deprived at home and lesser beings in the villages, the women cannot be expected to be equal or empowered in the political front.

It was believed then that the emergence of the critical mass of women as members and chairpersons of the panchayats and municipalities will help in lobbying for and pressurising the municipal and panchayat governments to provide various services to the women and children. The forecast that half of India's billions will soon be living in the urban areas, that many bigger villages will be in a process of transition, and that the men will migrate leaving women and children behind should warn the local governments to gear themselves to provide for friendly and profitable environment to women and children.

However all these issues can be identified, the necessary focus can be brought upon and the much needed lobbying can be undertaken by the women panches, councillors and others, only if the environment in the municipal councils and panchayat bodies is made women friendly and conducive to their functioning.

The women in general, and the elected women in particular feel the need for a whole lot of support structures and resourcing agencies providing services like information, political education, political and social counselling, skills in management etc. These external inputs will help in creating the needed socio political environment that will facilitate the women to emerge confident and perform. Ultimately the political empowerment is more a feeling of strength from within based on and secured with the sum total of inputs, externally injected.

Women's Participation in Urban Governance (2002)

Level	Members		Chairpersons	
	Total	Women	Total	Women
Nagar Panchayat	28457		2091	
Municipal Councils	34082		1443	
Corporation	7165		107	30
Total	69704		3641	

NB Total for 32 States and U.T. Data on women not readily available or compiled.

Women's Participation in Rural Governance (2000)***Participation of Women in Rural Governance***

Level	No. of Units	T. Chairperson	Women Chairperson	T. Members	Women Members
Village level	232,332	190,249	76,291 (40.10%)	2,449,759	768,582 (31.37%)
Intermediary level	6000	4720	1,593 (33.75%)	129,871	38,582 (29.71%)
District levels	534	378	122 (32.28%)	12,671	4,030 (31.8%)
Total	238,866	195,347	78,006	2,592,301	811,194
Percentage			39.93		31.29

* Data is not complete; does not include Bihar and Goa

Women (Members) Participation in Panchayat Institutions

S.No.	State	Gram Panchayat			Panchayat Samati			Zila Parishad		
		Women	Total	% women	Women	Total	% women	Women	Total	% women
1	Andhra Pradesh	78000	230529	33.84	5420	14528	37.01	363	1092	33.21
2	Arunachal Pradesh	86*	5733*	1.50*	39*	1205*	3.24*		77*	
3	Assam	8977	21301	42.14	791	2148	36.82	135	390	34.6
4	Bihar	FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE								
5	Chhattisgarh	53667	159923	33.5	872	2649	32.9	90	274	32.5
6	Goa	468	1281	36.53					35	

S.No.	State	Gram Panchayat			Panchayat Samati			Zila Parishad		
		Women	Total	% women	Women	Total	% women	Women	Total	% women
7	Gujarat	41180	123470	33.35	1275	3814	33.43	254	761	33.38
8	Haryana	17928	54169	33.01	807	2418	33.37	101	303	33.33
9	Himachal Pradesh	6013	18258	32.93	558	1661	33.59	84	252	33.33
10	Jammu & Kashmir	NA	15490							
11	Jharkhand									
12	Karnataka	35305	80627	43.79	1343	3340	40.21	335	919	36.45
13	Kerala	3883*	10270	37.81*	563*	1547	36.39*	104*	300	34.67*
14	Madhya Pradesh	106410	314847	33.8	2159	6456	33.29	338	734	33.53
15	Maharashtra	101182	303545	33.33	1174	3262	33.31	587	1762	33.31
16	Manipur	555	1556	35.67	0			22	61	36.07
17	Orissa	27036	87539	33.35	1754	6227	33.35	284	854	33.26
18	Pondicherry		120	0					16	0
19	Punjab	26939	75473	35.7	326*	2441*	13.36*	89*	274*	32.48*
20	Rajasthan	33566	112897	29.73	1740	5494	31.67	33	1028	32.39
21	Sikkim	326	873	37.34				28	92	30.43
22	Tamil Nadu	31548	125852	25.07	2295	6499	35.31	22	648	33.4
23	Tripura	1809	5421	33.37	67	196	34.18	24	70	34.29
24	Uttar Pradesh	174410	682670	25.5	14002	58165	24	648	2551	25.1
25	Uttaranchal	1937	117030			1826			136	
26	West Bengal	17883	49225	36.33	2997	8520	35.18	243	716	33.94
27	Andaman & Nicobar Is.	229	667	34.33	25			10	30	33.33
28	Lakhsadweep	30	79	37.96				8	22	36.36
29	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	46	135	34.07				4	16	25
30	Daman & Diu	25	63	39.68				5	15	33.33
31	Chandigarh	22	109	20.18	2	6	33.33	3	10	30
	Total*	768582	2449759	31.37	38582	129871	20.71	4030	12671	31.8
		Grand Total 78,1,194								

* Data as in 1999, other data as in December 2001

II. DETAILS OF THE PROCEEDINGS HELD ON 7.2.2003

The National Consultation was attended by the Panchayat Leaders, Councillors, Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Women's Studies Specialists, NGO Representatives, Academics, Media persons, Researchers and Representatives of International Agencies.

The Consultation also provided for an opportunity for valuable interaction with Ms. Ranjana Kumari, Ms. Rita Bahuguna Joshi and women from local self-governance.

The presentation by Prof. Susheela Kaushik highlighted some salient points in the context of women in local governance.

1. The quota and reservation for women in local governance is not an end in itself. It is a catalyst to achieve the aim of women's participation in decision making. Such a participation in decision making, in turn, is necessary as it would,
 - a) strengthen the political empowerment and development of women
 - b) lead to better gender development policies
 - c) accelerate national development
 - d) bring about an alternate, clean political culture
 - e) will bring about a heightened status for women in the family and community
2. The far reaching step of reservation for women of lower caste and tribes, who also happen to be from the lower class (a case of reservation within reservation, as the amendment requires one third of SC/ ST seats to be reserved for women).
3. The mandatory provisions have brought nearly one million women in local governance after the first round of elections in the states, but still the national average worked out to be less than 33 percent (actually 31.29 percent) for the position of members in the Panchayati Raj. This needs to be probed. The figures for the chairpersons (39.93 percent) however, exceeded the minimum stipulated reservation.

The participants noted with satisfaction that some of the states like Karnataka have exceeded, the mandatory minimum ratio of women participation. They at the same time, expressed their concern about the non-compliance of the minimum number of 33 percent women in the local bodies in some of the states. They believed that the data needs to be looked into and the proportion restored to at least the minimum.

4. However, the participation and provision for mandatory representation of women is not applicable in three tribal states of India and the scheduled areas elsewhere. The tribal councils with little or no participation of women, make the decisions.
5. The provision for a District Planning Committee that would formulate the final plans after receiving suggestions from the ward committees.

6. The data on the women elected to the municipalities under the 74th amendment is not readily available. So also the data on the S.C, S. T. and OBC women elected to the rural and urban bodies is yet to be compiled and not easily available.
7. The belief that once women have entered politics, through reservation, they would be able to sustain themselves without the reservation in the subsequent years, has not been proved correct. Very few women have continued their interest in political life, once the seats are rotated and reservation for women withdrawn. It shows that the struggle against patriarchal social order will continue and the traditional mind set will take quite a long time to change, though the trends are progressive and positive.

The consultations also discussed the role of women in local governance and their **performance** over the past five years or more. The areas where they performed or were expected to perform were :

1. providing infrastructural development,
2. bringing about an alternate political culture based on transparency, accountability and clean politics,
3. promoting social development, and
4. focusing on women oriented issues and women's needs.

Some of the chairpersons pointed out to their contribution in preventing violence and bringing about solace to women, even if it means confronting the rich and the mighty.

On many of the issues women have been performing according to the expectations, and have fulfilled the norms of great democratic traditions with a high standard of public ethics and commitment to women's development. The elected women participants had undertaken many difficult activities like sanitation, construction of schools, drinking water supply, facilities for fisheries, housing, rain harvesting, wastage collection etc. Many of them had also focussed on women's issues like mobilisation of women, welfare of old age women, widows and handicapped, anti – dowry awareness and action etc. Many have struggled to get the panchayat land released, auctioned the shops to help women to get self employment, helped the women to get loans and micro credit facilities etc. Many chairpersons had helped the women against domestic violence, sought the police help and had intervened on behalf of poor women. However their focus and record in the field of women's rights, common dignity and equity are yet to emerge clearly or definitively. Issues of violence and gender injustice have received only selective attention of the local bodies and women chairpersons.

By way of **impact**, the political participation and role of women have

- i) heightened the self image of women
- ii) enhanced the status of women in the family and community

- iii) led to better image of women from low castes
- iv) have made the males and the political system accept women leadership and their entry into the male arena
- v) has brought about a trend towards a change in the traditional stereotyped attitudes of men and women, on women's work and position
- vi) has exposed women to the world outside their homes

The discussions pointed out that women still face a lot of **Challenges** by way of

- a) violence and harassment
- b) cultural biases and restrictions
- c) lack of information
- d) lack of financial resources
- e) lack of support structures
- f) lack of power, resources, functions and jurisdiction of the local bodies themselves
- g) electoral malpractices, increased role of muscle and money

The women also found that the men in panchayats, the bureaucrats and even the MLAs were not very helpful. The women's demands on behalf of the people, often went unheeded. They were neither recorded nor followed up. They also found the contractors to be a big problem and monitoring them becomes difficult and politically sensitive. The effective and committed chairpersons however received support from the women in the community, the NGOs and the family members.

Many participants pointed out that the political parties tended to ignore them, even if they had done good work. Where the women had been put up by men, as a proxy, the women never got re-nominated, when the constituencies became general.

The national consultation brought out many positive elements by way of the factors that supported the women to overcome the challenges and participate – such as the legal structures of reservation, family support, community support, political mobilisation by the voluntary organisations, training and capacity building exercises by the NGOs and the governments. Though reservation and family political background were helpful in women entering politics, the discussions also pointed out that one's self image, education, confidence, previous experience, work in the society, will to struggle and face challenges, also helped. Women who were educated and knowledgeable found it somewhat easier to overcome the challenges.

On the basis of the day long discussions in which the elected members and Chairpersons participated actively, the national consultation arrived at some major, focussed strategies for action.

III. STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

1. *Documentation and Data Collection*

- 1.1 Data should be collected on gender segregated basis of the various local government elections in different states of India, both for Panchayat and municipal bodies. This should also include the number of total, women, SC and ST contestants, socio economic profile of the elected women, party wise figure etc., for all the three levels of both urban and rural bodies.
- 1.2 The data available with the State Election Commissions should be made accessible to researchers.
- 1.3 A monitoring exercise should be undertaken to see why the number of women elected is less than the minimum stipulated figures in the various states.
- 1.4 Data on the performance of elected women needs to be collected and analysed.
- 1.5 Research with a special focus on the Scheduled Areas to be undertaken with a view to analyse the impact of financial grants on the Panchayats. There is also need for more information on the functioning of PRI in these areas and their relations with tribal councils.
- 1.6 Research needs to be undertaken on an all India scale on the factors that helped the women to participate in politics, as well as those that deterred or prevented them.

2. *Administrative and Structural Action*

- 2.1 The Thirty Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development of Parliament needs to be disseminated among the elected women, NGOs, concerned government agencies and officials.
- 2.2 Extension of infrastructural support like TA and DA for attending the meetings, working expenses and facilities like telephone etc
- 2.3 Greater devolution of political power, authority, financial power and functions by the state governments. Schedules 11 and 12 should be enforced and the various areas mandatorily transferred to the local governments. Needed amendments in the Acts should be undertaken (for instance changing “may” into “shall” in the 73rd and 74th Amendments).
- 2.4 The elections of Mayors, Municipal Chairpersons and Sarpanches should be made direct. This will eliminate the frequency of no – confidence motions, corruption and factional politics.
- 2.5 The system of Mayor – in – Council should be adopted uniformly all over India, so as to enable the women Mayors and Corporations to do effective work.

- 2.6 All the State Acts should stipulate that the Executive Committees, Standing Committees, Planning Committees and quorum should have at least 50 percent women. Educated women members should be included in the Planning committees.
- 2.7 Planning, tender opening, contract sanctioning and monitoring should be undertaken by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson together. Otherwise it leads to petty quarrels, corruption charges, etc.
- 2.8 The administrative staff positions in the municipal and panchayat administration should be made transferrable. The chairpersons should have the powers to ask for their transfers, if found unsatisfactory.
- 2.9 The M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s Local Area Development Funds need to be monitored and not be allowed to lapse. In planning the projects, the Chairpersons of the panchayat and municipal bodies of the areas should be involved.
- 2.10 Just like the M.P.s and M.L.A. the members of the local government bodies should also receive Area Development Funds, for undertaking development projects in their areas. This will partially meet the lack of adequate financial resource to the panchayats.
- 2.11 All schemes, information about women agencies and other relevant materials which have a concern for women, should be made accessible to the State Women's Commission, and through them to the elected women representatives.
- 2.12 Political Parties should recognise the good work done by the elected women and nominate them for recontesting, even if the constituencies are opened out.
- 2.13 The reservation for women in the local governments should be increased to 50 percent.
- 2.14 The Reservation Bill pending in the Parliament for 33 percent reservation to Parliament and the state assemblies should be taken up and passed immediately.

3. Training

- 3.1 There should be periodic training and capacity building activities for the elected women.
- 3.2 The government training institutions and NGOs should undertake such training soon after they are elected and not wait for a later date. Such training should be done at an easy distance or in the locality / village itself.
- 3.3 The training methodology should be on a practical basis and not bookish. It should be interactive, based on the experiences of the elected women and not be monologues.
- 3.4 Models need to be presented so that the women can understand and replicate them.

3.5 The training should include officials and male counter parts so that they understand and recognise women's rights and roles. It should be jointly for women and men.

4. *To The National Commission for Women*

4.1 The National Commission for Women should undertake a status report and monitor the functioning of the local government, review the State Acts and their implementation.

4.2 It should also undertake the impact of women's participation on the functioning of the Panchayati Raj, on the political empowerment of women, on their relations with bureaucracy. On the basis of it, NCW should suggest the needed institutional reforms.

4.3 The National and State Commissions for Women should interact frequently with the elected women representatives (EWRs) and monitor their performance.

4.4 They should undertake to highlight the problems faced by the E.W.R.s and seek to lobby for the policy changes needed.

4.5 The creation of an election fund for women in local government should be lobbied widely; the NCW must hold a consultation and work out the procedure.

4.6 The N.C.W. and the government should recognise the women who have done good work in local governance and reward them.

4.7 The NCW and S.C.W.s should initiate debates on the concept and practice of grass root planning and monitoring of the actual performance in this context.

4.8 The NCW, government and the NGOs should facilitate the formation of a machinery to represent the elected women in local government. They should be enabled to interact with M.P.s, M.L.A.s, judiciary, bureaucrats etc.

4.9 The State Commissions for Women should undertake similar types of workshops on women in local governance. They should organise at the state and block level, conferences of elected women.

5. *Networking*

5.1 The women elected to local governments should network among themselves on national and regional basis. The NCW should facilitate such a networking.

5.2 There should be all India bodies of chairpersons of all levels.

5.3 The NGOs should facilitate the elected women and the people, meeting and sharing issues.

BACKGROUND PAPER ON WOMEN IN CIVIL SERVICES PRESENTED DURING NATIONAL CONSULTATION HELD ON 10.02.2003

By Ms. KIRAN AGGARWAL

Formerly Secretary to Government of India

Introduction

In 1934, long before the Indian Constitution was drafted, Nehru wrote... "The habit of looking upon marriage as a profession almost and as a sole economic refuge for women will have to go before women can have any freedom. Freedom depends on economic conditions even more than political, and if woman is not economically free and self earning she will have to depend on the husband or someone else, and dependents are never free." It was with this in mind that he later involved eminent women like Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Durgabai Deshmukh etc. in the important work of Constitution-making.

There was no voice of dissent when the chapter on Fundamental Rights giving women equal status of equality with men was written. Article 14 of our Constitution declares, "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the Law." Not this alone, Article 15(3) provides for positive discrimination in favour of women. Further, Article 16(1) guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. And Article 16 (2) forbids discrimination inter alia on ground of sex. These provisions as also some other provisions of the Constitution have provided a position to Indian women that women in some developed countries had to struggle long years for. In addition to the Constitution, and in line with the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles contained in it, many laws have been framed with a view that women should be able to work outside the home in a congenial environment. Then India is also signatory to CEDAW and other UN Conventions which militate against discrimination against women.

Historical Background

Historically, socially and culturally, women have been dominated by men. It is only in recent times that women have stepped out to work outside the home. And working in responsible positions in Government came only in the last century. According to the GOI Act of 1935, women were disqualified from holding class I posts in various departments under the control of the Governor General in Council. They were only eligible for class II posts and the clerical services. This continued till 1948. All this changed with the constitutional provisions guaranteeing equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. But, despite this, it was only in 1951 that we had our first lady joining the IAS and it was as late as 1972 that the first lady joined the IPS as till then women were not considered physically up to the rigours of that service. It is also worth noting that till 1971 the percentage of women working in the Central Government was 2.82% and in the State Governments it was 8.50%. But the majority of women were nurses, midwives, primary and middle

school teachers, and doctors till the late seventies according to another study. The position of women in employment in different branches of public sector in 1997 and 1998 was as per annexure A.

Though law and convention do not bar Indian women from occupying any post, very few of them are found in superior classes due to a number of factors like social bias, family responsibility, lack of chance etc. This is a matter of concern. Therefore, although Civil Service includes all non-elected civilian branches of governmental administration, I would like to focus here on women in the higher civil services – the All India Services, the Central Services and the State Civil Services as the representation of women in these critical services is still abysmally low and something needs to be done about it. Women need to be closely associated in public policy planning. They should be closely involved in policy decisions regarding taxes, increase in prices of various commodities, child care, welfare reforms, and various other issues that touch them directly. Women should not be objects of government policies, but be participants in the formulation of such policies. As Subramanyam Bharti stated so beautifully,

“The realm of knowledge we shall explore,
We shall not lag behind men,
Knowledge shall be ours as well,
We shall join in the making of the laws”

All that women need is the opportunity, and this should be available to them as a right and not as a welfare measure. This is all the more necessary and urgent when one looks at India’s ranking at 124 in the Human Development Report, 2002. In this, our ranking in the gender related development index is 105. (This is based on life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, enrolment ratio at different levels, and estimated earned income). India is at 124 in so far as the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) is concerned. This is based on seats in Parliament held by women, number of female legislators, senior officials, professionals, technical workers and the ratio of estimated female to male earned income. Considering that Indian women received the right to vote in 1950, at present only 8.9% seats are held by women in Parliament. And as late as 1999, only 7.60% women were working in the Central Government.

Women’s representation in Civil Services

Civil Servants play an important role in public policy formulation. However, the representation of women in civil service remains negligible. The reasons for the low rate of participation of women in decision-making is what we need to look at. From that will emerge the issues that need to be tackled to rectify the imbalance. A number of issues involved have been looked at in detail by the Vth Pay Commission. This is being dealt with in a separate chapter. Next, the Ministry of Personnel has always been conscious of the imbalance and has tried to make the rules gender sensitive and its recruitment policies favourable to some extent for women. This and the UPSC, which inter alia is

responsible for recruitment as also for vetting of recruitment rules, will be dealt with separately. Thirdly, under the aegis of the Ministry of Personnel, the Department of Administrative Reforms and the UNDP are jointly implementing a capacity building project for Civil Services. One of the objectives of this project is to examine women's issues in the Civil Service. As a lot of work has been done under this project, this will also be dealt with in detail separately. Then there are the other institutional mechanisms like the Department of WCD and the NCW which look after women's welfare. These will be dealt with later.

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

This Ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training in particular, deal with all matters relating to the Civil Services. The department deals with all the rules relating to conditions of service, including recruitment, promotions, leave, disciplinary action, dismissal, the conduct rules etc, as also rules relating to facilities, perks etc. Insofar as women civil servants are concerned, the department, aware of the dual responsibility of women workers, made special provisions for them in the rules. These include:

- i) Age relaxation for widows and women separated from their husbands for appointment in Group C&D posts;
- ii) exemption from requirement of educational qualification in respect of widows appointed on compassionate ground to posts of peons;
- iii) guidelines for posting of husband and wife at the same station;
- iv) maternity and paternity leave benefits;
- v) guidelines for provision of day-care facilities for working mothers;
- vi) allowing cadre change in respect of members of the All India Services on grounds of marriage;
- vii) Creation of a harassment-free work environment by issuing guidelines on dealing with instances of sexual harassment.

Capacity Building Project

The DoPT scrutinizes the rules regularly to remove any gender bias in men. Besides, on the basis of the recommendations of the Vth Pay Commission and the Capacity Building Project, it is further examining the rules and orders relating to issues concerning women. The DoPT and the UNDP implemented a Capacity Building Project for the Civil Services. It had four main objectives aimed at administrative reforms across the board. However, it was the fourth objective that is of relevance here. It states, "To examine women's issues in the Civil Service with a view to their redressal through an ongoing institutional mechanism."

Several workshops, seminars, visits to different countries and other activities were taken up as part of this project. The activities undertaken under Output IV are:

- i) Training of a core group of resource persons in the Graduate School, USDA, Washington.
- ii) Conduct of a survey on Gender and the Civil Services.
- iii) Development of a curriculum for regional workshops by ATIs.
- iv) Conduct of ten regional workshops by nine ATIs.
- v) Final workshop of cadre controlling authorities of different civil services belonging to the Government of India.
- vi) Establishment of a Focal Point in the DoPT.

In the process of the workshops held across the country, various issues relating to women in Civil Service came up for discussion and debate. The outcomes of the regional workshops were again discussed in a final workshop before the final conclusions and recommendations were arrived at. Starting with the fact that the numbers of women in various services and at various levels need to be increased, efforts were made to identify the issues that have resulted in this low representation of women in civil service. The next step was to recommend actions to address these issues and the inhibiting factors that have kept women away from the civil services. The objective eventually was to recommend the creation of an enabling environment for women to enter the civil services in larger numbers, to perform well and have the opportunity to rise to the senior-most positions in the organizations they joined.

Focal Point

It is the focal point that is the most important outcome – this Focal Point in DoPT is to deal with all women-related issues in the civil services. It will:

- a) review existing rules and regulations for possible gender bias and discrimination against women and suggest corrective action;
- b) Coordinate output flowing from various activities related to the issue requiring policy formulation or issue of regulation and guidelines.

While (a) will be a one-time exercise, (b) will be an ongoing activity of the focal point in the DoPT and similar focal points will later be established in the State Governments. One of the main problems we face is lack of sufficient disaggregated data and this is one of the main tasks that will be taken up by the focal points. These focal points are required to be sensitized towards gender issues and ensure that the recommendations of the project are properly implemented. It will eventually be the point for redressal of all grievances and complaints of women workers and ensure equal opportunity of appointments/promotions for women.

The issue regarding numbers has been dealt with in detail along with available data separately. So I will take up here the reasons for the small number of women in the civil service. The UNDP-assisted project had countrywide consultations and a large cross-section of persons attended the regional workshops. As the issues relating to women in civil services in the States and at the Centre are, by and large the same, they are dealt together. The findings of the workshops, by and large, are similar except for region specific reasons in some cases. The thirty-one focal issues are as at annexure F.

Next the project has identified further inhibiting factors like the patriarchal system excluding women from decision-making; financial independence not considered important for women; family attitudes favouring the male child's higher education in distant places, early marriage or marriage at the age when a woman is preparing to enter the civil service; lack of sufficient quality educational facilities for women in the large rural areas of the country inhibiting women from acquiring the requisite qualifications; poverty - leading to girls from poorer families not having the financial resources to study away from their homes, or to continue their education to the requisite levels for entry into services; lack of training and coaching opportunities in remote and rural areas. Besides, service conditions involving postings in distant cadres, frequent transfers, taxing field duties, compelling demands between family commitments and office etc. act as deterrents.

A Focal Point was set up in the Ministry of Personnel in 2000 and a Steering Committee set up on 16.8 2000 under the Secretary Personnel. This was to do follow-up with all Ministries regarding action taken on the minimum agenda (annexure G) arrived at for post-project activity of the UNDP Project. This minimum agenda listed 6 action points each for its two phases and the Ministry of Personnel circulated it to all the Ministries in June 2001 for a status report. The information received is in the process of being compiled by the Focal Point, which has been located in the Ministry of Personnel. Information regarding women in the civil services in the States is in the process of being collected by the National Commission for Women.

The figures collected so far show that there is an increase in the number but the percentage still remains very low (Annexure E). And to increase the numbers we have to ensure that the other recommendations made in the Capacity Building Project report are also speedily implemented. Briefly, these involve provision of educational facilities for female candidates, particularly in rural areas, to prepare themselves for competitive examinations, change societal attitudes towards the girl child, change male attitudes so that they learn to share the household and child care duties, create awareness through the media regarding job opportunities for women; good career counselling in rural-based colleges etc. Secondly, an enabling environment has to be created for women to perform well. Special housing and Transport facilities are necessary for them. Offices should be provided with common rooms and toilets for the women. Other issues regarding gender sensitive rules and facilities have been dealt with under the heading of Vth Pay

Commission. Thirdly, career planning and advancement for women must be given proper attention so that they can reach the top positions.

This raises the question as to whether there is gender stereotyping of posts. A study done in this regard reveals that gender stereotyping of posts tends to correspond with the overall situation of gender disparities within a particular State. And in so far as the Central Services are concerned, it varies from service to service. Regarding the posts in the States also I feel that things are changing. Where the posting of women as district collectors was rare or unheard of, now young lady officers get these posts in turn. And although there has been an occasional woman chief secretary, now there are four. Earlier, women were relegated to the social sector departments while Home, Industry and Finance were the male preserve right from the junior level with the result that when women rose to senior positions they were not found experienced enough to hold these posts. But things are changing. It is heartening to see that at present we have four women Chief Secretaries and eleven women holding Secretary level posts out of the 123 such posts to the Government of India. We are moving but not fast enough. Finally we have a woman E.O and Secretary, Banking but we need women as Secretaries - Home, Defence, Finance and Personnel, and of course as Cabinet Secretary. When the top decision making level posts are held by women, then we can hope for a sea change in all cadres. In one state there has been a woman chairing the Electricity Board for the past few years, and this was traditionally a male preserve.

The social sector jobs, which were avoided by male officers at one time are now sought after as they offer much more satisfaction. Women may find the social sector posts satisfying but those who have other aspirations should not be excluded from posts in the home or defence ministries. The Committee deciding postings at senior levels, both in the Centre and in the States, should include a woman nominee.

Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

This issue always comes up when we discuss women in the civil services. Lately committees have been set up in all Ministries and organizations under them to ensure that women facing problems have a redressal forum. Studies in this regard reveal that verbal and physical sexual harassment is prevalent in varying degrees in most organizations. But the point I would like to stress here is that this is not a factor that deters women from initially joining any service. The problems arise later. In this regard we have to ensure strengthening of the redressal machinery so that immediate and strict action acts as a deterrent and ensures a cordial environment for women to work and perform well.

Gender Sensitization

The Department of Personnel and Training has been running a number of courses for gender sensitizing all government officials. This is required as the number of women

in all organizations is so small. When there is larger representation of women in all spheres, it is expected that such exercises will not be required.

Women on Deputation to PSUs and International Organizations

Women in the civil service do occasionally get an opportunity to go on deputation to PSUs but the numbers are minimal. Insofar as international bodies and organizations are concerned, while equal opportunity is always advertised, it is very rare that a woman in civil service from India makes it to any top post. We have yet to see a top woman officer making it to the senior posts in World Bank or the IMF. We did have a representation in the ADB at one time but not the top post. Why does this happen? Women do not have the networking abilities that their male counterparts have – the lobbying on the golf course or the clubs in the evenings.

Training

In recent years, the Ministry of Personnel has been ensuring that some women are included in all training slots, whether in India or abroad. But the prize slots again are usually cornered by men.

Institutional Mechanisms

1. Department of Women and Child Development was created as a separate department in the Ministry of Human Resources Department in 1985. It is the nodal department to oversee that the programmes designed to improve the socio-economic status of women are properly implemented. It also undertakes gender sensitization and awareness generation activities. On the directions of this department, women's cells are required to be set up in each ministry/department.
2. A statutory National Commission for Women was set up in 1992. Review of legislation and interventions in specific complaints of atrocities against women are its mandate. It also undertakes legal awareness amongst women amongst its other activities. Further, at its instance, all ministries are required to consult it before moving any legislation which relates to women's rights.
3. Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women : This reviews women's issues regularly. It inter alia sees the reports of the NCW and recommends measures that should be taken by the Union Government for improving the status/conditions of women, and examine the measures already taken to secure for women equality, status and dignity.
4. Planning Commission : Over the last few decades, planning has moved from the welfare to the development to the rights approach for women. As part of its Ninth Plan strategy, the Planning Commission laid down the concept of a Women's Component Plan to ensure that not less than 30% of funds/benefits flow to women from all development sectors.

The Tenth Five-Year-Plan has also stressed the objective of providing a safe environment in which women can develop socially and economically. It took note of the Women's Empowerment Policy 2001 and stated that a National Plan of Action to translate the policy into action was under preparation. The intent is that women should be provided the wherewithal to grow socially and economically as empowered individuals.

These are some of the institutional arrangements already in place for watching the interests of women. They are all working towards one goal – to ensure that the Indian woman gets the status due to her in society, that the equality guaranteed to her under the Constitution and various legislations becomes a reality, and that an enabling environment is created for her to exercise her rights as equal partners along with men.

UPSC

The proportion of women in the Central Government was 7.6% according to the 1996-97 statistics. Of this 98% were in Groups C&D posts. The position in the higher civil services is equally bleak - 10.45% in the IAS, 3.4% in the IPS and 3.18% in the Indian Forest Service in 1999. The Annexure at 'B' shows the number of women candidates that appeared for the Central Services examination in 1999, the number that qualified for the personality test, the number recommended for appointment and the success percentage. The number of females sitting for the exam has increased from 19,802 in 1997 to 24,031 in 2001, registering an increase during this period, and the good part is that the number of those who finally qualified for appointment has increased from 63 in 1997 to 88 in 2001. The success ratio of female candidates was significantly higher than that of male candidates. Further, the statistics as at Annexure 'C' reveal that the performance of female candidates, in the 1995 examination, belonging to the SC, ST, OBC and general categories was far better than the performance of the male candidates of that community. It is also heartening to know that from three female candidates in the first 50 ranks in 1997, the number has increased to 10 in the 1998 Civil Service examination. It is further a matter of pride for women that, as shown in Annexure 'D,' they qualified the Civil Service examination in fewer attempts than the male candidates did.

From the above, the conclusion that I would like to draw is that women have proved their capability to succeed in the civil service examinations, but they are not coming forward in larger numbers. Something needs to be done to encourage large numbers to sit for the examination, and for this, training centres should be set up in Universities from which till date women candidates are not coming. University-wise information of students clearing the examination is tabulated in the UPSC. The Training Division of the Ministry of Personnel and Training could take up this matter with the Universities and provide them proper funding to support this venture. Secondly, as it has been seen that the successful women candidates are those who are from a comparatively well off background and on the whole urban-based, steps must be taken to create awareness of career options in colleges located in rural areas. Girls, apart

from being made aware, should be encouraged through some incentives like support in fee, hostel accommodation etc. in nearby towns and cities where they can get the necessary training and orientation for sitting for the examination. It may be mentioned here that a large part of the JNU and other hostels are occupied by students aspiring for and studying for the Civil Services. As the Annexure 'D' shows, students keep trying any number of times till they succeed.

When one considers the percentage of women in Class I and II posts and the percentage in Classes III and IV (Annexure E), it becomes all the more necessary to focus on the bright ones who have the capability of handling the more responsible and important posts in the administration. Until and unless women join the higher services in large numbers they cannot be said to be participating in the decision-making of public policy.

Reservation of Jobs

The issue as to whether there should be reservation of jobs at senior level for women is a debatable one. One view is that women are capable of and can make it on their own merit (and the UPSC data shows that they can). The other is that as the representation of women is still very small at the senior level, there should be reservation of at least 30% posts. Some of the State Governments have considered the issue of reservation and have decided to provide preference to women in public services to some extent. In Andhra Pradesh, posts/areas of work have been identified where women are better suited than men and where both men and women are equally suited. For the former category preference is given to women and for the latter preference is given to women and they are selected to an extent of 30% of the posts in each category. Similar schemes are in operation in Karnataka, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The recommendation made by the NCW for a similar system of reservation is under consideration of the Government of India according to the Vth Pay Commission Report. Here, I would like to draw attention to the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001 – para 3.1 which inter alia states that, "All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision-making bodies at every level,...". It is for us all to ensure that this policy is translated into positive action.

A Study has revealed that a large number of executives opposed reservation of posts for women in services whereas educationists favoured it. The former felt that they could be considered inferior if they expected 'statutory crutches'. They felt that women required justice, not charity. Those supporting reservation felt that historically women have been deprived of opportunities of development and reservation would compensate for the earlier neglect, deprivation and discrimination against women. The executives felt that reservation would put them at a disadvantage as they would become isolated and invite greater social hostility.

Fifth Pay Commission

The Fifth Pay Commission was particularly gender sensitive in its approach and in its recommendations. It devoted a full chapter to issues related to women's welfare in the Civil Services. It heard the National Commission for Women at length. It also heard various women's bodies including a group of women civil servants. The report reflects the fact that a number of their suggestions and those of the NCW have been taken on board. What is heartening in the report is that it begins by stating the special needs of women, as they have to care for the children and the elderly and shoulder all the family responsibilities. It is a known fact that men do not mind their wives working provided that their own routine is not disturbed. Very few men are willing to share household chores and child-care responsibilities. Therefore, the report stresses the need for special facilities for women employees.

Firstly, the report took into account the fact that some special provisions have already been made by the Government for its women employees 'for facilitating their dual role as mother/wife and a full time employee.' These include:

- a) Age relaxation for widows and women separated from their husbands for appointment in Group C and D posts.
- b) Exemption from requirement of educational qualifications in respect of widows of diseased Government servants appointed on compassionate grounds to post of peons.
- c) Guidelines for posting of husband and wife at same station.
- d) Maternity leave benefits and guidelines for provision of crèche facilities etc.

The report also took on board the recommendations made by the NCW earlier to the Government. These include the provision of ladies special buses, priority in allotment of accommodation, provision of common rooms and toilets for women, extension of maternity leave, working hours etc. – recommendations that are already at various stages of implementation. In Delhi, ladies special buses were introduced recently, but reports are already coming in of the likelihood of their discontinuance on account of their financial non-viability. Many Government offices have provided common rooms and toilets for the women employees, and a few have crèches located in their premises. Besides crèches are being run in some Government colonies by the *Grih Kalyan Kendra*.

The Pay Commission partly accepted the concept of flexi time for women employees and recommended its introduction on an experimental basis in some offices where work is measurable. Similar recommendation for a try at flexi place has also been made.

A radical recommendation is with regard to part-time employment for women at the stage when their children are very small and family commitments high. For this the

government has been asked to work out a scheme in detail. Further, Government has been asked to set up day-care facilities and increase the number of crèches and also improve their quality.

To increase the representation of women at the supervisory/managerial/decision-making levels, the recommendations of the NCW for a 30% sub reservation in public employment in all categories was stated to be under consideration of the Government.

The Report went on to recommend a scheme for raising the age of recruitment for women to 35 years, increase the number of working women's hostels, priority allotment of accommodation to women, construction of single women's hostels and assured housing for the married women employees.

On the issue of posting of women employees, suitable and stable postings for women at the stage when their children are young has been recommended. However, on the issue of posting husband and wife together at the same place, while reiterating the earlier guidelines, the recommendation that the two may 'invariably be posted together...' is rather lukewarm.

- On the representation of serving women civil servants, the Report has recommended that the rules and guidelines for couples who are both in service should be modified to include a shared leave bank, separate HRA, HBA etc. to both the husband and the wife. The woman civil servant felt that just because she married a colleague, she is not treated as an individual, as an officer in her own right, entitled to all the benefits available to other officers who may not be married to serving officers. Such rules, framed by men, keep the woman in a subordinate position and definitely need a change.
- One radical recommendation made and which has already been accepted by the Government and put into action is the grant of paternity leave for 15 days. It is hoped that this will lead to more sharing of child-care responsibilities by the menfolk.

Further, maternity leave has been increased to 135 days. But so far there is no positive action reported on the issue of leave sharing. On the issue of reservation the matter is reported to be under examination.

Women in Civil Services in the USA, UK and in the UN

Women in Civil Services in the United States

	Labour Force	US Govt.	Senior Executive Service
Men	53.9%	51.1%	81.2%
Women	46.1%	42.9%	18.8%

	No. of Women Employed	Percent of Women Workers
Administrative	207,186	41.8
Clerical	153,832	84.6

* This information is as collected by Mrs. Devika Kumar and Mrs. U. Choudhry during a study tour to the USA and UK in 1997 as part of the UNDP assisted project

There is no reservation for women under the US Government

The women in service of the Federal Government associate and federate with reference to their issues. They associate in monthly meetings, lunch meetings and form fellowship.

Women lose out in promotions/appointments to the Senior Executive Services.

Posts are largely filled in through open competition. It is here that women officers feel that they lose out and that there is a preference for men over women in making such selections.

The US Government does not provide facilities of maternity leave/paternity leave to the spouses working for it. There is no stated policy on posting couples in service of Federal Government together, to the extent possible. Entitlement of vacation is for four hours for every two weeks of work. Maternity leave is charged to this account.

However, the US government lays more stress on gender neutral but family friendly policies. Its endeavour is to provide and promote facilities, such as day care, children's health plan schemes, flexi-time, flexi-place, job sharing.

Women in Civil Service in the United Kingdom

UK is concerned with and regularly reports progress in achieving equal opportunities in the Civil Service. Its agenda is to achieve equality of opportunity for women, ethnic minorities and disabled people.

Despite overall lower staff numbers and recruitment, women till 1995 represented nearly 47% of all staff at executive officer level (the first management grade) compared with 29% in 1984.

In April 1995, 9% of the people at Grade III level and above were women compared with 4% in 1984.

Action Plan

Most Departments and Agencies have action plans for women. Action plans cover increased recruitments, development and promotion of women introducing family friendly policies and improving monitoring.

United Nations

The UN endeavoured to have women in a proportion of 50% of the Work Force by AD 2000. It, therefore, hoped to have a critical mass to start with. It was confident of achieving that without any reservations. Later reports on the achievements are awaited.

The UN attempts to develop a new working culture. It has undertaken a sexual harassment survey.

The UN has also established the office of nodal point for women under Human Resource Management which coordinates activities related to women with such nodal points for women in each office of the UN.

Equal Opportunities Training

Equal opportunities training is included in all induction programmes.

Monitoring

Department's aim is to include women on the Recruitment Boards.

Action to reduce under representation

Encouraging women networking and focus groups is popular. More Departments and Agencies are monitoring progress. Improvements in access to training are growing. Family friendly practices are seen as a good way to help career women. Some of the practices are increased maternity related benefits, family friendly initiatives such as adoption leave, dependency care leave and child care provisions at established working place. Some organizations are concerned with increasing part time working and flexible working practices.

The most impressive aspect about gender strategy in the Federal Government of USA and UK is the data compilation. It reflects gender (as also minority) representation across Services, Grades, levels, Departments etc. The data shows whether women are being recruited in large numbers now; levels at which representation of women begins to dwindle, kinds of assignments in which women tend to concentrate; how downsizing Government has impacted on women's representation etc. This is a practice that we in India need to emulate. We have no such readily available for the Central and State Governments.

Why women can be and in many cases are better administrators

Women by nature are supposed to be soft but nature has made them stronger and more resilient so as to be able to cope with their tough biological functions. Secondly, having to manage households on (by and large) limited budgets, attending to the elders in the family and the husband and children, the woman learns to juggle her roles to cope with all her multifarious duties. She is a born manager. A woman's

social responsibility for home and hearth, family health and education makes her much more sensitive to the social needs not only of her family, but of the community at large. Given the opportunity, she brings the female perspective in planning - the user perspective in areas like housing, transport, environment, health care, education etc. And, as the homemaker she manages the budget, she manages the finances of her department/organization with a strict hand. And, as a large proportion of workers in the unorganized sector are women, it needs a woman at senior levels to understand their needs and plan for them. Be it the agriculture worker, the *beedi* worker, the dairy worker, the weaver, the domestic worker etc. - all these need attention. And who better than a woman can empathise with their needs of housing, water, sanitation, education, health care, child-care facilities? Because of their absence or small presence at decision-making levels, issues that affect women are often overlooked.

Women being more sensitive by nature, bring this quality to bear on their dealings with their subordinates as also the public they deal with. They look at the human side of things and try and see the face behind the file, and not the notings alone. They are more accessible, show more courtesy, less aggression and are more judicious in their dealings.

Next, women by and large are much more conscientious about their work. For this I can vouch on the basis of my own experience of nearly four decades in service. I have seen male officers play golf on government time and blissfully ignoring newspaper reports on them. On the other hand, if a woman takes off early to attend to a sick child or mother or mother-in-law, she is adversely commented on. And, by and large, women work harder than their male counterparts. The canteens will be found full of men-folk sipping tea and gossiping while the women try and finish their work in time so that they are free to go home and attend to their other duties. As a study reveals, women feel that they have to keep proving themselves at every point. "The basis presumption is that you might not be able to accomplish or complete a tough task (until you prove yourself to the contrary)." Most women officers and officials say that they feel they have to work extra hard to prove they are as good workers as the men. As an Income Officer said, "Male officers take out time to become members of cultural/social organizations as they have enough time for that and as the home front is looked after by their spouses. For women such activities become a taboo due to family reasons as they have a guilt feeling that sufficient time is not available for self and children." And as another woman officer stated, "when there is any problem in the family, if the male officers take leave on that account, according to some people, it reflects their sense of responsibility towards the family. However, if a lady officer takes leave for the same reason, it is branded as a sign of lack of responsibility. To break the glass ceiling in many areas, the women have had to put in that extra effort which the men-folk do not have to. The men depend a lot on their networking and lobbying tactics – something that women are not adept at, nor are inclined to resort to. Besides, when the majority

of the workers are male, whom are the women to network with. Therefore they work harder and hope that their good work will be recognized.

Further, women are less prone to be corrupt. There may be a few delinquents but, by and large, women, because of their conscience, do not indulge in corrupt practices. They are always conscious of what others may say about them and prefer to follow the straight and narrow path so that they do not attract any adverse attention. Of the 106 officers against whom the CVC advised launching of criminal proceedings since 1990 only two were women and of the 93 against whom imposition of major penalty was advised, two were women. Besides, men hesitate to approach women and offer inducement to get some undue favours. It is basically a male dominated club where favours are exchanged and shared. Here it may be added that women civil servants do not get politically aligned with one party or the other like their male counterparts. I have seen men touching the feet of their political bosses – for what – to get plum postings! Or to hold on to so called good postings! Women cannot and will not do such things. And therefore the mark they make is based on their own merit, not on account of their connections.

The Chinese saying goes that women hold up half the sky but if we consider the women in India they literally hold up the entire sky. Women workers in the unorganized and the organized sector put in more hours of work (mostly unpaid in the informal sector and unrecognized on the domestic front). The latest census was to have documented the actual work put in by women. In the organized sector, at the critical decision-making levels, women are left with only a thin slice and not anywhere near the half they are entitled to. This is firstly due to less representation at the recruitment stage and further at the career advancement levels. While men accept the fact that women have to attend to family commitments, yet when it comes to promotions it is again a male dominated club that networks and lobbies and decides as to who is in and who is out. It is by sheer dint of hard work, diligence and merit that some women make it to the top positions. But even today, of the 123 Secretary level posts in the Government of India, only 11 are held by women. Of the C.S's in the States and UTs at present, four are women. This is the largest number to date. May it increase in future. And here I would like to mention, and I touch wood at the same time, women who made it to the Chief Secretary position in the past have stayed there for some length of time and do not get shunted out prematurely.

A study has revealed that women officers, particularly in the IFS, IT and Indian Postal Service commanded cooperation and respect from their superiors and subordinates on account of being women. Besides, in their working relationships people were on the whole courteous and loyal. Women in the Income Tax stated that their superiors were 'considerate' and accommodating. Subordinates, in turn, found female bosses more understanding and compassionate.

One major advantage that women in the civil service enjoy is that they can communicate directly with the rural women folk. With rural women in many parts of the country, who are still reluctant to step out and convey their problems and demands before the male officers/officials visiting the villages, when it comes to women in the same position, the village women flock together immediately. They are very forthcoming in replying to all queries and given the chance, will sing and dance for you. In this context, I would like to relate a personal experience. We were trying to persuade all villagers to construct toilets in their houses or else build community toilets. First, I spoke to the menfolk in the villages – they brushed aside the need for toilets – “What are the fields for?” they said. What about the problems women face during the day time, late at night and during the monsoons? No problems, according to the men. The women gathered to one side and signalled to me to meet them separately. They had their own tales of woe to relate. The toilets were constructed, and the women were thrilled to also be able to bathe and wash clothes at the taps provided in their own houses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is insufficient representation of women in different services and particularly so at the higher levels. A large number of factors have been identified for this, and remedies also known for rectifying the imbalance. A number of rules regarding recruitment, a number of guidelines to make the environment conducive for women to work in the civil service, a number of facilities to make it easier for her to balance her role as an officer/official and as a wife and mother have either been put in place already or are on the anvil. But, obviously what has already been done is not enough. The numbers at the higher level are increasing very slowly. A greater push is required.

The Constitutional guarantees for equality as also for positive discrimination in favour of women are there – but how many of the women folk, historically and culturally kept in the background, are even aware of their rights. A massive and sustained media campaign needs to be launched to reach out to the remotest village. Women should be made aware that they have the right to be part of the decision-making machinery, the machinery that decides their lives and destinies. But awareness alone is not enough. Facilities and opportunities have to be provided for them to avail their rights. And these facilities should not be given by way of charity, but as a matter of right.

Further, once they enter service, women should be given the facilities required to grow in service, to perform well, to have the opportunity of working in areas heretofore held to be the male preserve.

However, the top decision makers, who are mostly men at present, should include women in their deliberations, and ensure that women’s roles as mothers and wives are kept in mind while taking decisions that affect their roles as officers and women.

Apart from the Focal point in the DoPT, focal points should be set up in each ministry/department/state government to collect disaggregated data of women and men

at various positions and levels. This needs to be regularly analyzed by the DoPT at the Centre and the counterpart department in the states. Cadre controlling authorities, with the help of this data, can plan placements with a view to ensure that there **is no gender stereotyping of posts** and that upward mobility is available to women.

Gender sensitization of employees at all levels, as also politicians need to be done on a regular basis. Steps need to be taken to mainstream gender on all policies of government to ensure that women get their rightful place in society.

Steps need to be taken to ensure that sexual harassment at work place is eliminated. The committees set up for this purpose should be made more active and all women employees made aware of the redressal available.

Rules that favour women's role as mothers need to be further liberalized to ensure that their children do not lack proper care. At the same time efforts should be made to change male attitudes so that the men share the household and child-care responsibilities.

Facilities like common rooms, separate toilets, canteens and crèches need to be provided in all offices for women. More working women's hostels and rented accommodation should be provided for women.

Points for Discussion

1. The need to have regular disaggregated data collected is accepted. How should the data be qualitatively refined so that it can be used as a tool for decision-making instead of mere collection of statistics on women?
2. At what stage and by whom should counselling be done so that more women compete for the civil services?
3. Should gender sensitization be made compulsory and male officers have an entry regarding their level of gender sensitization in their ACRs.
4. The representation of women from rural areas in the civil services is very low. What steps other than those suggested in the background note need to be taken and by whom?
5. Every ministry is supposed to have a women's cell in it but these are not always active or aware of their roles. What guidelines should be issued by the DoPT/DWCD, the nodal department to activate these? Also, the steps that need to be taken to ensure that the women's component in the plan of each ministry/department is actually earmarked.
6. What further rules, other than those already recommended for amendment, need to be amended to make them more gender friendly?

7. Steps needed to break the gender stereotyping of posts; steps to make the entire procedure of postings, promotions and transfers transparent.
8. Should there be reservation of posts for women at all levels to ensure better representation of women at the decision-making levels?
9. Other than the strengthening and expansion of facilities already supposed to be provided, what further steps need to be taken to make life more environmentally friendly for the working woman?
10. What other policy interventions are required to ensure that there is sufficient representation of women at the decision-making levels?
11. What is the role expected from the media in awareness generation of employment opportunities, for women, particularly in rural areas? What is the role it can play in changing male attitudes?

ANNEXURES

Annexure A

EMPLOYMENT IN DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF PUBLIC SECTOR AS ON 31ST MARCH 1997 AND 1998 AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THIS PERIOD

Sr. No.	Branch	Total Employment (in lakhs) as on 31st March		Employment of Women	
		1997	1998	1997	1998
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(3A)	(4A)
1.	Central Govt.	32.57	32.63	02.40	02.46
2.	State Govt.	74.80	74.39	13.30	13.39
3.	Quasi-Govt. (Central)	38.49	34.93	03.44	03.42
4.	Quasi-Govt. (State)	29.20	29.22	02.41	02.46

Source : *Employment Review 1998 published in 2002, Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India*

Annexure B

Year	Appeared in CS (P)			Recommended for Appointment		
	ALL	FEMALE		ALL	FEMALE	
		Number	%		Number	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1991	100848	12850	12.7	871	128	14.7
1992	173777	22481	12.9	763	77	10.1
1993	114651	16161	14.1	790	140	17.1
1994	130088	11847	9.1	705	99	14.0
1995	146803	20982	14.3	641	103	16.1
1996	120712	17005	14.1	739	106	14.3
1997	130198	19802	15.2	621	63	10.1
1998	122363	19909	16.3	470	90	19.2
1999	135086	23836	17.7	411	77	18.7

Source : UPSC Annual Report 2000-2001

	Male Candidates Appeared	Women Candidates	Total Recommended for Appointment No. of Women	
2000	98336 (82.40%)	21059 (17.60%)	342 (80.10%)	85 (19.90%)
2001	114209 (82.60%)	24031 (17.40%)	329 (78.90%)	88 (21.10%)

Annexure C

		Appeared in 1999 exam		Recommended			Success Ratio		
Community	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
SC	701	647	54	63	53	10	1:11.13	1:12.21	1:5.40
ST	384	349	35	30	25	5	1:12.80	1:13.96	1:7.00
OBC	1279	1209	70	127	116	11	1:10.07	1:10.42	1:6.36
GENERAL	2354	1983	371	191	140	51	1:12.32	1:14.16	1:7.27
TOTAL	4718	4188	530	411	334	77	1:11.48	1:12.54	1:6.88

Source : UPSC Annual Report 2000 - 2001

Annexure D

COMMUNITY	SEX	NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS									TOTAL
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	
SC	Male	2	7	6	13	12	10	2	0	1	53
	Female	1	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	10
ST	Male	1	6	2	8	3	2	1	1	1	25
	Female	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
OBC	Male	5	16	22	29	24	12	8	0	0	116
	Female	1	3	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	11
General	Male	20	48	40	32	0	0	0	0	0	140
	Female	13	13	22	3	0	0	0	0	0	51
Total	Male	28	77	70	82	39	24	11	1	2	334
	Female	15	22	29	5	5	1	0	0	0	77

Source : Annual Report – 2000-2001

Annexure E**WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

GROUPS	Total No. of Employees in 10 representative Ministries/Department	No. of Women Employees	Percentage of Employees
Group A			
1980	3550	82	2.31%
1990	4745	219	4.62%
2000	5381	408	7.58%
Group B			
1980	273	26	9.52%
1990	15459	1047	6.77%
2000	17161	2183	12.72%
Other Categories			
1980	463803	25727	5.55%
1990	514997	41637	8.08%
2000	483929	49344	10.20%

(Unpublished data. Figures are approximates as data for some Departments for some years is not readily available)

Annexure F**Focal Issues:**

1. Poverty
2. Religious and Social dogmas.
3. Adverse traditional Practices.
4. Public Perception of the services.
5. Declining Importance and Influence of the services.
6. Increasing materialistic attitude vis-à-vis Public Service Orientation.
7. High Level of Stress (Perceived/real).
8. Very poor/non-existing childcare support services in the form of crèches in/around the workplace for women.
9. Poor transport facilities to and from work place.
10. Lack of awareness about the job responsibilities amongst women
11. Long working hours at work place
12. Imbalanced career development opportunities at senior levels.
13. Fear of exploitation associated with certain types/level of jobs.
14. Very limited job options for women.
15. Negative publicity regarding inconsiderate and unsympathetic attitudes of superiors in offices.
16. Lack of publicity/awareness regarding the measures existing for preventing sexual harassment at the work place.
17. Lack of educational facilities and opportunities for women.
18. Lack of awareness regarding the various job opportunities for women.
19. Hard work for women at an early age inhibits them from getting proper training to prepare the entry into civil services.
20. Lack of proper and dependable family support for working women in sharing their household responsibilities.
21. Lack of hostel facilities for single working women.
22. Unfavourable/discriminating attitude of people towards the female child.

23. Lack of proper educational facilities for women in rural areas.
24. Poor health-care facilities for women in rural areas.
25. Early marriage and marriage before women are able to complete minimum qualification required for the civil services.
26. Prohibitive cost of good education.
27. Male stereotyping of postings.
28. Frequent transfers.
29. Corruption, political interference and law and order problems.
30. Adjustment factor more acute for husbands who are not in the civil services.

Annexure G**Minimum Agenda for Post – Project Activity of the UNDP*****Project on Women in Civil Services*****Phase - I**

1. Collection and collation of gender desegregated data in all offices/institutions for all posts at all levels so that a clear picture about percentage of working women emerges. This needs to be done for the period say 1991, 1995 and 2001, in order to understand the trends.
2. Looking into the practice and not merely the provisions/rules etc. of ensuring posting of husband and wife together. To build up a data base on the number of cases where this has not been possible.
3. Review of rules and regulations to identify lacuna/areas for improvement where they perpetrate gender bias/discrimination. Examining the need for making special provisions for women in service in areas considered appropriate by the cadre controlling authority. A specific Action Plan in this regard is needed to be put in place.
4. To publicize the avenues/fora for employment of women at various levels through media. To evaluate if such steps have been taken in the past and their impact if any on increased participation of women over a period of time. A specific Action Plan in this regard is needed to be put in place.
5. To run Gender Sensitizing Training Programmes at all levels (including CCAs), not merely restricted to officers, and to incorporate a module on gender issues in the training programmes run by the CCAs on a regular basis.
6. Institute a Gender Awareness Week to be observed by all Ministries/Department every year.

Phase – II

7. Setting up of Daycare Centres/Creches for children of working women at all levels after discussions with them on various aspects like location, facilities to be made available, working hours of crèches, need for contribution from parents etc. It is also to be ensured that qualified/responsible workers run such Centres/Creches.
8. To remove the practice of disallowing privileges like HRA, HBA, LTC, etc. to individuals who may be married to other Government servants. While for most purposes, the Government treats officers individually, when it comes to privileges like these, family becomes a unit for the perks.

9. Develop a comprehensive media plan through effective networking.
10. To formulate rules/regulations providing for mandatory adequate representation of women in all recruitment/promotion bodies commissions, committees, boards, etc.
11. To make a special provision for one cadre change other than home cadre only to single women officers on account of marriage, irrespective of the service/employment of the spouse.
12. To make reservation for women in services at all levels, as has been done by certain State Government, eg. Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh. Maharashtra, etc.

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WOMEN IN CIVIL SERVICES

A REPORT

The National Commission for Women conducted a series of consultations on Women in Governance. The national consultation on Women in Civil Services was held on February 10, 2003. Civil servants and NGOs from across the country participated in it and expressed their views and concerns. A number of factors make it extremely difficult for most women who are constantly juggling between their various roles as ideal daughters/wives/mothers and at the same time as professionals to make their mark in their chosen field. For these women civil servants, who relentlessly work for the society, a more supportive infrastructure and a gender-friendly work culture is not asking for too much. The consultation provided a platform for working out strategies for enhancement of participation of women in civil services, particularly at the senior decision-making levels.

The consultation was chaired by Mrs. Poornima Advani, Chairperson, National Commission for Women. She said that the consultation would include several services across the line at various levels – the Indian Administrative Service, the Foreign Service, the Forest Service, the Postal Service, the Revenue Service, the Audit and Accounts, the Civil Accounts, Defence Accounts and others. One of the most important areas which needs to be addressed is that of the low representation of women in civil services. In some States, executive orders have been issued for a 30% representation of women. However, at the recruitment level, the number is increasing, but there is a very small percentage of women at the senior decision-making level.

The Chairperson also stressed on the problem of gender stereotyping of posts. By and large, women are posted in the social sector. There has not been a woman Home Secretary or Cabinet Secretary so far. Therefore, it is important to see how women should be mainstreamed into the main roles of governance. There should not be this bifurcation of what is normally called the 'soft' jobs, the 'soft sector' and the 'hard sector' and so forth. She also referred to the problem of transfers women in higher services face. Women suffer on account of the various responsibilities they are burdened with - home and career.

She said that the objective of the consultation was 3-fold. (1) While focussing on the need for enhancing numbers, the condition of women in the services needs to be looked at (2) How have women in senior positions of governance contributed to better gender sensitive governance? (3) Recommendations. She also informed that the National Commission for Women had drawn up a course curriculum for gender sensitization of administrative personnel. This was a joint effort of the Commission, the Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration and the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. This needs to be brought into all the training academies, and it should be ensured that it becomes a module for inclusion in all training programmes.

The consultation was co-chaired by Dr. Sudha Mallaya, Member, National Commission for Women. At the outset, she expressed her concern over the low participation of women in civil services. There is a need to make women active participants in policy planning. It is a matter of pride that some women were heading various institutions. However, only a handful of women are able to make it against the backdrop of millions who are deprived of even the basic right to education. There are several social factors and family compulsions that confine women to the four walls. There are lesser number of girls taking the civil services exam because of lack of accessibility to coaching facilities, cost involved, gender stereotyping of jobs within families, discrimination between the boy and the girl child in terms of accessibility to different facilities etc. Sometimes women who join the civil services resign on account of lack of a proper support system. She stressed the need for women in position to work towards the betterment of fellow women. There are problems women in higher civil services face. The social stereotyping of postings is a big impediment and inhibits upward mobility. In conclusion, Mrs. Mallaya stressed the need for more child-care facilities and separate toilets for women in offices.

Aims and Objectives

- To look at the reasons for the low representation of women in civil services
- To aim at a more gender-responsive government
- To look into the social problems of the women civil servants
- Document good practices
- To come out with policy recommendations

Presentation by Mrs. Kiran Aggarwal

While drawing attention to the detailed background note circulated earlier, Mrs Kiran Aggarwal drew attention to the following main points:

Constitutional Guarantees

The various articles in the **Constitution** guarantee equal rights to women and ensures that there is no discrimination against them. There is a provision that allows for positive discrimination in favour of women. The Constitution makers were gender sensitive. They gave various guarantees without the women having to really fight for them. In many other countries women had to fight for various rights which have been guaranteed to women in India.

Status of Women in India

Despite the various provisions in the Constitution, the actual condition on the ground is not so good. The discrimination begins even before a girl child is born. The alarmingly adverse sex ratio in some States is a pointer. There still is a wide difference between the literacy rates of males and females. In terms of actual numbers, and the

number of girls who drop out of school, the problem is still enormous. So there is a need to ensure equal opportunities for girls to pursue education for the required number of years.

Women still do not have the opportunity to take decisions even about themselves. Anaemic women are subjected to multiple pregnancies, giving birth to low weight babies every year. There is a very high rate of MMR which is supposed to be the highest in the world. This is because traditionally, historically, socially and culturally, women in India have been subjugated by men, right from birth under their fathers' tutelage, then the husband takes over and in old age the sons dictate. But slowly things are changing and women are coming to the forefront.

Low representation of women

If equal opportunity is to be guaranteed to women to develop socially, economically and politically, it has to be ensured that their representation at all levels is equal. A lot has been done but there is a long way to go to be able to achieve what has been enunciated in the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women which was announced in 2001. The number of women in the Central Government and State Governments and the quasi-government organizations in the States is still very little. At the critical decision making levels, the percentage of women is still very low. Unless there are more women at the critical decision-making level and higher civil services, numbers would always remain an area of concern.

The issues that affect women are, by and large, the same, whether in the higher civil service or in grades II, III or IV and it is practically the same in the Central Government and in the States. The very intensive and extensive consultations that were held under the aegis of the Capacity Building Project assisted by the UNDP revealed that the issues are common across the board. The number of women who are appearing for the exam every year is increasing. By and large the studies and analyses done by UPSC have shown that women candidates are coming into the service with fewer attempts which just shows that they are equally bright or maybe brighter than the men. They can make it, provided they are given the opportunity.

A lot of work has been done already to address the need for more women in services, and how to ensure that more women reach the top.

There are various institutional mechanisms for watching the interests of women. They are all working towards one goal – to ensure that the Indian woman gets the status due to her in society. These are, as mentioned in the Background Paper, Ministry of Personnel, Department of WCD; Ministry of HRD; Planning Commission; National Commission for Women and the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women which reviews women's issues regularly. It inter alia sees the reports of NCW and recommends legislative measures to ensure equality to women in all spheres.

Apart from the Capacity Building Project of the DoPT there are rules which are already in place to assist women in government. The DoPT looks after that part of it. The Fifth Pay Commission was gender-sensitive in its approach. It devoted an entire chapter to women employees and recommended that certain facilities should be made available for women to be able to perform well in their dual roles of officers/employees and mothers and wives.

Rural Women

Another issue which came up during the analysis done by the UPSC is that, by and large, the women candidates are from urban background. Very few are coming from the rural areas. There is a need to provide all possible facilities so that rural women can join hands in decision-making.

Need for disaggregated data

Data is being collected presently to show how many women employees are there at different levels in the Government of India. This was done subsequent to the recommendation made in the Capacity Building Project. Although the instructions went out in June 2001, it is still not available for some ministries so far, and the one available is not totally complete because some ministries do not have information for the years 1980, 1990, 2000. This is an issue which needs pushing. It is, therefore, necessary to have detailed data about women, to know how they are progressing – not only just factual data about Groups A, B, C, D but how they are progressing, what is their upward mobility once they get into service.

Need for more women at the decision-making level

Women at the Group A level should ensure that women are available at the critical decision-making levels to be able to influence the policy decisions of government because most areas of policy making do affect women, whether it is taxation, environment, housing, transport etc. If decisions are taken by men, they do not take on board the woman's perspective. So it is necessary to have women-friendly policies which take into account the needs of the women. That can happen only when there are larger number of women at the decision-making levels. Added to that will be the need to have more transparency in the whole system of empanelment, transfers, postings, and various rules have to be made much more open so that people know why they have been overlooked, why fewer women are getting to the top.

Why are more men willing to join the Social Sector – a sector so far considered suitable for women

On the issue of why women are typecast for the social sector, it has been noticed of late that men today want to be in the social sector because of the opportunities that are opening up in the social sector. These were considered generally as posts reserved

for women but now more and more men are wanting to be in those sectors because of the various other opportunities to move upward and in international organizations.

Need for a Change in Attitude

The gender perspective has to form part of all the policies and plans/schemes. It has to be ensured that women are not treated as beneficiaries, but they should be considered as equal participants. There is a need for more women to ensure that there is a change in attitude as without their participation it would be difficult to change the societal attitudes which have come down through the ages - issues like stopping early marriage, getting all the girl children to school, stopping child labour etc.. All these issues can be changed only when there are more women at the top. Besides, this is where the assistance of all members of the civil society is required.

Gender Sensitization

In most of the gender sensitization programmes, mostly women employees are deputed to go and attend these gender courses. It should be ensured that all men also attend these courses.

Sexual harassment at the work place

This is an issue which has come centre stage now. People used to brush it under the carpet earlier. But even now not all the ministries have set up the required cells/committees. And are women coming forward in large numbers to complain? This is an issue that needs to be studied and to see whether the instructions issued subsequent to the Supreme Court order and after pushing by the National Commission for Women are being followed. The NCW should push this much further and get a study done to see whether the present mechanism is sufficient? Are women gaining the confidence to come forward and complain? And what happens in the end? Do those complaints really end in any conviction or punishment for persons who are indulging in these activities? Since these committees do not have sufficient women on them, the people who take the final decisions are again mostly men. And will they take an objective decision against their colleagues? What the women lack is this **networking** ability, because they are so few in number. When they are in larger numbers, these issues are taken care of. The self-help groups in which women who are sometimes not even literate, their getting together gives them the strength and confidence to be able to take up big issues. They have fought for their rights in the villages for various things just because they are together and in larger numbers. The same should happen in the civil service also.

Enabling environment

All the basic facilities should be provided so that women can perform well in the office and at home. Their dual role cannot be ignored. It should be ensured that all recommendations made by the DoPT as part of the Capacity Building Project, by the

Fifth Pay Commission and in the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, are all put into action and that there are women friendly personnel policies and facilities for women to be able to fulfil their roles as employees and wives/mothers/daughters.

Role of the media

Media needs to play a much more proactive role in presenting a more positive picture of women. The spread of the electronic media is so wide that it can help change attitudes by presenting the positive role of women. Radio and newspapers could also spread awareness about the need to have more women as administrators and motivate women to join the services.

Why the Need to have more women at Decision Making levels

1. Women represent half the population and should have the opportunity to represent their needs.
2. To bring a gender perspective in all development planning.
3. To ensure a better environment for women working at lower levels.

Why Women can be and are better administrators

1. They are more sensitive, more fair and just
2. They are more conscientious and hard working
3. They are less corrupt as figures show
4. They have been performing better than men as the analysis of the 1999 exam shows
5. They can communicate directly with the rural women

Observations by Discussants

Mrs. Asha Das, a 1964 batch retired IAS officer, stressed the need for literacy to ensure more participation of women in civil services. Unless there are women teachers, the status of women or girls will not change. Despite years of implementation and the policies of 1968 and 1986 which laid down that 50% of the teachers will be women, the number is still abysmally low.

Mrs. Das drew attention to the health sector where access to services in so far as women are concerned is very low. The number of women attending or girls being brought to hospitals is far below that of boys and men. Boys are brought to a hospital even if they sneeze. A woman or a girl is given medical care only when she is practically on her deathbed.

Another area where women are given no chance to participate is agriculture. Unless there are more women in agricultural universities and women working as

agricultural extension officers at the grassroots level, there can never be a change of perception with regard to the needs of women at all levels.

It is necessary that women in all departments and at all levels should be empowered. At present, there is not even 10% representation of women both at the central and other levels. Due to lack of education, women from rural areas cannot even appear for the entrance examination. In villages where precious little is done to provide basic health facilities, education of women stands last in the list of priorities.

There have been major developments in many areas. It is important to bring in more women in all spheres of development and this is not possible unless there is a change in male perceptions about the so called 'jobs for men.' She said efforts should be made to ensure basic services like creche, separate toilets for women, transport facilities, etc. These facilities should be made available to women in all services and at all levels. Government and the NCW need to mobilize the community and society to provide for these services. They need not be loss-making enterprises for the government or the private people. These can be self-employment avenues for a large number of women at every level, including the rural and other levels.

Unless we start focussing at the grass root level, the dream of equal participation of women in civil services can never be achieved. Since sustainable development cannot be achieved without the active involvement of people in the process of solving problems common to their group, it is necessary that women get adequate representation in the decision-making processes because they are best equipped to articulate their concerns. It is necessary to push the government to create necessary infrastructure for the delivery of different services for women. There is no institution of the government which has been able to ensure that its own orders are followed. What is required is a monitoring mechanism and some sort of penal action or a time-bound programme.

Even today the inputs which need to go into training at various levels of functionaries, regarding gender sensitization, have not been adequately reflected, especially at the grassroots level where they are required. At the actual grassroots level, workers whose views and beliefs matter a lot so far as the dissemination of that information or educating the public at large including women in rural areas or even in semi-urban areas is concerned, it is practically missing. Social mobilization at the grassroots level, through Panchayati Raj institutions or government functionaries or a combination of all political leaders and everyone, needs to be done to ensure that there is a visible change in the attitudes towards the needs of the girls and women at the village level. This alone can change the focus and probably enable women to partake in the decision making in vital areas which have an impact on their status, on their participation and which make it possible for them to move from the household into the community to be able to provide services. They are capable of doing it provided they

are given the right type of environment, support and encouragement with the facilities and inputs for quality education.

Mrs Sarita Prasad, a 1969 batch IAS officer said that the topic of the consultation was close to the heart as, being a civil servant, she too faced problems due to lack of a gender-friendly infrastructure. For greater representation of women in civil services, especially from the rural areas, it was necessary to build the aspiration levels of the girls. Women in rural areas have to think beyond getting clerical jobs, low paid government jobs or jobs of teachers at the primary level and to think that they can go higher, they can aspire for higher jobs. It also takes a lot of family support for a woman to think that she has the potential and the wherewithal to go ahead and do what she wants to do. In this role models always help. Therefore, women should be given field assignments so that they are more visible to these aspiring women. They should go out so that people can see what women can do and aspire to be one of them. They need to believe that they can go higher and prove themselves outside the home as well.

The attitudinal problems need to be tackled from an earlier stage. The attitude that women are not serious about their work persists at a much more basic level. It is that men feel threatened by women intruding on their preserve. They feel that a woman who takes decisions takes matters out of their hands and they feel that they are no longer in control. So it does not have so much to do with the woman's performance as it has to do with their own insecurity. This is a power equation, an equation that has existed for centuries and now is being disturbed.

Therefore, what is most important is changing attitudes at a younger age. One of the solutions could be more coeducational schools because when girls study in a coeducational school, they also tend to take on the thinking patterns of boys. The girls who study in coeducational schools are generally more desirous of taking up careers for themselves because they study in an environment where boys are talking of what they will do when they grow up, what courses they will follow, what studies, what jobs, and the young girls also tend to think similarly. Also the boys take girls as their equals and partners in whatever they are doing, whatever activities they are undertaking. Attitudes cannot change overnight. So this is one point which Ministry of Education could perhaps take up. Also, gender specific personal questions in interviews should not be allowed.

On the issue of reservation, she said major concessions should not be asked for since women have built a certain image over the years, from 1951 when the first lady joined the service to now. And this image they have built by dint of hard work and high levels of integrity. She said that it was heartening to know that out of 106 persons against whom criminal proceedings have been recommended by the CVC, only 2 are women and of the 96 officers against whom disciplinary proceedings have been recommended, only 2 are women. This is an image built over a long period of time.

This is an image that should be maintained. Major concessions should not be asked for. Asking for too many concessions would damage their cause. However, in terms of rules, she felt that for grant of LTC, the family should not be treated as a unit. Each officer should be entitled to it as an individual. She also emphasized on the need for networking amongst women. Women at decision-making levels should try and work for the upward mobility of women.

Another problem is that of gender stereotyping of posts. There has not been single woman Home Secretary, there has not been a lady Finance Secretary. In the State Government, women have been Home Secretaries and Finance Secretaries but not in the Central Government. Perhaps in the State Governments, they get to hold more posts of a more difficult variety also than in the Central Government. Perhaps it is the nearness of the decision makers who know of the abilities of various women officers that they get more of these better jobs in the states than they get in the Centre, because at the Centre it is a more impersonal and remote posting process that goes on. So the suggestion that is made is that if a particular post has not been held by a woman for very many years at some place, women should be given a chance of holding those posts which have traditionally been a male preserve and we should try and work towards that end. There is a need for more women on the selection boards.

Mrs. Prasad stressed on the need for networking amongst women and for women. Have women in decision making posts taken decisions which have helped women? She said that this would be a very good area for a detailed study to be conducted by the NCW.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION AND THE OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF THE CONSULTATION

1. The **need to have regular disaggregated data** collected is accepted. How should the data be qualitatively refined so that it can be used as a tool for decision-making instead of mere collection of statistics on women?
 - It is necessary to have regular disaggregated data since it is a very important tool for decision-making. Data collected by the CSO and the RGI should be taken on board. Further, a format regarding the required data should be included in the Annual Reports of all ministries/departments/organizations. In the States, the ESA could collect this data. The Ministry of Personnel and other cadre controlling authorities should have the data collected regularly. Collection of data could also be outsourced to an organization like the NIPCCD. The Department of Economics and Statistics of every State Government could be asked to bring out the data about women at different levels. A proforma could be prescribed by the Administrative Reforms Department so that every organization has the same kind of format.
2. At what stage and by whom should **counselling** be done so that more women compete for the civil services?
 - Counselling is required to make more women compete for civil services. It should be done by senior civil servants and experts at high school and college levels in rural and urban areas. It is necessary to motivate girls, especially in rural areas, to take the civil services exam since often they are conditioned into believing that only men can be administrators while women are 'by nature' meant for more passive and soft jobs. The parents also need to be counselled. Some times women who make it resign because of a lack of a supportive system. Therefore, counselling is required for women who join the services as well.
3. Should **gender sensitization** be made compulsory and male officers have an entry regarding their level of gender sensitization in their ACRs.
 - Regular programmes for all should be necessary. There is no need to have an entry in the ACRs of male officers regarding their gender sensitization levels. The Gender Centre should be set up early. Gender sensitization programmes should not be stand alone programmes but should be made part of all other training programmes. Apart from the bureaucracy, all Political parties need to be gender-sensitized.
4. The **representation of women from rural areas in the civil services is very low**. What steps other than those suggested in the background note need to be taken and by whom?

- The representation of women from rural areas in the civil services is very low. More education and training facilities in and for rural areas is required. It could be worked out on the Haryana pattern, i.e., giving incentive to girls to get training in established training institutes. Universities like the Punjab University, that have syllabus in line with the UPSC exam should start distance learning for covering students in rural and semi urban areas. A large number of girls drop out of schools due to lack of basic facilities like separate toilets. An appeal should go to the States to construct separate toilets for girls in all primary and secondary schools. Providing basic health care is a must since without these basic facilities, we cannot even think of educating our women from rural areas.
 - Emulate the private sector - pick up bright students and give stipend to them to study further.
5. What **further rules**, other than those already recommended for amendment, need to be amended to make them more gender friendly?
- Separate LTC and HBA must be given to women. The family should not be treated as a unit. Each officer should be entitled to it as an individual.
 - Women in Civil Service who marry outside the service have a tough time. They should be allowed one-cadre change. The NCW should recommend this since seldom do men follow women as it is normally expected that the woman will follow wherever the husband is posted, even if it entails her taking leave, foregoing a promotion, or even quitting service.
6. Steps needed to break the gender stereotyping of posts; steps to make the entire procedure of postings, promotions and transfers transparent.
- Everybody endorsed the need to break the gender stereotyping of posts. Steps should be taken to make the entire procedure of postings, promotions and transfers more transparent. It was also felt that women should be included in the highest decision-making bodies and recruitment boards. In seminars held for the empowerment of women, there should be equal participation of men and women, preferably a man and a woman representative from each organization.
7. Should there be **reservation of posts for women** at all levels to ensure better representation of women at the decision-making levels?
- Some were against it while others asked for 50% reservation. Some states have made a 30% reservation for women but no studies are available yet to show how this is working in practice. A suggestion was made that there should be 10% reservation for rural women.
8. Other than the strengthening and expansion of facilities already supposed to be provided, what further **steps need to be taken to make life more environmentally friendly for the working woman?**

- There was a consensus on the need for provision of basic facilities like toilets, child-care centers etc. State should help out at the stage when women have small children.
 - Every ministry is supposed to have a women's cell in it but these are not always active or aware of their roles. Specific guidelines need to be issued to activate these. Steps need to be taken to ensure that the women's component in the plan of each development related ministry/department is actually earmarked.
 - Stringent action must be taken on **sexual harassment** complaints. Study is required to see whether the committees set up are ensuring that action is taken on complaints and to know the number of complaints made.
 - **Hostels** for working women: More such hostels as also rented accommodation should be provided for single working women.
9. What is the **role expected from the media** in awareness generation of employment opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas? What is the role it can play in changing male attitudes?
- All agreed that media has an important role to play in presenting a positive image of women and for awareness generation regarding opportunities for women in civil services. Social message slots have been greatly reduced in the electronic media. Media policy for women which was formulated should be implemented by all channels. The private channels should also be motivated to bring out these spots on the status of women as well as on family planning and other areas at their own cost. Gender Awareness Programmes should form a component of each development scheme. Lives of working women can be made more visible through the media. It could give an insight into the work situation. A media plan could be prepared for attracting recruits through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The concept of presenting role models on television could be inspiring. There is hardly any public evaluation done of contribution by women civil servants to better governance. Steps should be taken in this direction. Foreign channels hardly have any constructive and informative spots for women. These should be monitored and asked to include social messages in their telecasts. Cable operators should also show these spots. Informative talks on radio and television could also reach rural women. Media can play an important role in deconstructing the constructed myths that women want soft postings since they are 'by nature' more passive.
 - The issues of women's rights, health and education, access to resources, men's sharing of domestic responsibility, girl child's right to be born, survive, develop and many other related issues can be packaged in interesting, viewer-friendly programmes.

- Whenever any grant is given, for family planning or literacy programme or women development, a component of women awareness generation should always be a part of that programme. No project should be sanctioned any grant till the voluntary organization agrees to promote awareness of women, and highlight the status of women and the status of the girl child. This would depend on the sensitiveness of the officers of various departments.

10. **Networking:**

- Women, when they come together, get a lot of confidence. More networking amongst women is required. Women study centres can be used for networking. Website on women in Civil Services should be set up by Department of WCD or NCW for networking. Women at decision-making levels should work towards the upliftment of other women. There should be an association through which women can come together.

11. **The North East – Geographical impediments**

There are many qualified girls who are keen to join the civil services in the North East. But most are inhibited by the fact that they have to leave their homes to avail of the coaching facilities in towns. Most of the towns/cities also do not have boarding houses for women. Difficult terrain is another factor which discourages girls from commuting to the coaching centres wherever facilities exist. Therefore, there is a need to organize special coaching sessions for aspiring women candidates in the N-E States. Another option could be to organize the training/coaching sessions via the CICs (Community Information Centres) which have been set up by the M/O IT. There are about 470 such centres which have been established and are functioning quite well. These are mostly located in the block headquarters, thus covering rural areas of the region. Many of the women officers who get the Northeast cadres have sought cadre change. They may perhaps opt to if they could be allowed, in the course of their career, a one or two term deputation to a cadre of their choice or home cadre. This was a request received during the consultation.

Economic independence is the key to women's advancement. A combination of the ability of women and political will can accord to women the status due to her, not as charity but as a right.

“Swagat, Samman Suvidha and Suraksha” are the four Ss required, according to a gender sensitive male participant, to get more women in civil services and ensure that they are able to perform well.

PART - II
INAUGURAL SESSION

BUSINESS SESSION

- **Women in Public Sector Undertakings**
- **Women in Local Self Governance**
- **Women in Civil Services**

INAUGURAL SESSION

The session started with a lighting of the lamp by Hon'ble Shri Manohar Joshi, Speaker Lok Sabha, Hon'ble Dr. Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha. Smt. Jaskaur Meena, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, and Smt. V.S. Rama Devi, former Governor of Karnataka. Smt. Nafisa Hussain, Member, National Commission for Women welcomed the Chief Guests and the participants from various parts of India. She explained the purpose of the workshop and believed that the women of India have been struggling to get their rights. The National Commission for Women has been working for them and trying to resolve their issues.

In her Opening Remarks, Dr. Poornima Advani, Chairperson, National Commission for Women, introduced the theme of women in governance. She informed that a Core Committee consisting of Mrs. Kiran Aggarwal, Mrs. Asha Das, Mrs. Sarla Gopalan, (all former secretaries of the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India), Dr. Reena Ramachandran, Director General, Fortune Institute of International Business, New Delhi, and Prof. Susheela Kaushik, Delhi University, had designed this workshop on Women in Governance. She hoped that the Constitution Amendment Bill reserving 33 percent of seats in the Parliament and State Assemblies will be passed soon, and that with more women in governance, the values will improve. This, along with a sustainable human development will help the women to be an active participant in the development process. The emergence of a critical mass of women is necessary for impacting on the legislative and policy matters, and for women to be visible and recognised. Whether it is at home or in office, in legislature or any other institution, women need to have their adequate space. Even where they have attained this space, as facilitated by the 33% reservation in local self government, the question remains as to whether they have been able to get the necessary space to influence governance. This is a "democratic deficiency".

Similar types of issues - low participation, lower levels of their location, profession oriented concerns and women's special problems, have been marked in the civil service and public sector undertakings.

The present national workshop, which is a culmination of three earlier national consultations on the three sectors of Civil Service, Public Sector Undertakings and Local Self-Government, will seek to throw light on the major issues and arrive at strategies for further action and recommendations to the government. These consultation will be followed by consultations on other related fields of governance.

Giving his Inaugural Address, Hon'ble Shri Manohar Joshi, Speaker, Lok Sabha believed that women if given a chance will be good administrators. Governance by women will be clean, neat and nice, it will be better than by men. Their active participation will lead to better gender sensitive governance, which are necessary for good governance, development and nation building. Their participation will lead to a more

participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive governance, based on rule of law.

He further remarked, "Women still remain sidelined at all levels of decision making, especially in the political life of the nation. In the International Parliamentary Conference held to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India very recently, many delegates from abroad and around the world emphasized the need for ensuring greater participation of women in the political process for strengthening democracy and democratic institutions. I think all over the world, in principle it is accepted that the women must be given the reservation in seats and also preference in governance. It is true that in principle, things have been admitted but if you look to the actual implementation, there is a difficulty. I am sure that organizations like NCW will be very helpful in bringing about a correct implementation of the resolutions passed by the Parliament and the legislative bodies". He added, "According to a UN report of 2002, in 1999, only in 16 countries across the world did women account for over 25% of the parliamentarians. About 22 countries had a woman heading the government. And there were only 16 women Heads of State till the year 2000. These figures show that lots of things are yet to be done in this regard".

He pointed out "The difficulties that women experience in combining a political career with the traditional role of the family are economic dependency, lack of financial means and insufficient education in general and political education in particular. While the developed world has overcome some of the barriers and increased greater participation of women in public life, the situation obtaining in the developing world is yet not favourable". Without the full participation of women in decision-making, the political process will surely be less responsible and responsive.

He described the various laws made by the Parliament for women's rights and development but lamented that in practice there was no implementation of these Acts. He suggested three strategic areas that need to be looked into in the cause of women's advancement.

1. Financial independence to women. This will help to stop atrocities against them. In every state there should be a financial corporation to help women; banks should be providing financial assistance to women if the latter want to start their own small industries.
2. The problems of health of women need to be focussed.
3. The education of women and resolving the problem of women's illiteracy. Education should be given top priority and made free.

The honourable Speaker also mentioned the reservation of seats for women in local government, but believed that men should not be allowed to dominate the elected women. As regards the 85th Constitution Amendment Bill providing reservation of seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies, he mentioned that he himself personally moved an unanimous resolution in the Maharashtra Assembly in 1996 that the Bill

should be passed immediately. He promised to pass on the wishes of the people, who attended the workshop, to the Prime Minister who would be meeting the women Members of Parliament on the issue on that very day.

He praised the work of the National Commission for Women in the direction of achieving equity, equality and justice for women and commended its plan of activities for young girls. A holistic view of women's empowerment, by seeking women's participation in all spheres of decision making as in government bodies, public administration, judiciary, corporate and technical bodies, undertaken with commitment to change the existing perceptions, is imperative.

The key note address was delivered by Dr. Najma Haptulla, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha. She referred to the earlier post-Beijing Conference in 1997 when the then Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda committed himself to get the 33 percent of seat reservation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies; she lamented that nothing has happened since. She expressed the strong belief that the Bill should be through before Parliament even if there was no prior consensus, and allowed to be defeated in case it happened. Pointing to her own role in introducing a resolution on 8 March 1996 in Rajya Sabha for adequate representation of women in decision making, she said that many political parties have included it in their election manifestoes, but nothing has emerged.

She added very pertinently "The Constitutional guarantee against discrimination on the basis of gender should not lead to further marginalisation of women. We do not need a gender neutral governance. We need rather a gender sensitive governance and help women to overcome the historical deficiency. Government and political leadership should envisage proactive and positive gender discrimination and mainstreaming of gender perspective in national politics".

She also talked of the increasing gender inequality in sex ratio, education, management and economic opportunities; in property holding or occupying positions. Despite the constitutional equality, there is still legal inequality; gender justice and social security have not yet reached women. She made a strong plea for preparing more and more women for politics so that when and if the reservation comes about there will be enough women in every political party to contest the elections.

Hon'ble V.S. Rama Devi, former Governor of Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka, making her contribution to the workshop, presented her experiences as a woman governor. At the outset she pointed out that though a governor has very limited functions by way of governing, she/he can still do a lot by way of solving the concerns of the people. She mentioned about the hard working women of Himachal Pradesh who were educated and empowered to make their own decisions; still they were being exploited by the men. She narrated her experiences in Bidar and Kolar (Karnataka) where the women empowered themselves by forming self help groups and organising themselves for social and community development. Equally she gave many instances where the elected women of panchayats are empowering and helping themselves. Women would

like to be equal partners and have equal participation with men, she said, and not be treated either as goddesses or 'dasis'.

Smt. Jaskaur Meena, Minister of State, Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, made her Presidential Remarks. A role model herself, having risen from the village and block level of governance to the national politics. Smt. Meena said that 70 percent of Indian women living in the village and slums, working as hard labour or involved in the household work, are not aware of the significance of International Women's Day to their rights and dignity. On this day one should be concerned about their issues and problems.

She pointed out to the low participation of women in the group A (7.5 percent), group B services (13 percent), judicial services (less than 2 percent) and legislature (8 percent in Lok Sabha). With such a small percentage of participation out of a total of 49 percent of India's population, the Indian democratic system is operating today. It should be the ambition of every woman today that she becomes visible, makes her contribution, becomes self reliant and moves forward by recognising her own potentials. At the same time one should also focus on the challenges and constraints against women, in the form of the family conditions, social environment and national ethos. The deterioration in the values and social behaviour after independence has prevented even three percent women from emerging in public life. One needs to ponder over this and trace the factors as to why and how women have been prevented. Alternately one also needs to ponder as to what are the factors, the family, parental upbringing, special abilities, education, skills, support structures etc. which helped those who moved forward and participated in governance. Smt. Jaskaur Meena further pointed out that there is often a tendency to discourage the girl children from asserting themselves; to undermine and undervalue the potentials of rural and illiterate women, to pre-empt vocational skills, development, higher educational ambitions, nurturing of their health and engagement in economic activities, by marrying them off early. The voluntary organisations need to engage the family members and convince them. The media should focus on interesting and constructive activities rather than devote disproportionate space to crime and other unwholesome developments. The International Women's Day should be celebrated not merely in the urban areas but in every village and street, and among the women engaged in agricultural and informal activities.

Earlier welcoming the participants, Smt. Romi Sharma of the National Commission for Women, briefly traced the history of the Commission, its objectives, functions and powers. She also informed in brief, the type of actions and activities that the Commission had undertaken in recent years. Such actions included, among others, the review of the laws, violence against women and girls, Complaints Cell, Child marriage, problems of SC and ST women, hearings on impact of globalisation, trafficking in women etc.

The Inaugural Session came to an end with a vote of thanks by Smt. Sunila Basant, Member Secretary, National Commission for Women.

BUSINESS SESSION :

WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS

The theme paper on Women in Public Sector Undertakings was presented by Dr. Reena Ramachandran. Chairing the discussions, Smt. Nafisa Hussain, Member NCW, pointed out the various difficulties that the women working in public sector undertakings were facing. Dr. Reena Ramachandran, whose presentation was based on the national consultation held on 27th January 2003 and the suggestions that emerged therein, pointed out that the health and strength of a corporate body depend very much on the individuals who make it up. The new trends of women in leadership positions, and their successes as employees will add up to the corporation's performance. Hence the need for improvement in the working environment, particularly of women. She pointed out the purposes of the workshop to be those of working out a plan of action for promoting more women at the decision making level, helping them to go up the ladder and bringing about a critical mass of women at the higher level of the public sector undertakings. Dr. Reena Ramachandran pointed to the growing role of emoluments in the public sector, though the number of employees had come down. She believed that despite the disinvestment process, in recent years the public sector has grown in numbers. It is the single largest organised sector. She further believed that public sector will remain the core of Indian economy and so the role of women will continue to be crucial to the economy. Thereby the extent of participation of women in the public sector and their issues will continue to be significant.

Supported by facts and figures of the last decade, Dr. Reena Ramachandran demonstrated that the number of women employed in public sector had only marginally increased during the last decade. Even this increase was in the areas of transportation, tourism, etc. In areas like communication, tele-communication, agro-based industries, which are normally viewed as women friendly, there had been no increase. In the areas like steel, there had even been a negative trend.

Over the years, there has been a vast increase in the financial services (7-8%) real estate and business services (9-10%) and banking. However the organised sector has not been able to utilise it to the utmost. Out of this growth, the private sector was growing more than the public sector. Obviously, the increase in the employment of women in general has been less.

In the banking sector, the State Bank of India is a large segment of employment. In the commercial bank sector, the growth of women's employment is the highest (54.2 percent). In the foreign bank sector, more than half of the officers are women. Obviously they are hiring them because women are performing well and giving them the results.

However the foreign banks and commercial banks are concentrating on the urban areas, and their growth is the result of globalisation process. It is only the public sector

which has spread in the rural areas. There is not much difference by way of employment of officers (including even men). It is only 29.7 to 30.6 percent. The presence of women in banks in the rural areas is less because of the absence of support system and facilities.

On the whole, Dr. Ramachandran pointed out, taking all rural, urban and semi urban areas, as well the public sector, commercial and foreign banks, the highest number of women employees are in the southern region. Next comes the western region.

She also pointed out that growth has taken place in the last four years in the private sector rather than in the public sector banks; but on the whole it has not been much. The growth of women in the private sector banks has been slow and steady.

As regards the insurance sector, women's employment is larger in the life insurance rather than in general insurance. Also more women are participating in the unorganised sector of life insurance rather than the organised one, mainly in the form of agents. The prospects in future, however, is somewhat bleak as more and more of expansion in this sector will be in selling products rather than in keeping accounts. Women who are good in keeping accounts will be replaced by computers and internet. The managements will have to look for better input from women employees by way of development of communications, managerial skills, and aptitude for team work.

With the prospects of future expansion taking place from the banking to IT based business services, the employment of women in the financial sector as a whole will go up. This will help women as it will enable flexi working hours, opportunities to operate from home and to pick up entrepreneurial areas of work. The management of banks and financial services need to look at these, enhance the participation of women and enable them to contribute to the commercial well being of the organisation.

The other large public sector industry is the railways. There is one woman (Ms. Viswanathan) on the Board. There is an increase in the employment of women in the railways, but significantly it is entirely in the Southern Railways.

Thus at the decision making level in the public sector like banks, railways etc. there is very low visibility of women. There is a need to improve this and make them a critical mass.

In the private and foreign banks, there is a higher proportion of women in the decision making level and they make a direct impact on the institution's performance. Women account for 20 percent in ICICI Prudential and 28-29 percent in its banking section and 6.5 percent at the managerial level; three out of seven members in the ICICI Board are women. The ICICI experience highlights that it makes a commercial sense to appoint women in the right places.

Dr. Reena Ramachandran pointed out that globally speaking 40 percent women are in the workforce; of them 20 percent are in managerial and 2-3 percent in the top leadership positions. There is a wide variation among the countries, with India having only 2.3 percent women in the administrative and managerial jobs.

Dr. Ramachandran referred to the formation of the Forum of Women in the Public Sector, in February 1996. The Forum has the support and involvement of the management of various undertakings. The Forum has influenced the management to recognise the need for its contribution to education and training of women as well as the advantages of their placement in higher positions. Tracing the evolution of the Forum, Dr. Ramachandran pointed out to its regional, decentralised and participatory character, and its activities like running a newsletter, creation of a data based collection of information, attitude surveys etc. It has instituted entrepreneurship training, support system, websites, performance awards etc. Many PSUs picked them up with good results and a momentum was provided. The Forum presented the best performance award to the PSUs which did well for women. A task force was constituted to implement the various decisions.

By way of impact of the Forum's activities Dr. Ramachandran pointed out the following developments :

Recognition of women's contribution :

- (i) The fact that the chairmen, CEOs and H.R. Cells Heads came to receive the award personally, showed the significance of women's contribution to the company's performance.
- (ii) The annual surveys of PSUs and the Department of Public Undertakings, introduced for the first time a chapter on women in the normal statistics which they collect every year.

Ms. Ramachandran spelt out various strategies to promote women in management and need to adopt at a right age so that they can reach the level of a GM, the Board and above all of a CEO, before they retire. In turn, these strategies were recommended at three levels - at the enterprise level, at the level of women and at the government level in terms of policy intervention.

The discussions that followed, raised very many important points and witnessed keen participation.

OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS

The Governments, Enterprises and employee associations have an important role to play in raising awareness, developing strategies, sharing information, monitoring, implementing and strengthening equal opportunities for women. A tripartite approach is particularly strategic. Government, Enterprises and Associations need to find common ground and goals to improve the situation of women at work.

GENERAL :

- (a) Needed new approaches to education system from an early age which would develop a positive view of women's economic role, their capacity in decision making and their effectiveness in achieving business objectives.
- (b) In view of continued occupational segregation and problems for qualified women moving to top level in organizations, there is a need for a joint effort by governments, employers and associations in removing barriers for career advancement. This is crucial for enterprise competitiveness, general well being of society and optimizing the full potential of women in terms of knowledge, skills, increased levels of education and experience, larger share of labour market.

A) AT ENTERPRISE LEVEL :**Research and Data :**

- 1. Information and data collection; annual reports of PSU, Banks, Insurance and Railways should have quantitative and qualitative information on women.
- 2. Enterprises to carry out surveys and publicly promote best practices.

Training :

- 3. Training, compulsory gender sensitization programme for men.
- 4. Training for women in capacity building, assertiveness, leadership, training, decision making, public speaking, team building and multi skill building. Learning and on the job training should be accessible to women and men on the same terms.
- 5. When women or men opt to work part time at managerial levels, they should not be excluded from training opportunities and promotion considerations.
- 6. Special programmes for business skill training and entrepreneurship development.
- 7. The women should not be ignored for vital training and foreign training. They should get additional opportunities (not merely equal) in the training programmes, as there is very low participation right now. There should be a follow up for the training programmes, to know the impact of the programme.

The PSUs should work out gender ratio statistics in their employment, training and foreign training.

Support Services / Systems :

- 8. In order to allow more women to enter managerial positions, support structures need to be established where there are none, and strengthened where they are weak. Support systems, such as day care centers, care of older persons etc. need to be initiated.

9. Enterprise should provide safe environment and transport facility for women.
10. Flexible working hours, but it should be only for a short duration during the child nurturing period.
11. Sabbatical leave especially during child birth and rearing, maximum twice in the entire service for a total period of five years. It should assure lien on the job, enabling her to return to work without losing or quitting the job.
12. Mentoring of women not only by other women but also by men.

Policies / Procedures / Systems

13. Equal opportunity policy. Commitment of top executives to gender equality, making middle managers aware and accountable and adopting a range of measures vital for ensuring the success of equal opportunities policies at the enterprise level.
14. Recruitment and promotion procedures, to be transparent. The selection panels should have women representatives. If the women are not there at senior positions, the enterprise must induct them from outside and/or outsource them.
15. It is essential that clearly defined job descriptions are established free of gender bias and that there is an objective system of job evaluation, and a well structured management performance appraisal system. It is good for enterprises, institutions, organization and governments to set targets and goals and to monitor progress.
16. Enterprises/institutions and governments should take appropriate steps to ensure that employees are aware of obligations and rights stemming from fundamental rights, equal employment laws, when applicable, and related legal requirements.
17. Women should be given opportunities in strategic assignments and job rotation to improve their promotion prospects to higher echelons of management. Upward mobility and career progression should be more flexible to allow women more opportunities, based on their ability and competence. Career and succession planning and the tracking of women in enterprises and organizations, help them gain visibility and experience, as well as provide a mechanism for monitoring their progress. Adopting objective policies of internal recruitment combined with the necessary job and coping skills training can give more opportunities to women to advance in their career.
18. Ensuring women's equal access to networks both formal and informal, not only in the enterprise but beyond, can provide support and visibility, as well as be a source of invaluable information.
19. Diversity management conceived in response to specific needs, career aspirations, contributions and lifestyles of the workforce, can be an important strategy to promote women to the top and may be good for business.

20. The development and dissemination of guidelines, as well as the publication of success stories and awards on best practices are important for encouraging interest in women in management issues. Information sharing, counseling centers to encourage women to take up non-traditional occupations to move faster up the career ladder are critical for women themselves.
21. Effective Human Resource Management reflected in career planning, adequate record keeping for tracking career advancement of women are critical.

Gender Audit :

22. Enterprises should develop a self mechanism for achieving gender equality and implementation of various strategies.

B) AT THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT :

Research and Data :

23. Creation of a database should be made absolutely mandatory. Information and data collection to be improved, tracking women's progression, tracing the main obstacles to women's career development; publicising the success stories of women.
24. Publication of data and information on women (both quantitative & qualitative) dealing with recruitment, promotion, training both within the country and abroad, crucial gender ratios etc. as part of annual surveys of public enterprises and annual reports of the Departments.
25. The DPE, Ministry of Finance and Department of Women and Child Development should create a system of not only generating data but updating it on a continuing basis.
26. NCW to develop case studies and role model for awareness building. Mass media should help in this direction.

Training :

27. The Government policies and monitoring system should bring out clearly a feed back mechanism from the enterprises covering the micro details of training opportunities for women with a view to promote capacity building, upgrading skills and knowledge enhancement.
28. The training should deal with the competence building for men and women, confidence in women's capacity and commitment to use the training.

Support Services / Systems :

29. In the industrial areas, it should be mandatory that there are working women's hostels. It could be run by any outside agency or by the company.

Policies / Procedures / Systems :

30. Recognition of best practice through awards at the national level can be an important incentives to enterprise in promoting women. DPE and SCOPE should include those companies which do well for women, in their criterion for the performance, recognition of best companies.
31. Governments should ensure that equal opportunity policies and measures are integrated in the general and vocational educational system to overcome stereotypical roles of men and women and create the opportunities for a wider range of occupation choices, especially in non-traditional areas.
32. Governments should set an example by implementing equal opportunity policies. More women should be appointed to high level positions.
33. Equal opportunity, like the Sexual Harassment directive, should be a government policy at the national level.
34. Job clarity; what are the pre-requisites for the job should be spelt out and standardized. Instructions to be issued by the Department of Public Enterprises for job description to be clearly spelt out for different levels of management to facilitate the women understanding the job criteria, and have better appreciation and prepare themselves for such positions.
35. Identification of workplace strategies that have been successful.
36. Identification of effective measures to prevent segregation by gender; working out a concept of positive action.
37. Identification of policy interventions by the governments and public enterprises for improving the career improvement opportunities, such as diversity management.
38. The MOU of companies should include gender related performance as one of the criteria for evaluation.
39. There should be specific tax breaks for companies which have women friendly policies.
40. The NCW should take up immediately the issue of the provision of atleast one women on the Board and the Departmental Promotion Committees of the Companies. It should insist on getting information on the recruitment in the public sector, as well as the promotion procedures.
41. Posts like the Directors of Finance, Director of Personnel, Chief Vigilance Officers etc. should be thrown open and be properly advertised. This will be fair and bring in deserving women.

42. The practice of the CMD writing the confidential report of the CVO should be done away with.

Gender Audit :

43. NCW, the Parliamentary Committee for Empowerment of Women should establish a compulsory system for gender audit so as to know whether the companies are really getting the policies implemented.

Reservation Policy :

44. The experience of Panchayat Raj with 1/3rd representation of women is well recognized. It is, therefore, imperative that reservation is adopted as a method for ensuring fair representation of women which would go a long way in improving the critical mass and the visibility of women in the decision making level. National Commission to take up with Government.
45. There should be a minimum quota (say 10 percent) for women in the promotion list.

AT THE LEVEL OF WOMEN :

Strategies that women themselves should adopt to achieve success, such as

- (a) adoption of certain ground rules like having a career goal, taking risks and not rejecting postings.
- (b) improve visibility, information management, continuous self development by attending training programmes when nominated.
- (c) Marketing oneself
- (d) Networking

Implementation of the various suggestions is expected to contribute enormously toward achieving gender equality but the process is long. Women constitute a valuable component in the society and the work force, and maximizing their contribution to the growth of the economy and the general well being of the society cannot be under estimated.

BUSINESS SESSION :

WOMEN IN LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE

Prof. Susheela Kaushik who made the brief presentation on the theme, referred to the earlier national consultation held on 7 February 2003, and pointed out to the significance of grass roots women in governance in the form of panchayati raj and municipalities. She said that one needs to be clear, at the outset, as to why women should be in governance, and what are the expectations from these women who are governing. It is here that the governing women come in close touch with the common women of India. It is here that the common women can have a sense of participating in politics and expressing their expectations.

The reservations introduced in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were expected to lead to political empowerment of women, and through that to their development. It would make women visible and become role models for others. It may lead to an alternate clean political culture, as women in general are viewed to be less corrupt and are reluctant to be pushed around. Political empowerment and political role will also bring about a heightened status for women in the family and community.

These Acts have also recognised that women of India are not homogeneous lot. The SC and ST also have even more backward sections among their women. The reservation within reservation is based on the belief that every section of the community will have its own women representing them. Thereby, it helps in not only reflection and articulation of their interests but also empowerment of the women in these sections. The fact that women's reservation is one third of the SC and ST reservation is also important as it would gender sensitise those communities.

The reservation having been in effect now for ten years, and with almost all states having gone through two rounds of elections, India has more than a million of women at the helm of local governance in the rural and urban parts of India. Their experiences by way of performance, challenges and best practices are worth many volumes and present a kaleidoscopic pattern.

Prof. Kaushik pointed out to some of the salient features in the functioning of Panchayati Raj system, by way of the percentage of women elected (the national average falls far short of 33 percent while some states like Karnataka exceeds it), the limitations of the Acts and their non-availability to the women of three north eastern states (Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland), the provision for a District Planning Committee under which the municipalities and panchayats formulate the plans for their areas and take it up to the district boards (Zila Parishads) for a consolidated plan for the district, etc. The last provision is of vital of critical importance from the point of view of women in governance and grass root democracy. But there is still a lot in its structuring and operation.

The rotation of constituencies / wards reserved for women is once again a point of debate. It discourages the women who perform with commitment and hinders their

long term planning for the wards and the villages, due to the uncertainty of next elections. In fact more often than not, the women, including even those who had performed well, are not being renominated in the next elections once the reservation is withdrawn - and it becomes a general, open constituency. It shows that there is still a hesitancy to accept women as having emerged in politics and public sphere, and to recognise them as leaders in normal course. Even the political parties, wherever they are directly contesting, do not put up women from the open wards. This cuts short the political career of women, and their sustainability in politics is weakend, even though many elected women are very keen to continue in public life, having proved their capability. Thus reservation by rotation, by itself, is not enough. It needs to be preceded and accompanied by much gender sensitization and acceptance of women in leadership positions as a normal feature of democracy.

As for their performance, the women, by and large, have tried to bring about an alternate political culture based on clean politics, accountability and transparency. They have tried to focus on social development, women oriented issues and women's needs. However, they and the local government bodies in general, still need to focus more on issues of women's rights, common dignity and equity. Issues of violence and gender injustice have received only selective attention. Their power over caste panchayats and religious institutions, is very weak. Access to information is almost nil; consequently the bureaucratic and male control is very much marked. The women in particular, and the panchayats in general lack financial resources and autonomy. The decentralization of functions is minimal, and the devolution of power almost nil. The women in governance feel powerless and frustrated. Additionally, the lack of education, resources and information also are the reasons for women's weakness.

With increasing political significance of the local governments, the role of violence, muscle power and money power have increased. This reinforces the patriarchal processes and poses various types of threats to women. The officials and others also seem to be more at ease dealing with men or male proxies.

The presentation was followed by a lively discussion in which some elected women also participated. Some the highlights of the discussions were :

Not merely women but men also come to political position because of their political background and godfathers. Men too require the help of father, brother and others who are already in politics. However, only in the case of women politicians and candidates a criticism is levelled on these grounds, and proxying is brought up repeatedly.

Male members of the local bodies often do not accept the leadership of women, particularly if they belong to SC/ST community. They boycott the meetings or hold the meetings in the absence of the women chairpersons. They indulge in violence against them, so much so that they force these women to resign in favour of male members.

The participants made various recommendations made by the participants for strengthening the local government system and women's performance in the same are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women in Local Self Governance

Documentation and Data Collection

1. Data should be collected on gender segregated basis, of the various local government elections in different states of India, both for Panchayat and municipal bodies. This should also include the number of total women, SC and ST contestants, socio economic profile of the elected women, party wise figure etc., for all the three levels of both urban and rural bodies.
2. The data available with the State Commission should be made accessible to researchers.
3. A monitoring exercise should be undertaken to see why the number of women elected is less than the minimum stipulated figures in the various states.
4. Research with a special focus on the Scheduled Areas to be undertaken with a view to analyse the impact of financial grants on the Panchayats. There is also need for more information on the functioning of PRI in these areas and their relations with tribal councils.
5. Need for more data collection, dissemination and documentation on the participation and performance of women. Data on SC and ST women are singularly lacking.
6. Research needs to be undertaken on an all India scale on the factors that helped the women to participate in politics, as well as those that deterred or prevented them.
7. Need for a study of the utilisation of MP's and MLA's Local Area Development Fund and the procedure adopted for identification and implementation.

Administrative and Structural Action

8. The reservation for women should be raised to 50 percent; and the rotation should be withdrawn or at least extended to two terms.
9. Various amendments to be introduced in the structures and administration of local governments in the light of experiential suggestions. The National Commission for Women should initiate action towards these suggestions, to the concerned departments.
10. Greater devolution of political power, authority, financial power and functions by the state governments. Schedules 11 and 12 should be enforced and the various areas

mandatory transferred to the local governments. Needed amendments in the Acts should be undertaken (for instance changing “may” into “shall” in the 73rd and 74th Amendments).

11. The elections of Mayors, Municipal Chairpersons and Sarpanches should be made direct. This will eliminate the frequency of no - confidence motions, corruption and factional politics.
12. The system of Mayor-in-Council should be adopted uniformly all over India, so as to enable the women Mayors and Corporations to do effective work.
13. All the States Acts should stipulate that the Executive Committees, Standing Committees, Planning Committees and quorum should have at least 50 percent women. Educated women members should be included in the Planning committees.
14. Planning, tender opening, contract sanctioning and monitoring should be undertaken by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson together. Otherwise it leads to petty quarrels, corruption charges, etc.
15. The administrative staff positions in the municipal and panchayat administration should be made transferable. The chairpersons should have the powers to ask for their transfers, if found unsatisfactory.
16. The Thirty Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development of Parliament needs to be disseminated among the elected women, NGOs, concerned government agencies and officials.
17. Extension of infrastructural support to the chairperson, like TA and DA for attending the meetings, working expenses and facilities like telephone etc.
18. The MPs and MLA Local Area Development Funds needs to be monitored and not allowed to lapse. In planning the projects, as well as implementation the Chairpersons of the panchayat and municipal bodies of the areas should be involved.
19. Just like the MPs and MLAs, the members of the local government bodies should also receive Area Development Funds, for undertaking development projects in their areas. This will partially meet the lack of adequate financial resource to the panchayats.
20. All schemes, information about women agencies and other relevant materials which have a concern for women, should be made accessible to the State Women’s Commission, and through them to the elected women representatives.
21. The number of women among local officials like Panchayat Secretary, Panchayat Karmi should be increased. This will help in some of them being attached to women chairperson.

Counselling and Guidance :

22. In order to reduce corruption among officials, the views of Mayors Chairpersons of PRIs and other local government authorities should be respected and punishment meted out in reasonably quick manner. Prolonged inquiry and delayed decision only makes a mockery of women who work with great dedication.
23. The males proxying for women has been deliberately fostered and encouraged by the bureaucrats. They hand over cheques and other papers to the males like husbands and brother in law. This should be stopped. Only the chairperson or other occupying posts should be given the cheques and other papers.
24. Community participation in identifying and solving the local issues will be effective in quick resolution of local problems. Mechanisms like gram Sabha and ward meeting for such participation should be strengthened.
25. There should be expert committees at the central, state and local levels, to deal with the problems faced by the elected women in local governments. The women should be able to reach the committees with their problems and get proper guidance. The NCW also could have such an expert committee.
26. Sustained, frequent and localised training programme for capacity upgradation of women, before and after they get elected.
27. At the level of district, there should be some counselling centres for the elected women where they can learn about the legal provisions, their own powers, the ways to utilise them etc. This will remove their tensions and restore self confidence.
28. There is a need to reconsider the 2 chld norm and discuss its implications as it puts enormous pressure on the women elected representatives and limits future women candidates.
29. The Reservation Bill pending in the Parliament for 33 percent reservation to Parliament and the state assemblies should be taken up and passed immediately. In view of the opposition to reservation in Parliament one solution can be to first introduce 20 percent reservation, and after every election increase it by 5 percent.
30. Political Parties should recognise the good work done by the elected women and nominate them for recontesting, even if the constituencies are opened out.
31. The political parties should take special efforts to identify the capable women in local government and nominate them for higher positions for local and state government elections, and also utilise them in the party positions.

Training :

32. There should be periodic training and capacity building activities for the elected women. They should be sustained, frequent and localised training programme for capacity up gradation of women, before and after they get elected.

33. The government training institutions and NGOs should undertake such training soon after they are elected and not wait for a later date. Such training should be done at an easy distance or in the locality/village itself.
34. The training methodology should be on a practical basis and not bookish. It should be interactive, based on the experiences of the elected women and not be monologues.
35. Models need to be presented so that the women can understand and replicate them.
36. The training should include officials and male counterparts so that they understand and recognise women's rights and roles. It should be jointly for women and men.
37. There should be training workshops specially on negotiating skills. This will help in their dealing with higher authorities and powerful persons.
38. Mere training of the elected women will not be enough. There should be constant guidance. The committees suggested above should be able to help them to function better. There is also the need to discuss ways of making the committees functional.
39. Need to create an environment of social acceptance of women in local government and politics. Towards that, the need to change the pattern of social conditioning of both women and men through a process of gender sensitisation for affirmative social action by NGO's.
40. The media should be sensitised not to play up only the negative side of the elected women's functioning. There has to be a responsible reporting so that the elected women do not feel diffident. They also need to highlight the best practices and give the elected women their due credit. The media also should have some onus of building up the image of women in the political process.

To The National Commission for Women :

41. The National Commission for Women should undertake a status report and monitor the functioning of the local government, review the state Acts and their implementation.
42. It should also undertake the study of the impact of women's participation on the functioning of the Panchayati Raj, on the political empowerment of women, on their relations with bureaucracy. On the basis of it, NCW should suggest the needed institutional reforms.
43. The National and State Commissios for Women should interact frequently with the elected women representatives (EWRs) and monitor their performance.

44. They should undertake to highlight the problems faced by the E.W.R.s and seek to lobby for the policy changes needed.
45. The creation of an election fund for women in local government should be lobbied widely; the NCW must hold consultation and work out the procedure.
46. The NCW and the government should recognise that the women have done good work in local governance and reward them.
47. The NCW and S.C.W.s should initiate debates on the concept and practice of grass root planning and monitoring of the actual performance in this context.
48. The NCW, government and the NGOs should facilitate the formation of the machinery to represent the elected women in local government. They should be enabled to interact with MPs and MLAs, judiciary, bureaucrats etc.
49. The State Commission for Women should undertake similar types of workshops on women in local governance. They should organise at the state and block levels, conferences of elected women.
50. The NCW should hold national and regional conventions of the elected women to Panchayati Raj and Municipalities and interact with them to learn about their problems and to seek suggestions for strengthening the local governments and women's performance.

Networking :

51. The women elected to local governments should network among themselves on national and regional basis. The NCW should facilitate such a networking.
52. There should be all India bodies of chairpersons of all levels.
53. The NGOs should facilitate the elected women and the people meeting, and sharing issues.
54. Collection and collation of gender desegregated data in all offices/institutions for all posts at all levels so that a clear picture about percentage of working women emerges. This needs to be done every five years, in order to understand the trends.
55. More studies to be undertaken on the implementation of the Supreme Court directive on Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place. We need to find out how many cases are actually filed, and with what results; who constitute these committees, and who take these decisions; how gender sensitive are the committees and their decisions?

BUSINESS SESSION :

WOMEN IN CIVIL SERVICES

In her remarks as Chairperson, Smt. Jayawanti Mehta, Minister of State for Power, Government of India, remarked that women's issues, as and when they crop up, need to be faced and resolved. In the present context the issue of women's participation in governance is of paramount importance, as very few women are in legislature and judiciary. As judges in High Courts and Supreme Court, the number of women is negligible. Our governing system is based on the British mode whose role and functions were limited to the protection of the interests of the imperial rule and collection of revenue. However after Independence the executive adjusted itself to the demands of the new political system. The functions and agencies of the government expanded, and new services and systems came into operation. A network of varied services and departments came into being, employing thousands of people. However the number of women employed, remained very marginal. It is, hence, necessary to find out as to why women's participation is so low and what are the problems they face after entering the services. She asked the conference to suggest ways of overcoming the same, so as to lead to an increase in the number of women in civil services to almost 50 percent. This would help in governance reaching to the common people and bringing justice to women. This would make the twenty first century a women's century. However this would require more women appearing in the civil services examinations.

She further believed that there should be more interaction and dialogue between the ministers and women officers so that it leads to greater contribution by them to benefit the country.

Dr. Sudha Malaiya, Member, National Commission for Women and co-chair for the session, regretted that despite the constitutional and legal equality of women, they constituted only 7.5 percent of the civil servants at the all India level. The participation at the legislative level is not any better, this was because of the leadership in the political parties and other factors. In the case of civil services where the entry is through merit and examinations, if the figures are low, it needs to be pondered over. After all women are occupying merit positions in higher education and universities. This is despite the DOPT having paid special focus to it. Also most of the women currently in civil service belong of the urban areas.

Many factors have been attributed to this low participation. The national consultation held earlier had discussed these issues. They were being submitted to a wider audience for consultation and adoption so that they can be implemented by the concerned authorities.

Ms. Kiran Aggarwal briefly presented on the theme 'Women in Civil Services'. She pointed out that the civil servants are supposed to be faceless and anonymous. They

are supposed to just work and never show their faces, never to give a name to the work. The conduct rules prohibit them from going to the press without permission. So there really is no forum through which they can present their case. This is true for all civil servants and more so for women civil servants who are already so few in number, so much so that one really does not notice them unless sometimes they come up to that level where they are noticed. The NCW, happily, had provided the civil servants with this opportunity for focussing on all issues affecting them, including entry of more women into the civil service.

She pointed out that the Indian women have got a Constitution which guarantees to all not only equal opportunities, but also makes a positive discrimination in favour of women. There are many provisions in the Constitution which have a direct bearing on the status of women. Over the past 50 years or more, the Indian women have come a long way, but there is still much distance to travel.

There have been many measures adopted by DOPT and others. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) had also talked about equal access in all areas to women, and women friendly personnel policies. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women also recognises this as women have many roles to play in the family and outside.

The women in civil service also need proper support services like child care, crèche at workplace, educational institutions etc. There are also many unwholesome social practices and developmental problems like foeticide and adverse sex ratio, low female literacy rate with a high drop out rate, early marriage, heavy household chores etc. which affect education of girls and their entry into civil services. Unless there are adequate number of women entering civil services, there will not be enough women to participate in the decision making levels. With education becoming a fundamental right and with immense awareness and efforts to reverse the adverse sex ratio, more women may have the opportunity to join civil service.

Ms. Kiran Aggarwal presented various figures and graphics to support her presentation on low participation in literacy and employment, the gender stereotyping in the jobs, the increasing but still low rate of participation of women in the qualifying examinations and final appointments. This is despite the fact that the percentage of women who clear the examinations is more than that of men. They also cleared in much fewer attempts. This showed that given the opportunity, women perform better.

The figures also show that there is an increase in the number of women employed. However, this is only a partial finding of ten ministries; the figures of other ministries are still not available. Gender segregated data should be available all the time; their collection should be a regular exercise and should feature in the annual report of

each ministry/department as to how many of them have been promoted and how many directly recruited, and the factors responsible for the same. Also, there has to be more transparency in recruitment, promotion, data collection and data dissemination.

Ms. Kiran Aggarwal also spoke about the various women's agencies in Government of India, like the Ministry of Personnel, the Department of Women and Child Development, the Planning Commission, the National Commission for Women who are undertaking various efforts to promote and watch the interests of women in civil services. The Parliamentary Committee for the Empowerment of Women is also keeping a watch as to how the women are progressing.

Ms. Aggarwal then spoke about the recent initiatives of the Ministry of Personnel, by the Fifth Pay Commission and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women.

She also reasoned out as to why we need more women officers. She believed that women officers will be better able to reach out to women, especially in rural areas and in the communities that observe purdah and interact directly with them. It is these women who need more critical services in terms of health, education, sanitation, water supply etc.

Responding to the presentation, the participants brought out many salient points on the issue. Some of them could be recaptured as :

Many women administrators are capable and honest, but when they move into the patriarchal world they are often forced to follow the dishonest path. If they remain stubborn, they come into a clash with the male bureaucrats and politicians.

It was generally agreed that more women in revenue services will lead to a better administration; the traders and industrialists may be more happy. Women will also be less corrupt, and that the nation will benefit.

On the issue of reservation for women in civil services, however, there was no consensus. Many believed that the issue of representation in Parliament and Assemblies is different from that of civil service. In their view the issue of reservation in civil services needs to be thought out carefully and debated, as it would prevent others with much merit from entering civil service.

There were, however, others who believed that reservation for women is necessary in civil services. Even if they somehow enter it through examinations and merit, it is difficult to move up and get the opportunity to head the ministries or departments.

Gender stereotyping is prevalent in almost all the departments except in the Ministry of External Affairs. Not many women have been appointed in high positions in Finance and Economic Affairs.

Women in the civil services should make a difference to the policies being framed.

In the Foreign Service, at the group B [(IFS (B)] level, the women who join in the secretarial service is lower than the women in the higher levels. This may be due to the problems for women in travelling abroad.

At times the women are not allowed to perform. There should be a change of attitude at the level of male politicians and bureaucrats.

There is a certain amount of discrimination even at the higher level of the method of women administrators and women ministers networking and meeting often for dialogue to help administration.

Even though there are a lot of women officers in the Indian Revenue Services (IRS) and they are conscientious and have a high integrity, still not a single woman officer has been appointed in sensitives areas like DG (investigation) Women should also be willing to accept hard postings like in rural areas and not seek to avoid the same.

There were a general consensus on the issue of reservation of seats for Parliament and State legislatures. Some even believed it should be 50 percent, and not just 33 percent. There were some who viewed that the reservation of specific seats for Parliament and State Assemblies may create problems of women getting confined to specific constituencies. The better proposal would be to require every political party to nominate 33 percent of its candidates as women.

Shri S.S. Dawra, Secretary, Department of Personnel, Government of India, responding to the various suggestions, observed that some of them deserve special attention; such as

- (1) Flexible timing
- (2) Entry point for women may be raised to a higher age. As marriage of girls at the age of 22 or 23 is the main reason as to why bright girls from higher education do not go for civil services, the ceiling for the age of entry for girls should be extended to 28, 29 or 30.
- (3) More than the women of higher levels, it is the women at the lower levels of civils services who have many problems and need special attention. The Department of Administrative Reforms will organise a special conference of Women in Civil Services.
- (4) Empowerment of women is essential for the progress of the nation and the success of the policies. For this empowerment, secure employment and economic independence are necessary perquisites.

He also believed that the issue of getting “good postings” is common to men and women as it depends on many factors and not gender alone. He said, further, that

women in the group A services, do not ask for “soft postings”; in the higher services women are as good as men. In general they have more integrity though there are some exceptions.

By way of recommendations, the workshop arrived at various strategies for further action. They are being put together at the end of the volume.

Summing up, the Chairperson said that while reservation in jobs may not be that important, support services, especially in the rural and tribal areas, such as spreading literacy, establishing institutions, encouraging them to take up the civil services examinations, and then once they join the Services move forward on the basis of one's own strength and personality, are very much necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women in Civil Services

Preparation of Girls for Civil Service :

1. In order to bring girls from the rural and tribal areas into civil services, there should be more schools in the villages. The good students should get 100 percent free schooling upto higher education level.
2. More opportunities for women from rural areas for education and training in civil services.
3. Young women in colleges should receive career counselling as well as counselling on reproductive health.
4. There should be counselling among the college girls who believe that administrative services are difficult to enter and that it involves difficult tasks. This fear should be removed through counselling.
5. There should be adequate publicity through the media which should give the rural women and young girls awareness about the opportunities. This should be done through the TV during the prime time.
6. The allocation of funds for education should be increased and more hostels for rural girls and vocational centres for training / coaching them for civil services should be started.

Recruitment and Promotion Policies :

7. In view of the low representation of women in government service there should be clear reservation of posts for women at the recruitment stage.
8. Women should be mandatorily included in the recruitment promotion boards, committees and decision making bodies. This will facilitate more women as role

models at the decision making levels. It will make a lot of difference to the selection of more women.

9. To formulate rules/regulations providing for such mandatory and adequate representation of women in all recruitment/promotion bodies commissions, committees, boards, etc.
10. In Maharashtra there is a 33 percent reservation for women in government services but if this cannot be filled up, the vacancies are filled up with male candidates. As in the case of SC and ST posts, the vacancies should be carried over.
11. There should be more transparency in postings, promotions and transfers etc. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that couples can stay together and live as a family.
12. There should be a relaxation of age of entry for women. At the lower levels of civil services, there can be flexi timings.
13. In the case of Indian Foreign Service, the participation of women is higher at all level of Secretary, Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary (14.6%), it will be worthwhile to study the policy which encourages women in the Foreign Service to reach the top and hold crucial post.
14. Media should project the positive image of the women. Social messages should be given free slots on television. All TV channels must provide slots for positive images of how women are performing well in Civil Service. This will encourage more women to join the service and participate in the development work and decision making.

Family and Career :

15. For the women civil servants who are already in service but want to have a break to look after the family responsibility, there should be a provision to do so and join back with some protection for the seniority. One should also recommend multiple entry.
16. Any house, for instance, allotted to the couple should be in the name of the husband and wife, where both are government employees.
17. Officers should be kept in the place of posting at least for a certain period, and frequent transfers should be avoided.
18. Men's role and responsibilities in the household work and child care should be equally emphasised, just as one talks about women's role and responsibilities in civil services and governance. Both men and women should share equally all the responsibilities.

19. Setting up Daycare Centres/Creches for children of working women at all levels after discussions with them on various aspects like location, facilities, working hours of creches, need for contribution from parents etc. It is also to be ensured that qualified/responsible workers run such Centres/Creches.
20. There should be provision for maternity/equivalent special leave for adoptive mothers.

Training :

21. In the training programmes, women should have special slots, so that they can enhance their capacities and improve their skills.
22. Not merely the secretarial services, but the general services also should get equal opportunities for training.
23. Need to change attitudes, particularly gender sensitisation of men. Men (and not women alone) should be sent to the gender training programmes undertaken by the Ministry of Personnel.
24. To run Gender Sensitizing Training Programmes at all levels and not restrict it to only officers, and to incorporate a module on gender issues in the training programmes run by the Cadre Controlling Authorities, on a regular basis.
25. Institute a Gender Awareness Week to be observed by all Ministries/Departments every year.

PART - III

**The Joint Meeting of the NCW and the Parliamentary
Committee on the Empowerment of Women on
Role of Women in Legislature
held on 21st August 2003**

BACKGROUND PAPER ON ROLE OF WOMEN IN LEGISLATURE

– Dr. Sarala Gopalan

Formerly Secretary to Government of India

Political Rights and Status

Political status of women could be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of power in governance and the value given by society to this role of women. The struggle for a political identity for women is more than two and a half centuries old. It has been carried on around the world within nations and multilaterally within the United Nations. Advancement in women's status has been taking place, consequently, though sluggishly and unevenly across nations. The phenomenon has come to be termed as "Shevolution". Indeed, presence of women in politics and governance not in proportion to their numbers in population has also come to be understood as an index of "democratic deficit".

The political identity of women and their specific contribution to politics has been well recognized in recent years. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of Parliaments affirmed in 1997 "the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarily, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences". The effort has been to enhance participation of women in the decision-making and legislative processes in all Parliaments to realize the true spirit of democracy.

Currently, across 182 Parliaments representation for women in both Houses taken together is around 15%, as per data compiled by the IPU (Annexure 1). The range of representation for women in the Lower House or Single House is between 6.1% in the Arab States to 39.7% in the Nordic countries and 2.6% (Arab States) to 25.9% (Pacific) in the Upper House or Senate. Representation for women in the Lok Sabha is as yet only at 8.9%, 8.5% in the Rajya Sabha and much lower in many of the State Legislatures. India has a long way to go to reach even world average levels.

A study conducted by the IPU across 65 countries and 200 respondents, published in the year 2000, highlights "wherever women are present in sufficient numbers to represent an embryonic political force, they are beginning to initiate a change in the political environment and decision making process and to influence the outcome of political activity".¹

The study highlighted that women were committed to putting new and different issues on the political agenda. Often they were most likely to be those addressing social

1. Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000. Politics : Women's Insight, Series "Reports and Document" No. 36.

issues with an emphasis on the deconstruction of power and money, tone and language, process and status. Women politicians were likely to act as advocates for many sectors for society other than those concerned with female status.

The efficacy of the instrumentality of political rights and status to achieve general equality of status can be assessed through certain indicators. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (1975), suggested the following three indicators :

- (a) Participation in the Political Process - turnout of women voters and number of women candidates in each election.
- (b) Political Attitudes - the level of awareness, commitment and involvement of women participating in politics, particularly, their autonomy and independence in political action and behaviour.
- (c) Impact of women in the Political Process - assessment of women's views of their own roles and efficacy in the political process, and society's attitude to these new roles of women. This is indicated by the success of women candidates at various elections, the efficiency of women's pressure groups, the nature of leadership and women elites in parties and Government, and the effectiveness of campaigns for women's mobilisation, particularly on issues that directly concern them.

The progress against these indicators in India between the conditions prevailing in the 1970s and current period is presented in Annexure 2.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Exercise of Franchise

The nineteenth century social reform movement in India which concentrated on the spread of education among women gave attention to improving their status in the family, and strengthening the family as the basic unit of social organization, rather than on their political status. It was the subsequent national movement for independence and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi that acted as catalyst in the achievement of political equality for women. Both these made them aware of their political rights and responsibilities and released them from behind the purdah in the security of the home to the public arena. Gandhiji recognized women as persons 'with equal mental capacities', and called out to them to come out and participate in the social revolution and reconstruction of the nation. The response to the call was enormous.

A demand for women's franchise was initiated in 1917. Dr. Sarojini Naidu led a deputation of Indian women to the British Parliament and presented demand for enfranchisement of women on the basis of equality with men. A Reforms Act of 1921. Women's right to vote was subject to qualifications of possession of 'wifehood', property and education. Women demanded adult franchise without sex discrimination. Women's

organizations drafted a memorandum demanding adult franchise without sex discrimination in a meeting of their representatives and submitted the same to Government. It was turned down.

A historic decision of committing itself to political equality of women, regardless of their status and qualifications was adopted in 1931 by the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress.

Marriage as a condition of eligibility for voting for women was deleted in the Government of India Act of 1935, which paved the way for women (above age 21) with property and education to exercise franchise.

Finally, the Constitution of India, in 1950, pledged the nation to achieving a just society, based on the principle of equality and dignity of the individual, and proclaimed the right to political and legal equality as fundamental rights of all Indians. The guarantee against discrimination in employment and office under the State opened the avenues to offices of power and dignity to women. Many nations of the world were able to obtain franchise for their women only much after India, as only shown in Annexure 3. The latest country to confer this privilege on their women was South Africa (Blacks) in 1994. Women in **Kuwait** do not yet have the right to vote or to stand for election. In the **United Arab Emirates**, where the Parliament is officially appointed, neither men nor women have the right to vote or to stand for election.

The assessment of women's participation in the political process as voters presents a positive trend over the half century of Parliamentary democracy in India increasing the proportion of women voters from 46% to 58% and narrowing the gap between male and female voters to 8% from 15%. Data available since 1962 are presented in Table-1. The analysis of the data highlights the following :

- The range of total voter participation has been between 55 to 62%. Total voter participation has peaked in the Eighth General Election in 1984 - at 64%.
- Except in 1984, male participation has been ranging between 60 and 66% of male voters. (In 1984, it was 68.4%).
- Female participation has been lower in all elections. However, the significance of female voter participation over the years is in its steady increase from 46.6% in 1962 to (59.2% in 1984) around 57.86% in 1998.
- The rate of increase in female participation has been steadily growing, narrowing the gap between male and female participation. The gap has come down from 15 to 8 and odd percentage points.

“Women as a constituency are becoming increasingly crucial in electoral contests as reflected by the women-related issues projected by various political parties in their

manifestos and election campaigns. Generally, in the past, political parties depended on the male heads of families to guide their womenfolk during election campaigns. Recently, however, with increasing awareness of women on various social development issues and the need for fulfillment of various priorities of women, political parties have become conscious of addressing women voters exclusively. One example of this is the promise on the introduction of prohibition in several of the States in India during election campaigns in response to women's demands to curb domestic violence, mainly due to alcoholism. Other important specific issues on which political parties have come to undertake electoral commitments are those relating to education and health care of women, their access to skills, employment, income, economic assets etc. During the 1998 and 1999 General Elections, all major political parties have committed in their manifestos to secure one third reservation of positions for women in the Parliament and State Legislative bodies."²

A quarter century ago, the Committee on the Status of Women in India concluded that there was a correlation between the level of education of women in a State and the voter participation in that State. In States known for educational and social backwardness of women on all the demographic indicators, women's participation was low. The Election Commission data on 1998 General Election reflect that the total voter turnout percentage is higher, going above 70% in States which have higher levels of literacy/higher density of population and is lower between 50 and 60% in other States.³

The proportion of participation of women voters in all the States that went for Elections in 2000 and thereafter, shows a much higher turnout for women with a smaller difference in polling percentages between men and women than in the General Elections of 1998 (Table 1A).

Representation of Women Members in the Parliament

Representation of women in the Lok Sabha is just above half the world average for representation of women in National Parliaments. This is far below the "critical mass" required for influencing decisions, despite the fact that the proportion of women, members in the Lok Sabha has doubled over the half century since the first general election from 22 to 48 members. This indicates an increase from 4.4% to 8.9% in 1999. The proportion increased in the second and third elections but started declining during the fourth and fifth elections touching a low of 3.4% in 1977. Since then it has been rising. The President chose to nominate a woman in the 11th, 12th and 13th Lok Sabhas against two members to be nominated in the Lok Sabha under Article 331. The progressive increase is brought out in Table 2.

2. Dr. Sarala Gopalan, Gender and Governance, Paper Prepared for Mahbub-ul-Haq, Human Development Centre, Human Development in South Asia, 2000.

3. Ibid.

The twin problems that keep women out of the political arena are patriarchal attitudes of the society and women's own diffidence to face threats of violence and character assassination. The CSWI had observed "Some of them have a long record to political activism, but still hesitate to face candidature at elections." This observation made a quarter century ago holds good even now.

Representation for women in the Rajya Sabha has been coming down in the last decade. It started off at a higher proportion of 11 and odd percent in 1960. In the category of nominated members to the Rajya Sabha, more women were preferred in the earlier years of Indian democracy, which has now shifted to more men. Women's representation in the Rajya Sabha has slid down to 7.76% in 1996, though it went up slightly, to 8.5% in 1999. The decline in representation for women has been attributed to several factors, one of which is patronage practices involved in political parties accommodating those who are not successful in popular electoral contests, such persons more often being men. Data on representation of women in Rajya Sabha are presented in Table 3.

Representation of Women in State Legislatures

The representation of women in the State Legislatures is generally lower than in the Lok Sabha. It has continuously been low with some States not having any women in certain periods (Table 4). The election results in 13 States that have been held since 2000 show an improvement in the proportion of women returned to the legislatures compared to their previous election results. Goa and Kerala are the two exceptions, where the proportions have declined (Table 5).

The Debate on Reservation of Seats for Women in the Parliament and State Legislatures

The low proportion of representation of women at 8.9% in the Lok Sabha and even lower proportions in the State Legislatures is a matter of serious concern. Given the socio-cultural environment in the country, the women's movement is of the firm opinion that a critical mass of women can come into the Parliament only with specific affirmative action. This has already got established with the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, which created space for women in Urban and Rural Local Bodies. Even women's groups that previously advocated that women have the merit and can come through merit have changed their approach, as merit did not get recognition despite the proclamation of equal access to both sexes according to the Constitution. The major political parties as already stated, have included their commitment for supporting reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures in their manifestos for two successive general elections since then in 1998 and 1999.

A Bill was introduced in the Eleventh Lok Sabha (the 81st Constitution Amendment Bill) on 12th September, 1996. It sought to amend the Constitution to introduce

compulsory reservation of not less than 1/3rd of the seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures for women. It was also envisaged in the Bill that there would be reservation of one third of the seats for the women of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from out of the seats which already stand reserved for these communities.

The Lok Sabha referred it to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. The Committee held several consultations and took evidence from a spectrum of people and submitted its report on 9th December, 1996 to the Lok Sabha. The bill could not, however, be taken up for consideration as it lapsed with the dissolution of the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

The Bill was reintroduced in the Twelfth Lok Sabha (the 84th Constitution Amendment Bill) on 14th December, 1998. Some members of certain political parties vehemently objected even to the introduction of the bill on grounds such as non-availability of worthy women candidates, want of reservation for Other Backward Communities etc. They even tore the printed copy of the Bill. This Bill also lapsed with the dissolution of the Twelfth Lok Sabha. The Reservation Bill has again been reintroduced in the present Lok Sabha (the 13th) as the 85th Constitution Amendment Bill on 23rd December 1999. Women's groups have been agitating for the Bill to be taken up for discussion in the Parliament and passed at the earliest.

The general recommendations of the Joint Committee is extracted below :

“The Committee note that the proposed amendments in the Constitution provide reservation of seats for women belonging to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, as the case may be, from out of the seats reserved under sub-clause (2) of Article 330 and sub-clause (3) of Article 332 of the Constitution, respectively in the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies in the States. The Committee, however, observe that such reservation of seats has not been provided for in the Bill for women belonging to Other Backward Classes because there is no reservation for Other Backward Classes at present under the Constitution as it exists for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government may consider the issue of extending the benefit of reservation to Other Backward Classes also at the appropriate time so that the women belonging to Other Backward Classes will also get the benefit of reservation”.

“The Committee note that the Bill does not contain any provision for reservation of seats for women in the Rajya Sabha or the Legislative Councils of the States. The Committee feel that there should also be reservation of seats for women in Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government work out the modalities for this purpose and bring out suitable legislation in this regard at the appropriate time.”

Women's organisations are getting more united on the issue of reservation and networking together. However, the general social milieu as reflected in the editorials in the newspapers and opinions expressed in various quarters do not favour reservation of seats for women. Doubts that are expressed question the capability of women to contest for seats in the Parliament and Legislatures in such large numbers. They attribute these to low levels of literacy and education among women, absence of

experience in public affairs, lack of management abilities, pre-occupation with domestic responsibilities etc.

The system of rotation of reserved seats as envisaged in the Bill is pointed out as a problem by both men and women members of Parliament. As of now, more than 40% of the constituencies return the same candidate to the Lok Sabha in more than one election. In a system of rotation, neither men nor women MPs can be sure of getting returned from the same constituency in the subsequent elections when the reservation rotates. A woman MP winning from a reserved constituency would lose the advantage of reservation at the subsequent election as this seat would no longer be "reserved". If she desires to contest again from the same constituency, she would have to contest as a general candidate. Contesting as a general candidate could reduce her chances of winning compared to her advantage in a reserved constituency. A gentleman may also lose his constituency when it gets reserved on the basis of rotation. Thus the compulsory rotation of reserved constituencies may harm both men and women candidates in subsequent elections.

The real threat perceived by the male aspirants in the reservation of 1/3 of the seats for women was, and continues to be, the prospect of losing seats to the extent of reservation for women.

Profile of the Women Members of Parliament

In the past, the trend had always been for the majority of the women candidates to be selected from relatively well-to-do families with the sprinkling of members of old princely houses. Women from middle and lower middle class could not generally aspire for selection as candidates by political parties in the absence of a system of financial support to them from the party. "Only one party had occasionally backed women candidates from Scheduled Caste or Tribes and Muslims. Majority of the women candidates are educated, though their levels vary. About 70%-80% of the women Members of Parliament are however relatively better educated".⁴

"In terms of political socialization or background, a smaller group among the candidates come from families with fairly long traditions of political participation. They are, therefore, highly articulate, have a sharp perspective of politics, and have continued in the struggle for power through several successive elections. The larger group consists of new entrants. Some of them had no previous political experience but entered the political arena for the first time through elections."⁵

An important phenomenon noticed in recent years, is the increasing entry of younger women as noticed from the age classification of members between the 7th and

4. Committee on the Status of Women, 1975.

5. Ibid.

11th Lok Sabhas i.e., between 1980 and 1996. In the Seventh Lok Sabha, nearly 36% of the women MPs were over 56 years of age and 71.5% were over the age of 46 years. In the Eleventh Lok Sabha, on the other hand, less than 25% were above 56 years and only 49% above the age of 46 years. Women members between 31 to 45 years of age accounted for 51.3% of their total numbers. Age break up of the women MPs as per study of the 7th to 11th Lok Sabhas is given in Table 6.

The analysis of the data for 1980 and 1996 also highlights the following :

- Women with higher educational qualifications were elected to the Parliament. Graduates predominated in both the years. The percentage of under-matriculates had come down during this period from 25% to 8.3% and the proportion of graduates and above had gone up from 60.6% in 1980 to 69.43% in 1996.
- The largest segment of the women Members of Parliament both in 1980 and 1996 came from a background of politics and social work. There was an increase from 6.4% to 48.64% from this background between these years. This is an indication of greater work experience in the political and social fields.
- An important index of performance in the Parliament is the number of times members get returned in elections. Judged by this criterion, many of the women members of the 13th Lok Sabha had several multiple terms and were as good and as experienced as their male counterparts.

Participation of Women in the Business of the Lok Sabha

The performance of Members of Parliament as representatives of people is assessed on the basis of their participation in the proceedings of the Parliament and secondly on their ability to resolve problems back in their constituencies. The latter would call for both participation in the decisions in the Parliament and interventions in the field.

“The low strength of women in the Lok Sabha gets reflects in the level of their participation in the important business of the House concerning financial, legislative and other matters. Discussions during Motion of Thanks on the President’s Address, General and Railway Budgets, Short Duration Discussions, Confidence Motions etc. are generally the important items of business. In the Eleventh Lok Sabha, for example, of the total number of members who participated in the discussions on General Demands for Grants and the Demands for Grants for Railways, women constituted only 6.23%. In the same House, the figures relating to women’s participation in two Confidence Motions was 6% and 4% respectively. They seem to be participating somewhat intensively in Short Duration Discussions under Rule 193 of the Rules of Business of the House on matters of urgent public importance such as rise in the price of essential commodities, performance of the Public Distribution System, natural calamities, atrocities on women etc. These are, obviously, issues which generally concern women. It is also obvious that

political parties do not give adequate attention to allotment of time for women on more serious issues. The pattern of women's participation in important business of the House was not significantly different in the Twelfth Lok Sabha either. The details of participation of women MPs in Financial, Legislative and other Important Business of the Lok Sabha in the Eleventh and Twelfth Lok Sabhas are presented in Annexure 4.”⁶

In the assessment of the performance of women Members of Parliament often there is a view that they are invisible. The complaint generally of all MPs and particularly women is that they do not get as much time as they would like to have in the Parliament due to the complicated process of the Business Advisory Committee of the Parliament. This Committee allocates time for various items of Business, and the time has to be shared by political parties according to the strength of their presence in the Parliament. Individual Members get a proportion of the “Party Time” as per the decision of the Party Leader. Political Parties prefer comparatively senior, articulate and experienced amongst their members for participation in the debates. Most often these would be the more famous and familiar faces that give the parties their identity, apart from putting down the opponent effectively. New entrants and juniors in the party hierarchy - both men and women, lose in the bargain, to get opportunities to speak. Women members, particularly find it a great challenge to get opportunities to effectively make their points of view in debates in the Parliament.

Women do get opportunity to participate in various Committees in the Lok Sabha both as Members and as Chairpersons. The general ground rule is that every Member of Parliament, man or woman, should be included in Committee work. Recently, the Committee on Empowerment of Women has been able to focus attention of the Parliament on the performance of different Ministries with regard to policies and programmes relating to women and pin pointing the lacunae in their implementation and impacts. To achieve even more impressive gains and achieve greater equity and justice representation for women has to become stronger in the Parliament with increased numbers.

Support of Political Parties for Women Candidates in Elections

“There is general consensus that the political parties have neglected their task of politically educating and mobilizing women adequately. They have also tended to ignore the claims of women in nominating candidates for elections. This criticism was voiced even by successful women legislators”.⁷ This situation persists, Globally, it has been recognized now that political parties have a great role to play in the political participation of women. Election of women to various decision-making positions depends on the support and encouragement given by the political parties. Increasingly, it is being realized

6. Dr. Sarala Gopalan, Gender and Governance. Paper Prepared for Mahbub-ul-Haq, Human Development Centre, Human Development in South Asia, 2000.

7. CSWI Report.

that the political status of women can be enhanced only by the active intervention of the Political Parties.

What has come out clearly in the analysis of the Committee on the Status of Women in the 1970s and in our recent analysis is that political parties are not interested in taking up representation of women in politics as an issue. In looking for candidates, parties are interested in “winning candidates” who can enhance the prestige of the party, rather than the party’s capability of making a candidate win. The proportion of female contestants have remained low, hovering around 13-17% between 1962 and 1971. In the last General Elections the major political parties gave even lesser space for women, the highest being around 11%. By 1999 women contestants formed only 5.2% of the total contestants. Out of 5336 candidates put up by different political parties, only 278 were women. Details are presented in Table 7.

The success rate, which was 50.6% of the women contestants in 1962 declined to 25.9% in the 1971 elections. The success rate has varied for different political parties due to a variety of factors. These factors have not changed very significantly for women despite large number of women having acquired education including university education, and participating in social and economic activities. Political parties continue to be very vary of putting up women candidates for election as contestants. This is due to the big hiatus between the profession and practices of political parties in respect of their commitment to women’s political participation.

Funding for Elections

Sizable financial resources are required for candidates, both men and women, for participation in electoral contests in a vast country like India with vast constituencies. Campaigning and mobilisation of votes are increasingly becoming expensive because of ever increasing costs of transport production of campaign material, access to the media (print as well as electronic) and communication. It is also becoming increasingly competitive because of proliferation of political parties. Increasing expense of elections is the greatest deterrent to women’s active participation as candidates. Families are still not prepared to finance the elections of their women from family funds, though they would do so for the men. Since most women have no economic resources of their own, their aspirations can only be fulfilled if they are fully backed by a political party. Majority of women candidates today are those who can command some independent means. Candidates, naturally then, look to political parties for financial support for electioneering.

‘Waves’ generated by emotional issues become the strength of political parties in individual constituencies, and create an environment in their favour, apart from the merit and standing of the candidates themselves, that strongly impact on success in electoral contest. While optimizing the chances of their success in elections, political parties are strongly inclined to reckoning with what has come to be understood in the election lexicon as “winnability” of candidates.

According to the winnability parameter, women candidates often lose out to men in nominations for electoral contests. Winnability of individual candidates is also assessed by the political party concerned with reference to the strength of competing nominees from other political parties in terms of their religion, caste, community, traditional pattern of voting etc. Women, especially if they happen to be first time aspirants, lose out to men in this assessment as well. Very frequently, in the entire process of nominations for elections, women end up becoming symbolic contestants - in constituencies with meagre chances of success - from parties wanting to be seen as supporters of women's political participation.

That the rate of success of women candidates is a function significantly of the support they would receive from political parties becomes evident from the comparative data on the success rate of women contestants fielded by them and that of independent women contestants. In the 13th General Elections to the Lok Sabha, the rate of success for party supported women candidates was 23.5%, 47 out of 200 having won (Table 6). The success rate for independent women candidates was a mere 1.3%, as only one out of 78 candidates won. Indeed, it is this phenomenon which brought down the success rate of women candidates as a whole relative to that of men. Seeming overall low success rate of women candidates, in turn, also adversely affects their prospective nominations for electoral contests. Sometimes, women candidates are offered 'uncertain' seats by political parties so that they safeguard the interests of their preferred (male) candidates. Women end up taking the blame for losing.

Representation in Leadership Positions in Political Parties/Party Wings

Thanks to the women's movement, an inevitable dispensation in party structures has become the creation of women's wings to facilitate mobilisation of membership as well as voter turnouts during elections. There are instances of women coming to occupy top positions in party hierarchies. This is true of national as well as regional political parties. The most prominent past example, of course, is that of Ms. Indira Gandhi. Till recently, Ms. Jaya Jaitley was President of the Samata Party. Ms. Sonia Gandhi (Congress), Ms. Jayalalithaa [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)], Ms. Lakshmi Shiva Parvati (NTR Telugu Desam Party), Ms. Mayawati [Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)] and Ms. Mamta Banerjee [All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)] are the current examples. In the case of several of these leaders, access to top positions in their parties was facilitated, *inter-alia*, by the fact of their having been related to other prominent leaders. Nor has it been a policy or rule of practice for political parties to provide meaningful number of positions for women in the hierarchies of their own formations. As of 1995, women constituted less than one-eighth of the total strength of the top management of parties.

The enhancement of the status of women in the hierarchies of political parties is important for improving the chances of representation of women in legislatures and other

decision-making bodies. This has been recommended in the IPU Conference at Delhi “Towards Partnership Between Men and women in Politics” held in February, 1997.

Representation in Ministerial and other Constitutional Positions

Women have only been a sprinkling in the Central Council of Ministers. Over the years, full cabinet positions have been given only rather grudgingly. The tendency has all along been one of the relegating women to middle or lowest tier amongst ministers, that too in low proportions in the total strength to those tiers. Data on distribution of ministerial positions by sex are presented in Table 8. There have not been women in the position of President or Vice President so far, though there was a woman candidate nominated for the first time for the position of President of India in 2002. Similarly, Lok Sabha has not so far been fortunate to have a lady Speaker. A lady has been Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for multiple terms. Dr. Najma Heptullah has also the distinction of having been the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and is the first woman to occupy that position at the world level.

There have been quite a few women Governors of States.⁸ Nonetheless the status at any given time has always reflected strong male preference for gubernatorial positions.

India has had a few women Chief Ministers too, starting with Sucheta Kripalani⁹. Some of these women have been strong forces in the Government and Opposition in the respective Governments. Women Chief Ministers also have been exceptions proving the male rule.

Portrayal of Women in the Media

Portrayal in the media is very critical for success in the political field. One of the reasons for women’s limited access to politics is pointed out as their inadequate access to the media. Women around the world have the grievance that they get prominence in the Media for flippant reasons on the way they dress or for any mistake they may commit. In this context, often the need for engendering the media is emphasized. The media looks at the world with the male lens. Women’s perceptions do not get captured nor their portrayal does justice to them.

Capacity Building and Support Services

To be successful in politics as in any other field, one has to be capable. Politics is one professional career that cannot come through qualifications alone but has to come through training and application. Women, whose exposure to a variety of matters is more

8. Sarojini Naidu, Padmaja Naidu, Sharda Mukherjee, Kumud Ben Joshi, Jyoti Ventakachalam, Sheila Kaul, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, Fatima Beevi and Rama Devi have been some of them.

9. Other women Chief Ministers have been Ms. Nandini Satpati in Orissa, Ms. Janaki Ramachandran, Ms. Jayalalithaa (currently for the third time) in Tamil Nadu, Smt. Sushma Swaraj in Delhi, Ms. Mayavati in Uttar Pradesh and Smt. Brar in Punjab. Currently, the NCT of Delhi has Ms. Sheila Dixit and the State of Bihar has Smt. Rabri Devi as Chief Ministers.

limited than for men, particularly in patriarchal societies need special processes of capacity building on the political processes, sectorial issues, technical matters of the Parliament are critical. This has emerged as the most critical factor in the context of elected women members of the Local Bodies who are constantly expressing this need. Similar is the requirement for female members of Legislative Bodies who may be much fewer compared to the Members of the Local Bodies.

Priorities Identified by Women Members of Parliament around the World

Women have successfully intervened in the national processes in a variety of ways around the world as captured by the IPU survey and brought about change in their governments and societies (Annexure 5). Similarly, women's perceptions have significantly varied from the male perspectives. It is believed that women's perspective brings a new approach essential for change of social attitudes and the establishment of a new world order with greater equity and justice for all.

The survey conducted by the IPU in 2000 captures a wide range and legislative issues where women's specific contribution had traditionally male approach.¹⁰

These are :

- Social welfare
- Health
- Legal protection
- Human rights
- Work conditions and reduction of discrimination in the workplace
- Peace talks, mediation and negotiation
- Incarceration conditions
- Gun control
- Modification of the criminal code
- Victim compensation legislation
- Legislation regarding drugs
- Mandatory reporting of sexual abuse
- Redressing gender imbalance and monitoring of sexual harassment in/by defence force
- Modification of rules governing the appointment of officers
- Domestic violence policy and legislation
- Provision of refuges and shelters for victims of domestic violence
- Development of family advocacy and support systems

10. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Politics : Women's Insight, Series "Reports and Document" Geneva 2000.

- Heightened awareness of family law in general
- Protection and education programmes for the girl child
- Legislation of civil weddings
- Consideration of issues to do with maternity leave
- Women's reproductive freedom, particularly access to abortion
- Constitution of departments and ministries of gender affairs
- Maintenance Matrimonial property
- Parental leave
- Removal of barriers to participation in the workforce
- Workforce policies and a reduction of discrimination
- Policies which encourage part-time and regular work for working children
- Maintenance and child support
- Policies and legislation on childcare and care for the elderly
- Statutory retirement pensions
- Reduction of discriminatory taxation policies
- Monitoring of social welfare policies to detect discrimination
- Promotion of gender equality in governance and management
- Education of male politicians and bureaucrats to be gender aware when designing policies and legislation
- Highlighting the issues faced by rural women
- Protection of the environment
- Encouraging transparency in management and political practices

The IPU survey also identified the following priorities for the future as indicated by the women respondents :

- Sustainable development
- Human-centered Policies
- The fight against poverty
- Fight against unemployment, and for employment for future generations
- Education for All
- The family code
- The health of the whole family
- The fight against violence within the family and in society, including sexual harassment
- Food for all
- Medical and technical developments

- Technology
- Agriculture and mechanization
- Environment issues
- Defence of the weaker members of society, including the handicapped
- Defence of minority rights
- Promotion of human rights in general

Conclusions and Recommendations

The inclusion of women in greater numbers in the political processes calls for a major shift in the mindsets of both men and women. The status of women in the society as equal partners has got to be recognized first. Access to education, facilities and opportunities for advancement have to be provided in order to raise the capacities of women for greater participation in the affairs of the community and society. A sound structure of support services for women, particularly childcare, should be assured to enable them to participate outside the home in work and in public meetings etc. Gender roles in the family have also to be restructured with men also participating in household chores and taking responsibility for children. As long as this does not happen it would be difficult for more and more women to come out in the public domain.

The strengths of the women who have already gained experience in the local bodies over the last decade with the establishment of the Panchayati Raj should be recognized and their energies harnessed for building a new cadres of legislators at the State and the National level.

Political parties should take the lead in mobilizing women for political work and in increasing their representation at all organizational levels to provide a channel of growth for them to get into real governance. It naturally would lead to more women being sponsored as candidates for elections, which is essential for more of them to come into positions of power. It has often been suggested that quotas for women candidates should be provided at the political party level to ensure adequate numbers of them winning elections and coming into elected positions. It has also been felt that this might be better than reserving quotas in Parliaments. Practical experience shows that political parties have not shown any initiatives in this regard, though no law is required for the purpose. In view of this and in the present stage of our social development there is yet a strong case for reservation of seats for women in the legislatures as has already been proposed in the Bill pending before the Parliament. The Bill should be given priority and enacted by the Parliament.

The role of the Media in shaping public opinion is very important. The portrayal of women in the Media should become more proactive and positive and highlight the achievements and contributions of women particularly at the decision-making levels in recognition of their capabilities. This would also serve to build role models of women for others to emulate.

Specific steps for building capacities of both women candidates for elections and those who have won elections should be initiated through a system of training. Women's networks elsewhere in the world have done a great deal of work in helping women in their campaign strategies, funding collections and education on various social issues for attaining success in their political career. A strong movement on these lines needs to be initiated both within political parties and outside political parties to increase the capabilities of women to handle public matters.

As has been well brought out by the IPU survey, women would be able to bring a great deal of positive contributions for social change and advancement of status of neglected sections of the society. This should be encouraged.

Issues for Discussion

1. How to enhance the political status of women and enrich democracy with their equal partnership with men and change social attitudes?
2. How to ensure representation for women to form the "critical mass" required for changing the Parliamentary processes to incorporate the women's perspectives in social and economic development?
3. Measures for building the capacity of women to play a constructive role in the political processes.
4. The role of political parties in creating a conducive environment for better participation of women in the political processes.
5. Measures required for improving the self-image of women as decision makers and agents of change.
6. The future priorities for women Parliamentarians in India.

Table 1
Participation of Women in General Elections (Percentage)

General Election	Year	Male	Female	Total	Difference between male and female participation
First	1952	—	—	*61.2	—
Second	1957	—	—	*62.2	—
Third	1962	62.0	46.6	55.0	15.4
Fourth	1967	66.7	55.5	61.3	11.2
Fifth	1971	**60.9	**9.1	55.3	11.8
Sixth	1977	66.6	54.9	60.5	11.7
Seventh	1980	62.2	51.2	56.9	11.0
Eighth	1984	68.4	59.2	64.0	9.2
Ninth	1989	66.1	56.9	62.0	9.2
Tenth	1991	61.6	51.4	61.0	10.2
Eleventh	1996	62.1	53.4	57.9	8.7
Twelfth	1998	66.2	57.9	62.0	8.3
Thirteenth	1999	NA	NA	60.4	

Source : Election Commission of India

NA : Not Available

* Calculated on the basis of valid votes polled.

** CSWI Report, 1974.

Note : Election Commission has not maintained sex-wise break-up of electors in respect of the First, Second and Fifth General Elections.

Table 1A
Participation of Women in Recent State Elections (Percentage)

Sl. No.	State	Polling Percentage		
		Men	Women	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh (1999)	72.07	66.24	69.15
2.	Arunachal Pradesh (1999)	72.38	73.58	72.95
3.	Assam (2001)	77.23	71.82	74.63
4.	Bihar (2000)	70.71	53.28	62.57
5.	Goa (2002)	69.89	67.61	68.76
6.	Haryana (2000)	69.97	67.85	69.01
7.	Jammu and Kashmir (2002)	48.26	38.27	43.70
8.	Karnataka (1999)	70.62	64.58	67.65
9.	Kerala (2001)	74.39	70.67	72.47
10.	Maharashtra (1999)	63.62	58.03	60.95
11.	Manipur (2002)	90.09	90.32	90.21
12.	Orissa (2000)	63.63	54.25	59.10
13.	Punjab (2002)	65.92	64.27	65.14
14.	Pondicherry (2001)	69.51	70.70	70.10
15.	Sikkim (1999)	84.36	79.10	81.83
16.	Tamil Nadu (2001)	61.30	56.83	59.07
17.	Uttar Pradesh (2002)	56.75	50.31	53.85
18.	Uttaranchal (2002)	55.96	52.65	54.36
19.	West Bengal (2001)	77.83	72.53	75.29
20.	India (General Election)	66.20	57.90	62.00

Source : Compiled from the data published by the Election Commission of India.

Table 2
Representation of Women Members from the
First to the Thirteenth Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha	Year	Total No. of Seats	No. of women members	% to the total
First	1952	499	22	4.4
Second	1957	500	27	5.4
Third	1962	503	34	6.7
Fourth	1967	523	31	5.9
Fifth	1971	521	22	4.2
Sixth	1977	544	19	3.4
Seventh	1980	544	28	5.1
Eighth	1984	544	44	8.1
Ninth	1989	529	28	5.29
Tenth	1991	509	36	7.07
Eleventh	1996	541	40*	7.36
Twelfth	1998	545	44*	8.07
Thirteenth**	1999	543	48*	8.83

* Including one nominated member

** Election Commission of India

Source : Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Journal of Parliamentary Information - Members of the Eleventh Lok Sabha: A socio-economic study*, p. 450.

Table 3
Women Members in the Rajya Sabha

Lok Sabha	Strength of the House	No. of women members	% of women members
1960	236	24	10.17
1980	244	29	11.89
1990	245	24	9.80
1996	245	19	7.76
1999	235	20	8.51

Source : WHO's WHO in Rajya Sabha 1960-1998 and Compiled by Reference Wing, LARRDIS, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Table 4
Representation of Women in State Legislature

State	Year of Election	No. of Seats	No. of Women Contestants	No. of Women Elected	% of Successful Contestants	% of representation for women
Andhra Pradesh	1999	295	157	28	14.0	9.52
Arunachal Pradesh	1999	60	4	1	34.88	1.66
Assam	2001	126	19	10	12.36	7.93
Bihar	2000	324	189	19	8.22	5.86
Goa	2002	40	11	1	18.86	2.50
Gujarat	1998	182	49	4	8.2	2.2
Haryana	2000	90	49	4	9.32	4.44
Himachal Pradesh	1998	68	25	6	24.0	8.8
Jammu & Kashmir	2002	87	30	2	12.27	2.29
Karnataka	1999	224	62	6	16.70	2.67
Kerala	2001	140	19	8	13.73	5.71
Madhya Pradesh	1998	320	181	26	13.3	8.1
Maharashtra	1999	288	86	12	14.35	4.16
Manipur	2002	60	7	1	16.30	1.66
Meghalaya	1998	60	15	3	20.0	5.0
Mizoram	1998	40	10	0	—	—
Delhi (NCT)	1998	70	57	9	12.8	12.9
Nagaland	1996	60	—	—	—	—
Orissa	2000	147	59	13	16.93	8.84
Pondicherry	2001	30	9	0	15.54	0.00
Punjab	2002	117	71	8	12.67	6.83
Rajasthan	1998	200	69	14	20.3	7.0
Sikkim	1999	32	6	1	30.47	3.12
Tamil Nadu	2001	234	N.A.	25	22.82	10.68
Tripura	1998	60	21	2	9.5	3.3
Uttaranchal	2002	70	72	4	7.55	5.71
Uttar Pradesh	2002	402	341	26	7.26	6.46
West Bengal	2001	294	N.A.	27	28.85	9.18

Source : Election Commission of India. N.A. : Not Available (The published data of the Election Commission has a higher number of women elected than the number of women contestants. Hence no figure is given against the no. of women contestants separately. There is no alteration in the total no. of contestants as published by the Election Commission in calculating percentage of successful candidates and successful women candidates).

Table 5
Representation of Women in State Legislature

State	Year of Election	No. of Seats	No. of Women Contestants	No. of Women Elected	% of Successful Contestants	% of representation for women
Assam	2001	126	19	10	12.36	7.93
	1996	126	45	6	13.33	4.8
Bihar	2000	324	189	19	8.22	5.86
	1995	—	264	11	4.2	3.4
Goa	2002	40	11	1	18.86	2.50
	1999	40	10	2	20.0	5.0
Haryana	2000	90	49	4	9.32	4.44
	1996	90	93	4	4.3	4.4
Jammu & Kashmir	2002	87	30	2	12.27	2.29
	1996	87	15	2	13.0	2.3
Kerala	2001	140	19	8	13.73	5.71
	1996	141	55	13	23.6	9.2
Manipur	2002	60	7	1	16.30	1.66
	2000	60	14	1	14.96	1.66
	1995	60	11	0	—	—
Orissa	2000	147	59	13	16.93	8.84
	1995	147	75	8	10.7	5.4
Pondicherry	2001	30	9	0	15.54	0.00
	1996	30	18	1	5.6	3.3
Punjab	2002	117	71	8	12.67	6.83
	1997	117	52	7	13.5	5.9
Tamil Nadu	2001	234	N.A.	25	22.82	10.68
	1996	234	156	9	5.8	3.8
Uttar Pradesh	2002	402	341	26	7.26	6.46
	1996	425	190	20	10.5	4.7
West Bengal	2001	294	N.A.	27	28.85	9.18
	1996	294	—	—	—	—

Source : Election Commission of India. N.A. : Not Available.

Table 6
Distribution of Women Members, by Age Groups,
from the Seventh to the Eleventh Lok Sabhas

Age Group	7th Lok Sabha		8th Lok Sabha		9th Lok Sabha		10th Lok Sabha		11th Lok Sabha	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
25-30 years	—	—	1	2.3	1	3.70	4	11.11	Nil	—
31-35 years	1	3.5	2	4.5	2	7.40	3	8.33	3	8.10
36-40 years	3	10.7	3	6.8	2	7.40	4	11.11	8	21.62
41-45 years	4	14.3	5	11.4	5	18.51	8	22.22	8	21.62
46-50 years	6	21.4	7	15.9	5	18.51	4	11.11	5	13.51
51-55 years	4	14.3	9	20.4	4	14.81	2	5.56	4	10.81
56-60 years	6	21.4	5	11.4	2	7.40	5	13.89	4	10.81
61-65 years	3	10.7	6	13.6	2	7.40	3	8.33	—	—
66-70 years	—	—	5	11.4	1	3.70	1	2.78	2	5.40
71-75 years	1	3.5	1	2.3	3	11.11	2	5.56	2	5.40
76-80 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2.70
Total No. of women who have supplied information	28		44		27		36		37	
Total No. of Seats	544		544		529		509		543	

Source : Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Journal of Parliamentary Information - Members of the Eleventh Lok Sabha: A socio-economic study*, page 451.

Table 7
Sex Disaggregated Party Wise Data on Electoral Contestants
in the General Elections, 1999

Sl. No.	Party	Contestants			% of women to total contestants	Elected			% of	
		Women	Men	Total		Women	Men	Total	Elected women to No. of women contestants	elected men to No. of men contestants
1.	Bharatiya Janta Party	25	314	339	7.37	15	167	182	60.00	53.18
2.	Indian National Congress	50	403	453	11.04	14	100	114	28.00	24.81
3.	Other Political Parties which fielded women candidates and won seats in the election	81	1045	1126	7.19	18	181	199	22.22	17.32
4.	Independents	78	1867	1945	4.01	1	5	6	1.28	0.27
5.	Political Parties which did not field women candidates but have won seats in the election	—	82	82	—	—	42	42	—	51.22
6.	Political Parties which fielded women candidates but did not win any seats in the election	44	347	391	11.25	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Political Parties which did not field women candidates and also did not win seats in the election*	—			—	—	—	—	—	—

Source : Election Commission of India.

* No figures are indicated against this column because the Election Commission has not yet compiled figures in respect of political parties which have neither fielded women candidates nor won seats.

Table 8
Representation of Women in the Central Council of Ministers

Date	Number of Ministers			Number of Women Ministers		
	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister
04.02.1985	15	25	0	1	3	0
31.08.1990	17	17	5	0	4	1
31.01.1995	12	37	3	1	4	1
05.08.1996	18	21	0	0	1	0
10.06.1997	20	24	0	0	5	0
19.03.1998	21	21	0	1	3	0
04.01.2000	29	45*	0	1	7**	0
Feb 2003	30	46*	0	1	5	0

Source : Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi

* Seven Ministers of State hold independent charge.

** Three out of them hold independent charge.

Annexure 1

WORLD AVERAGE

BOTH HOUSES COMBINED	
Total MPs	41,746
Gender breakdown known for	37,803
Men	32,130
Women	5,673
Percentage of women	15.0%

SINGLE HOUSE OR LOWER HOUSE	
Total MPs	35,664
Gender breakdown known for	32,400
Men	27,487
Women	4,913
Percentage of women	15.2%

UPPER HOUSE OR SENATE	
Total MPs	6,082
Gender breakdown known for	5,403
Men	4,643
Women	760
Percentage of women	14.1%

REGIONAL AVERAGE

	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	39.7%	—	39.7%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	18.1%	14.8%	17.4%
Americas	16.2%	18.4%	16.5%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	15.7%	14.8%	15.5%
Asia	15.4%	13.0%	15.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	13.7%	12.7%	13.6%
Pacific	13.7%	25.9%	15.2%
Arab States	6.1%	2.6%	5.7%
<i>Regions are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House</i>			

Annexure 2

Assessment of Change since the CSWI Report on the Political Status of Women

Indicators of Political status used by CSWI	Assessment of CSWI	Change in the situation since CSWI Report
Participation in political process. (Voter turn out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the three General Elections between 1962 and 1971 the gap between male and female participation had narrowed. ● This was an indication of improvement of political participation of women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the successive post 1971 General Elections, voter turn-out gap declined from 11 to 8%, except for a slight increase to 10% in 1991. ● Male participation in elections cruising over a small range without a secular trend, steady increase in women's participation, raising the total voter participation in elections itself to higher levels.
Political Attitudes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level of awareness ● Commitment in political Participation; autonomy and independence in political action and behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Predominance of the educated amongst women members in Parliament ● Higher participation of women voters in States with higher indicators on literacy and education. (Education, however, not as determinant of participation as literacy). ● Women from princely families or from families having experience of political participation ● Generally, older women. ● Pattern of influence by men on their wives changing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Predominance of the educated amongst women members in Parliament increasing, more of them also having higher education. ● Higher participation of women voters in States with higher indicators on literacy and education (Education, however, not as determinant of participants as literacy) ● Larger numbers of elected women from political and social work background ● A significant shift to younger persons ● Autonomous political preferences in local bodies have thrown up opportunities to them for autonomy, the influence of the men from their families on them has come for critical review. Exercise of autonomy in any case, is clearly increasingly evident.
Impact of women in political process		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Electoral success etc. ● Nature of Leadership in Parties and Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of women contestants increasing. ● Women contestants a small proportion of total contestants between 1962-71. ● Women form a low proportion of elected members of the Lok Sabha. ● Proportion of winners against contestants declining with increase in the number of contestants. ● Low representation given for women in leadership and managerial positions by political parties in their hierarchies; and in nominations for electoral contests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of women contestants increasing. ● Women contestants a small proportion of total contestants. ● Proportion of elected women representatives doubled to 8.9% in 1999 compared to 1952. ● Proportion of winning women candidates amongst women candidates higher than proportion of winning male candidates amongst male candidates. ● Low representation given for women in leadership and managerial positions by political parties in their hierarchies and in nominations for electoral contests.

Source : Dr. Sarala Gopalan, "Towards Equality - The Unfinished Agenda - Status of Women in India - 2001".

Annexure 3

A World Chronology of the Recognition of Women's Rights to Vote and to Stand for Election

Unless otherwise indicated, the date signifies the year women were granted the right both to vote and to stand for election. The countries listed below currently have a Parliament or have had one at some point in their history.

1788	United States of America (to stand for election)
1893	New Zealand (to vote)
1902	Australia*
1906	Finland
1907	Norway (to stand for election)*
1913	Norway**
1915	Denmark, Iceland
1917	Canada (to vote)*, Netherlands (to stand for election)
1918	Austria, Canada (to vote)*, Estonia, Georgia ¹ , Germany, Hungary, Ireland*, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, United Kingdom*
1919	Belarus, Belgium (to vote)*, Luxembourg, Netherlands (to vote), New Zealand (to stand for election), Sweden*, Ukraine
1920	Albania, Canada (to stand for election)*, Czech Republic, Slovakia, United States of America (to vote)
1921	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium (to stand for election)*, Georgia ¹ , Sweden**
1924	Kazakhstan ¹ , Mongolia, Saint Lucia, Tajikistan
1927	Turkmenistan
1928	Ireland**, United Kingdom**
1929	Ecuador*, Romania*
1930	South Africa (Whites), Turkey (to vote)
1931	Chile*, Portugal*, Spain, Sri Lanka
1932	Maldives, Thailand, Uruguay
1934	Brazil, Cuba, Portugal*, Turkey (to stand for election)
1935	Myanmar (to vote)
1937	Philippines
1938	Bolivia*, Uzbekistan

1939	El Salvador (to vote)
1941	Panama*
1942	Dominican Republic
1944	Bulgaria, France, Jamaica
1945	Croatia, Guyana (to stand for election), Indonesia, Italy, Japan ¹ , Senegal, Slovenia, Togo
1946	Cameroon, D.P.R. of Korea, Djibouti (to vote), Guatemala, Liberia, Myanmar (to stand for election), Panama**, Romania**, The F.Y.R. of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia
1947	Argentina, Japan ¹ , Malta, Mexico (to vote), Pakistan, Singapore
1948	Belgium**, Israel, Niger, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Suriname
1949	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile**, China, Costa Rica, Syrian Arab Republic (to vote)*
1950	Barbados, Canada (to vote)**, Haiti, India
1951	Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Nepal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
1952	Bolivia**, Côte d'Ivoire, Greece, Lebanon
1953	Bhutan, Guyana (to vote), Mexico (to stand for election), Syrian Arab Republic**
1954	Belize, Colombia, Ghana
1955	Cambodia, Entrea ² , Ethiopia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru
1956	Benin, Comoros, Egypt, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Somalia
1957	Malaysia, Zimbabwe (to vote)**
1958	Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Lap P.D.R., Nigeria (South)
1959	Madagascar, San Marino (to vote), Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania
1960	Canada (to stand for election)**, Cyprus, Gambia, Tonga
1961	Bahamas*, Burundi, El Salvador (to stand for election), Malawi, Mauritania, Paraguay, Rwanda, Sierra Leone
1962	Algeria, Australia**, Monaco, Uganda, Zambia
1963	Afghanistan, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Morocco, Papua New Guinea (to stand for election)
1964	Bahamas**, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Papua New Guinea (to vote), Sudan
1965	Bostwana, Lesotho

1967	Democratic Republic of the Congo (to vote), Ecuador**, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Yemen (D.P.R.)
1968	Nauru, Swaziland
1970	Andorra (to vote), Democratic Republic of the Congo (to stand for election), Yemen (Arab Republic)
1971	Switzerland
1972	Bangladesh
1973	Andorra (to stand for election), Bahrain ³ , San Marino (to stand for election)
1974	Jordan, Solomon Islands
1975	Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Vanuatu ¹
1976	Portugal**
1977	Guinea Bissau
1978	Nigeria (North), Republic of Moldova ¹ , Zimbabwe (to stand for election)
1979	Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Fed. States), Palau
1980	Iraq, Vanuatu ¹
1984	Liechtenstein, South Africa (Coloureds + Indians)
1986	Central African Republic, Djibouti (to stand for election)
1989	Namibia
1990	Samoa
1993	Kazakhstan ¹ , Republic of Moldova ¹
1994	South Africa (Blacks)
<p><i>Women in Kuwait do not yet have the right to vote or to stand for election. In the United Arab Emirates, where the Parliament is officially appointed, neither men nor women have the right to vote or to stand for election.</i></p>	

* Right subject to conditions or restrictions

** Restrictions or conditions lifted

1. Reference to several dates reflects the stages in the granting of rights. It is not uncommon, in countries previously under colonial rule, for women to have been granted the rights to vote and be elected by the colonial administration and to have had them confirmed at the time of accession to independence. Similarly, it is not uncommon, in countries that were formerly part of a federation and in which women were entitled to vote and be elected under the federal legislation, for women to have had these rights confirmed under the Constitution of the newly independent State.
2. In November 1955, Eritrea was part of Ethiopia. The Constitution of sovereign Eritrea adopted on 23 May 1997 stipulates that "All Eritrean citizens of eighteen years of age or more, shall have the right to vote."

Participation by Women MPs in Financial, Legislative and other Important Business

	General Budget	Railway Budget	Motion of Thanks	Private Members Business	Discussions under Rule 193 (Short duration discussions)	Other important Legislative Business
11th Lok Sabha	2(8)	6(97)	2(28)	1(5)	2(10) Hike in price of diesel etc.	2(34) Confidence Motion
	1(8) J&K Budget	10(151) Demands for Grants (Railways)		2(10)	1(16) Amarnath Yatra	1(18) Felicitations to HDS
	2(16) UP Budget			2(11)	3(25) Cyclone in Andhra Pradesh	12(76) Important Bills
	4(61) Demands for Grants (General)			2(15)	4(21) Drought in Orissa	3(18) Statutory Resolution reg. U.P.
				1(8)	Rise in prices of essential commodities	1(10) Judgment of Allahabad High Court
		2(15)		Textile Industry	1(18) Law and Order Situation	
		1(10) Streamlining Public Distribution System		1(25)	Confidence Motion	
	2(31)			Bihar Fodder Scam		
	28(117)			Motion regarding status in science and technology and human development in country		

(169)

12th Lok Sabha	9(80)	17(166)	3(32)	3(29)	3(30) Suicide by farmers due to non-payment of price for agricultural produce	3(30) Felicitations to Speaker
		9(144)			5(23) Rise in prices of essential commodities	1(20) 12th Report of R.C.C.
		8(15) Atrocities on women			3(20) Confidence Motion	
		2(21) Situation in North-Eastern Region			1(8) Motion reg. Suspension of member	
		1(21) India's Foreign Policy in connection with SAARC			11(154) Important Bills	
		4(42) Deportation of certain people by Maharashtra Government			1(19) Statutory resolution reg. Goa	
		3(32) Rise in prices of essential commodities			3(30) Statutory resolution reg. Bihar	
					3(28) Reservation policy in respect of SC, ST in Government Service	
		5(35) Atrocities on minorities			2(26) Confidence Motion	
		1(13) Bilateral talks with U.S.				

Source : Compiled by Lok Sabha Secretariat specifically for this report.

Note : Figures shown in parenthesis indicate total number of members who spoke on the occasion

Annexure 5**POLITICS : WOMEN'S INSIGHT****Excerpts from Inter-Parliamentary Union Report, Series
"Reports and Documents" No. 36, Geneva 2000****Solution, not Power**

The following quotes selected at random among respondents from different parts of the world will provide a flavour of their vision and show at the same time how they compare with men :

- Women's priorities are directed towards social well-being, for men, profit and power. (West Africa)
- Women will humanize politics and development will follow suit. Women are better managers than men are. They will get through and adopt legislation in favour of men - the family code, which gives no rights to widows, will be amended and corrected, as will the problems of polygamy. (West Africa)
- Women think about the country's development; the fight against poverty and unemployment, our children's future (education, jobs, etc.); the people's health (pre and post natal medical tests), medical aid, medical insurance, the improvement of farming methods (since it is women who cultivate the land from morning till night) and mechanizing farming. (West Africa)
- Some major decisions should be taken to stop certain practices; early marriages; marriage with the consent of the two future spouses non-existent until now. The adoption of a family code in all countries, especially in developing countries or Muslim countries. (East Africa)
- Women are the first to become aware of economic, educational and health problems. Women are more aware of the country's problems; you can start out with a minor problem that ends up being major. (Central America)
- [Women have] a lesser tendency to use political influence for their own or their family's benefit. They are apt to deal with issues that men do not tend to deal with, such as family violence, health and education, discrimination etc. The result is more responsible action with greater respect for the dignity of others. There is greater reference to social issues and the family's well-being, and hence greater commitment to the fight against poverty, which generates or exacerbates obstacles to progress, peace and the promotion of women. (South America)
- In social matters, in particular, women's sensitiveness is much greater than that of men. This is not just because of women's lifestyle; I think that traditionally

women are much more sensitive to social problems, especially those related to poverty and raising children. I have found that at present women like to specialize in matters of human rights, because women's present state is very similar to that of the minorities, even though women represent a larger proportion of the population than men. (Central Europe)

- Increased participation of women in politics will result in governments taking greater interest in the following issues : securing the minimum income, providing larger outlays for health care structure and culture, and assistance in bringing up children, in addition to keeping the peace in the country and worldwide. (Central Europe)
- I believe that women are very much led by social aspects and caring for the needy. Their experience gained during children's education, family work and taking care of older family members gives them a different outlook and has an impact on their decision. Most women concentrate on solving problems, not on gaining power. (Western Europe)
- Women have a greater sensitivity towards the weaker members of society and towards any minorities; a general view of society rather than consideration of economic aspects alone. (Western Europe)
- I believe that women's political priorities are different. They give priority to social issues such as public welfare, health, education, culture, environmental issues and questions of law. Their priorities are, in short, more human-centered. (Southern Europe)
- With the economic difficulties in Korea, business and financial institutions have been cutting down their management, and during this process many organizations have been dismissing female employees first. When participating in parliamentary inspections of government-run banks and government organizations, I raised such issues in an effort to reverse the trend of firing women first. [Also:] My activities focus on preventing the dissolution of families, securing a sound environment for the younger generation, and creating various welfare systems to prepare for the coming senior citizen's society. (South-East Asia)

POLITICS : WOMEN'S INSIGHT

Excerpts from Inter-Parliamentary Union Report, Series "Reports and Documents" No. 36, Geneva 2000

A Number of Key Areas of Change

A number of other comments identify very specific fields in which the life of ordinary people may have been improved as a result of action by women politicians, especially women legislators or ministers. For example :

Peace and Conflict Resolution

The presence of women on negotiating teams in (N. Ireland) peace talks was crucial - not only in terms of gender representation but also in outcome. Both governments had a female minister on the team. Women were present in all parties (apart from unionist parties). The Women's Coalition also played a key role representing women on a cross-community basis and across class.

Arms Control

- Identifying the social impact of particular policies was frequently the role of women. Gun control (in Canada) would not be as stringent were it not for the women in parliament. The impact of government policy and programmes on women has led to much greater consideration of gender impacts.
- I raised the matter of the ratification of anti-personnel landmines. (West Africa)

Support Services

- Women's contribution has been to address social problems and a fair and just society in place of an emphasis on status, power, money and awards. (In Australia) Lobbying by women's groups led to the creation of support services for families and the growth of the community services section (e.g. the Women's Electoral Lobby's role in the 1970s and 1980s in funding and developing local-based and accessible services).
- Forcing of Government to change legislation relating to access to full payment of new assistance to some advantaged groups. Legislation still being amended. Sexual harassment in defence force addressed. (Pacific)

Labour/Employment

- Maternity leave was only 45 days : ratification completed for increase from 45 to 90 days. (East Africa)
- We have succeedd in passing a proposal which facilities part-time work (which

particularly concerns women) because we, three women from three different governmental parties, got together and defended the subject. (Western Europe)

Education and Health Care

- Health, education and social matters are areas in which women invest a lot in society. Their massive involvement in politics will have a catalyzing effect in those areas. Anyone familiar with the impact of health, education, a healthy environment and social values on society's development will say that the result can only be positive. (West Africa)
- The final working of the draft legislation on the education framework strongly reflects the presence of women in parliament. (West Africa)

Protection of the Environment

The few women in the Senate have been able to affect legislation on environmental issues and, to a lesser extent, some legislation in the field of family issues. (Middle East)

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment; Domestic Violence

- Private Members Bill on individuals who commit serious assault (sexual or non-sexual) to be tested to see whether they are psychopaths. (North America)
- Some special legislation on, for instance, marital rape, rape in childhood, and abortion. (Western Europe)
- Since there are more women in Congress, we now have the domestic and intra-family violence act, initiatives are taken on women's issues, and there is legislation on education for adult women. (Central America)
- As Deputy Minister of Justice, I had a battle getting the male-dominated department to agree (in 1993) to include an acknowledgement that rape could take place in marriage and to outlaw sexual harassment in legislation dealing with domestic issues. I succeeded chiefly with the very strong support of women prosecutors who gave excellent evidence and so helped the decision through. [Also:] Legislation: e.g. repealing of tax provision which discriminated against married women; introducing domestic violence legislation, including rape in marriage as explained above; abortion-on-demand legislation (Southern Africa)
- The passing of legislation penalizing sexual and physical violence against family members, the abolition of the householder system, the projects to shelter sexual abuse victims, and the protection of young girls against violence, abuse and sexual exploitation are all results of increased female participation in politics. (South-East Asia)

- Legislation : Action against violence where women and children are victims. (Nordic country)
- Continuous participation in the drafting of legislation to prevent sexual abuse and family abuse. (South-East Asia)
- Domestic violence within families has been reduced; there is better legal protection for human rights in general. (Southern Africa)

Children's Rights

- Sex discrimination legislation and a focus on childcare would not have happened without women in parliament. Women parliamentarians have lobbied for changes to legislation on care for the elderly, childcare and income support (social security) and obtained some position changes. (Pacific)
- In 1964, a government bill was introduced in the National Assembly with the aim of protecting young under-age girls, whereby any man getting a young girl pregnant was liable to imprisonment. The Assembly, in which women were in the minority (3 women out of 125 MPs), changed the substance of the law to make the girl and the man caught in the act both punishable; they were liable to imprisonment. (West Africa)
- Nine bills changing things for children - giving them greater rights (Western Europe)

Gender Equality and Women's Rights

- Women have been the driving force behind draft legislation of benefit to women, even though some of that legislation was proposed by our male colleagues (for example, the sexual harassment act). (Central America)
- Within legislation, there have been a lot of changes for the better to protect women. (Nordic Country)
- Good efforts have been made to eliminate discrimination from existing legislation. They have not been successful in everything. (Central America)
- Women in South Africa are a strong pressure and lobby group for recognition of female equality to males and effective governance. When discussing education legislation for example, the same rules will apply to the boy who makes a girl pregnant while at school [Also] I was instrumental in getting an amount set aside in the provincial budget for Gender Affairs for the first time this financial year - 1997/1998. I also set up a committee of representatives of the different departments to involve themselves with equality in their departments.
- We non-governmentally pushed for the passage of CEDAW and influenced the Representation of the People Act. (Pacific)

- In terms of legislation I was the author of drafts of the “Quota Act”, the “Municipal Defendants of Children and Adolescents Act”, and the “The Pregnant Adolescent Act”. I proposed the “Maternity Protection Act”. (Central America)
- Specific laws to correct imbalances, quotas, access to military, police institutions, contracting of women as advisers and technicians. (South America)
- The women in my parliamentary party group have achieved significant advantages for women with children in the statutory retirement pension system. They also monitor all proposed legislation to determine whether or not it will result in disadvantages to women. (Western Europe)
- Of course, we have for example demanded that school texts use equality and not sexist language, and that men and women not be identified with specific occupational roles. In places with a large indigenous population, people are still not used to women speaking in public, but in recent years they have grown used to seeing and above all hearing us. (Central America)
- Still more to be done but the good work so far has enabled the National Policy on Women to be passed by Parliament in 1989. The National Policy on Women has spurred a lot of action plans for the advancement of women in [my country]. (South-East Asia)
- The [legislation] was amended to include equality, between men and women as partners in marriage. (Southern Europe)

REPORT

Role of Women in Legislature 21st August, 2003

The National Commission for Women and the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women held a joint session on the Role of Women in Legislatures on 21st August, 2003 in the Parliament House Annexe. It was a unique gathering of Members of Parliament, Chairpersons of State Women Commissions, Members of the Women's Movement and Members of the National Commission for Women.

Smt. Margaret Alva, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women chaired the meeting.

Smt. Jaskaur Meena, Hon'ble Minister of State, Women and Child Development was the Chief Guest.

Smt. Poornima Advani, Chairperson, NCW, welcomed the Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women and other delegates to the conference. She pointed to Section 16 of the NCW Act requiring consultation by the Government with the Commission on all policy matters concerning women. She considered this as a very special legislative strength. The special purpose of this meeting was to make advancement on ensuring political reservation for women and realize a *de jure* reservation of 33% for women. She was happy that there were 20 State Women's Commissions in the country. She hoped that the United Voice of the women, which had carried through amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and various other legislative amendments would now enable political reservation for women.

In her inaugural address, the Hon'ble Minister regretted that the country had wasted 50 years to even reach 10% representation for women in the Lok Sabha. She applauded the capability of the women Parliamentarians and Members of the Panchayati Raj. She referred to three propositions relating to women's representation in the legislatures. One was at the Party level, the second was dual membership and the third was 33% representation for women. She emphasized the need for a far-sighted vision for women, which included literacy, capacity building and intellectual participation in decision-making. She emphasized the need to reach women at the grassroots at the village levels going beyond women from urban areas and renowned families. Even reaching 8% representation was a big task and we have now to scale larger heights, she said. "We need to pitch our goals high so that we can march forward".

Dr. Sarala Gopalan in her presentation referred to the "shevolution" where women were coming to the forefront seeking recognition. The study done by the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) had brought out that women had been able to bring about

change whenever and wherever they had been given opportunities to work. Women parliamentarians have changed the texture of democracy in those countries where they have formed a critical mass.

She said that it had taken 50 years to double the representation from 4 to 8.9% in the Lok Sabha and it should not take another 50 years to reach the current world average of 15% representation for women. It was regrettable that the Reservation Bill had been slipping from the 81st position of the Amendment of the Constitution to the 95th/96th position. She referred to her paper in which she had described the transformative processes in India and in the world. In India, women had become very important as voters. Political Parties canvassed votes from women for garnering more votes to their Parties. It was a fact that non-traditional groups were able to come into power wherever higher proportions of women cast votes. The gap between male and female voters had reduced significantly from 11-12% to just 8%. The data from the State Elections showed a positive coalition between literacy and proportion of women votes. Politically, women had become an invaluable constituency for the Political Parties. "With the result, I think, without exception, every proclamation, every manifesto of every political Party had included reservation of seats for women". The political parties exhibited their keenness to attract the attention of women. It was important to strategize to rectify the democratic deficit by drawing the attention of the Government, political parties and the society itself to making space for women. The increasing number of women voters should bring in a change in mindset and address women's practical and strategic needs to convert them into valuable human resource. This has been neglected hitherto and needs greater emphasis and attention for improving the quality of life.

She referred to changes in attitudes in recent times. Younger and more educated women were coming into Parliament. More women were contesting elections than before, though they still constituted less than 20% of the candidates. The winning possibilities of women candidates who were put up by political parties was much higher than the winning possibility of men who contested elections. Yet political parties were reluctant to give seats to women vary of their success in elections. Sometimes, the parties allotted only such seats where they were doubtful of succeeding.

She highlighted the major issues for discussion as :

- How to enhance the political status of women and enrich democracy with their equal partnership with men and change social issues;
- How to ensure representation for women to form the "critical mass" required for changing the Parliamentary processes to incorporate the women's perspective in social and economic development;
- To undertake measures for building the capacity of women to play a constructive role in the political processes;

- The role of political parties in creating a conducive environment for better participation of women in the political processes;
- The measures required to be taken for including the self-image of women as decision makers and agents of change; and
- The future priorities for women Parliamentarians in India.

She also invited attention to an analysis on the participation of women Parliamentarians in various kinds of debates in the business of the Parliament. The question was how could women bring the kind of qualitative change that democracy required.

The discussion veered round various alternatives that were being discussed.

The first was the formula suggested by Smt. Rami Chhabra about making 50% of the constituencies as double member constituency with one man and one women and remaining 50% as general. In this method by women coming in 50% of the constituencies would represent 33% in the Parliament. Smt. Medha Navlekar explained the various alternative formulae proposed. She also emphasized on the creation of a public fund if needed by imposing a tax.

The second alternative was making it compulsory for the political parties to give a certain percentage of representation to women candidates to contest in the election. In the Private Members Bill, she had already introduced in the Parliament. She had suggested 40% reservation for either sex. She was agreeable to have this brought down to 33%. The Election Commission had also made a similar suggestion earlier. The only condition she felt necessary was that if the minimum percentage of women candidates had not been put up by a Political Party, the Election Commission should not allow the Political Party to participate in the elections. The merit in this strategy was that it did not require a Constitutional Amendment which called for a two-thirds majority of votes for passing the amendment. Mr. Gill the former Election Commissioner had supported this course, and had said that by not taking recourse to such a measure, women had let several elections pass in the last few years. She felt this was the only sensible alternative.

Majority of the members felt that the Reservation Bill already introduced in the Parliament should be taken up for debate without any modification and discussed and put to vote. The strong opinion was that the Bill should not be diluted in any form, should be debated as it is in Parliament and put to vote. Smt. Maya Singh felt that a joint session of both Houses could be called as was done in the case of POTA and the matter finalized. The members challenged the political parties for a dialogue to remove whatever fears they had. The women could all join together and have a larger assertion from the women's side on the opening day of the next Parliament Session.

The argument against dual member constituency posed by many persons was that it would result in women becoming add-ons.

On the point of Political Parties making reservation for women, the Nepal experience was pointed out, which did not throw up the numbers. Those in favour of this felt that the Election Commission should penalize Political Parties that did not put up the prescribed number of women candidates.

Summing up the discussions, the Chairperson Smt. Margaret Alva said “There are three alternatives which have been proposed. The opinions are divided but the consensus round the country is for the original Bill to be discussed, voted and defeated, if necessary. Let them defeat it, if they want to vote against it. Even the Constitution (Amendment) Bills for the Panchayati Raj, in the year 1989, were defeated, but they came back later. So there is nothing wrong in a Bill being defeated. If there is a strong opinion against it, let those who have the courage vote against it but not sabotage it.”

Other issues that were discussed included the following :

- It was recognized that there should be a holistic approach to women’s status, beyond political participation. Women have to be given the place and status that is rightfully theirs in society.
- Women should equip themselves to reach the decision-making levels and sharpen their abilities to take the final decisions.
- Elections are complicated and need lot of money, muscle power, ability to counter violence, sabotage from own party persons etc. Reservation of Constituencies for women therefore becomes important and relevant because of the milieu prevalent in the society.
- Creation of a national funding agency to fund women contesting in elections to the State Legislatures and Parliament.
- More attention to be given for networking to support women fighting elections.
- Enrollment of more women by political parties to bring more of them into polls.
- Many women at the grassroots level are very aware and want to be involved. A system should get established by which all Political Parties sensitize prospective women candidates through training and effective support.
- Even elected women need training.
- Women should be given positions on all National Commissions and in the Press Council.
- There are a lot of capable women, and only capable women should be given tickets.

- The Media is always negatively portraying women. When women are in distress, other women do not come to their support and fight for them. Women should unite together and strongly act against derogatory remarks made about women.

The Chairman of the National Commission stated that the full Commission had wanted “the Bill in its present form should be debated and voted.”

The second point was “A National Funding Agency should be established for women candidate in legislature and Parliament”.

Recommendations of the Meeting

- The Bill on the reservation of seats for women in the Parliament and State Legislatures should be taken up for discussion in the form it now exists and voted.
- Funding agency for financing women candidates contesting elections should be created.
- Training should be organized for women for improving their capabilities for participation in decision-making bodies.

Gist of the discussions in the Joint Meeting of the National Commission for Women and the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women on Role of Women in Legislatures, 21st August, 2003

Smt. Margaret Alva, Chairperson of the meeting, invited members to discuss the issues placed before them. She suggested that the general problem of political participation could be discussed first and reservation of seats financing of elections etc. could be taken up thereafter.

Smt. Rami Chhabra felt that the 33% reservation had created a logjam from which it was necessary to come out. Her alternative was to arrive at a consensus on a double member constituency. She referred to her article in the Indian Express in which she had suggested that half of the 544 seats be demarcated a double member constituencies which would give a figure of 272 and this would be exactly 33% seats for women. She also pointed out that the decision to freeze the number of constituencies upto 2025 had made them very large for any one to handle.

Smt. Margaret Alva reminded that the decision on freezing of the number of constituencies was taken in order that States who had done nothing about family planning should not be rewarded as in the case of the “BIMARU” states, while those States were limited their population would lose seats comparatively and tilt the balance of power in favour of the States who are already causing a drag on the economy. Smt. Chhabra insisted that she was only trying to ensure that constituencies would remain at reasonable size and not become even more unmanageable than they are now.

Smt. Krishna Bose, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from West Bengal (Trinamool Congress) was Chairperson of the Committee on External Affairs and also part of the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women. She referred to the alternative suggestion she had been making about Political Parties compulsorily placing a certain percentage of women candidates to contest in the elections. This would be possible by a simple amendment of the Representation of People Act. She had introduced a Private Member's Bill suggesting 40% reservation for either sex. She conceded that it could be 33%. The only condition she felt necessary was that if the minimum percentage of women candidates had not been put up by a Political Party, the Election Commission should not allow the Political Party to participate in the elections. The merit in this strategy was that it did not require a Constitutional Amendment which called for a two-thirds majority of votes for passing the amendment. Mr. Gill the former Election Commissioner had supported this course, and had said that by not taking recourse to such a measure, women had let several elections pass in the last few years. She felt this was the only sensible alternative.

Smt. Maya Singh heartily thanked both the NCW and the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women for organizing the joint meeting. She said that it was her mission to see women come out of the confines of their homes. Her party the BJP was keen on getting women to the Parliament on 33% reservation as they had the positive experience of reserving seats for women in the Panchayats. She hoped that this joint meeting would pave the way for reservation of seats for women. She said that even a joint session of both Houses could be called to pass this Bill as was done in the case of POTA. She said another alternative was dual member constituency, so that one-third women would be in the Parliament.

Smt. Vasanti Devi, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women was positive that the present draft of the Reservation Bill must be put to vote. She felt that no alternative should even be discussed. She said that double member constituency would certainly result in women becoming add-ons. Women should not lose their entitlement and become secondary persons in a double member constituency. Political parties would manipulate and relegate women to invincible seats. She felt that there should be no compromise on giving true political participation for women, and there should be no discrimination.

Smt. Krishna Bose reminded the situations in the Parliament on all the four occasion the Bills was presented in the House. Her question was why should we tolerate that?

Prof. A.K. Premajam, MP [CPI(M)] had been a member of the Women's Empowerment Committee. She endorsed the views expressed by the Smt. Vasanti Devi. She pointed out that reservation at the party level would not guarantee 33% seats for women, as they would be given invincible seats. As regards, dual membership, she felt

it was illogical, unscientific and undemocratic. Women will be treated as extras as was already evident from the rare opportunities women were given to participate in debates on important issues in the Parliament. These were dominated by top leaders of parties and men. She said that the Bill already introduced in the Parliament should come up for voting and as per the present strength of parties two-third majority could be ensured if the Government had the will.

Smt. Biplav Thakur strongly opposed double constituency proposal. The draft was already before the Parliament. She also pointed out that Election Commission had not been able to control many matters like expenditure on elections etc. How would they ensure political parties giving representation to adequate number of women?

Smt. Susheela Kaushik pointed out that we started the discussion on how to get a critical mass of women into the Parliament in order to give them a role in decision-making. The reservation within political parties for women candidates may not bring the critical mass as had happened in Nepal where only 5% women got elected despite 10% reservation in the political parties. The women's movement in India have insisted on 33% as there is no other alternative to bringing this critical mass of women into the Parliament.

Dr. (Smt.) Beatrix D'Souza raised a point on finding adequate number of women to contest for the Parliament seats as women considered politics as dirty. She mentioned that maybe they would have to contest as independent members from special funding as EMILE in America. Mrs. Margaret Alva, Chairperson, pointed out that it was not easy to win election as an independent member. There was only one independent member namely Smt. Menaka Gandhi. Election was a complex affair involving election agents, booth management, campaign management etc. it would be difficult for an independent candidate to manage. Women would need lot of support from women in the field when they contest.

Chairman, State Commission, Rajasthan said it was strange that with all the political parties supporting reservation of seats for women the Bill could not be passed. The major obstacle was that the decision making power of various parties was in the hands of the few men who did not want to share that. This needed to be broken.

Smt. Gurcharan Kaur, pointed out that the mindset had to be changed to pass the Bill.

Dr. Ranjana Kumari referred to this as a historical meeting. It was important that the members gathered together at this meeting had to go out with the positive solution to bring women into the Parliament. If all the political parties want it, what is the problem? The National Commission is looking towards the women parliamentarians to get this done.

Dr. Sudha Malaiya agreed with Dr. Ranjana Kumari that there was nothing required now than to take up the Bill already introduced for voting.

Smt. Sushri Savita Sharada was of the firm view that the Bill should be taken up and passed in the current Session of the Parliament. If need be women should threaten to go on fast, if the male members are not inclined to take it up. She hinted at the reluctance of men in the political parties to give space for women except for their own wives. There was also discussion on the fact that women are compelled to oppose reservation of seats for women under threat that they will not be given a seat for contesting in the next elections. It was still difficult for women to get tickets for contesting elections, as the men always felt that they will lose, though the reality was that the chances of winning was higher for women candidates than for men.

Smt. Kamla Nath felt that the Parliament should take up the matter now, and if anybody opposed discussion, the Marshals should be called to throw out those who were obstructing the proceedings of the House.

Smt. Margaret Alva agreed and said that she had challenged the Speaker to put in the Chair to conduct the proceedings of the House and she would get it done in an hour. The point was, she said, political leaders themselves influence the decision making from behind the scenes, which made things more difficult.

Smt. Ayani Raja, representing the Federation of Indian Women, said that the Reservation Bill should be passed. The alternative of Double Member Constituency, that was being suggested was an insult to women, it would make them the less privileged members and was undemocratic.

Smt. Philomena Peris, Chairman, Karnataka State Commission for women beckoned women to join together and pass a resolution asking Government to put the Bill for debate and vote. There was no question on asking for any other alternative.

Smt. Khan Lata Wahulu felt the talk about a double member constituency was only to divert attention and cause confusion. Attention must be concentrated on 33% reservation. She referred to the good work done by women in J&K, who came out of their homes and participated in the recent elections.

Summing up the discussions, the Chairperson Smt. Margaret Alva said "There are three alternatives which have been proposed. The opinions are divided but the consensus round the country is for the original Bill to be discussed, voted and defeated, if necessary. Let them defeat it, if they want to vote against it. Even the Constitution (Amendment) Bills for the Panchayati Raj, in the year 1989, were defeated, but they came back later. So there is nothing wrong in a Bill being defeated. If there is a strong opinion against it, let those who have the courage vote against it but not sabotage it".

Smt. Margaret Alva chairing the meeting emphasized that whatever may be the individual party positions, all members had come together in this meeting as activists to find a solution to bringing the critical mass of women in the Parliament in decision-making positions. They had to find solutions together.

Recommendations

The Bill as it is in Parliament should not be diluted in any form, should be debated and put to vote.

Smt. Padma Seth recommended the creation of a national funding agency to fund women contesting in elections to the State Legislatures and Parliament.

More attention needs to be given for networking to support women fighting elections.

Political Parties should enroll more women and bring more of them into polls.

Many women at the grassroots level are very aware and want to be involved. The glass ceiling prevents younger, more capable and more aggressive women coming to the front, mainly due to the feeling of insecurity of both men and women leaders.

A system should get established by which all Political Parties sensitize prospective women candidates through training and effective support.

Even elected women need training.

Elections are complicated and need lot of money, muscle power, ability to counter violence, sabotage from own party persons etc. Reservation of constituencies for women therefore becomes important and relevant because of the milieu prevalent in the society.

There has to be a holistic approach to women's status, beyond political participation. Women have to be given the place and status that is rightfully theirs in society.

Women should equip themselves to reach the decision-making levels and sharpen their abilities to take the final decisions.

This was a unique meeting where women from different sections - Chairpersons of State Commissions, Women Members of Parliament, NGOs and activists, could come together and work out on a consensus based on mutual discussions.

Smt. Sheila Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi, congratulated the Chairperson, NCW and others for this excellent session. She wanted a holistic approach to women's status, beyond political participation. Women needed to be given the place and status that is rightfully theirs in society. Men were reluctant and would not easily give up their position and allow their big male bastion to be stormed by large number of women coming

through elections. Men consider that women fall a little short of 'capability and ability' to take final decisions at all decision making levels. The urgency was to address ourselves as to how to equip women to get to the decision making point and show that women were neither weak in brain or in brawn. Societies, all over the world had given a secondary status to women. Even in a forward community like that of America, a woman had no chance of becoming the President as she would not get funding to contest while in the East women had scaled great heights, becoming Prime Ministers and Presidents. History had proved time and again that women made great leaders with their innate ability to manage people. On the other hand many men had failed. History abounds with such failures. Women would bring new perspectives in governance, they would not waste resources on war and armaments, they would work towards better amenities to make life more comfortable for all. It was important to bring these perspectives into politics and change ideologies. Women had to work hard for this and bring them into public life and decision-making positions.

Smt. Jaya Jaitley, thanked the NCW and the Committee on Women's Empowerment for holding this dialogue. This was an essential stage in the process of the Bill to organize women from different sections to come together, even if a unanimous resolution here may not result in the adoption of the Bill. Being in Politics for several years now, I am aware of the constant pinpricks and exposure to criticism. In public life, one will be attacked one has to learn to fight back. In politics, everybody both within the party and outside, men and women try to pull down an individual. One has to learn to face that. Women are not visible. There is criticism that only the elite, urban become visible. This is not true. There are several contradictions. "Merit versus castes like OBCs, minority etc. and merit. As Dr. Lohia said, all women are backward because every woman in her family is oppressed irrespective of the caste. A study is being done which shows that without OBC reservation there are more OBCs in Parliament than any other group. This information is not being put forward to counter those blocking reservation on the argument of OBC reservation. During the latest no confidence motion there was a micro mini debate on the Women Bill. This only indicates that it was actually possible to have a debate on the Reservation Bill. This Bill being of historic importance no Prime Minister would like to be defeated on such a Bill during his regime. That is why it has not been brought up for discussion.

All the issues have been placed before us in the background paper provided by Dr. Sarala Gopalan. On the one hand, the low capabilities of women is shown as a factor against to come into decision making positions. On the other hand, the elite women who have education and capabilities are criticized as blocking the disadvantaged.

Dr. Sarala Gopalan has pointed out that the real threat perceived by men is the lose of their seats. A formula like what was proposed by Rami Chhabra may help prevent losing of men's seats. May be we should think of some amendments to the 33% reservation. Another irritant is rotation.

There is also the reality of a general de-generation of party organization and absence of ideologies. "Because of governance reasons or anything else women are not taken in, and do not stick to parties. If solidarity for women is required, then it has to be in three phases".

One is getting awareness in which we should all be collectively involved in making women aware.

The second is the choice for women to go into a party. That must be completely free. If women are fighting for reservation, I would again beg all of you to please join parties to help them. I was told to arrange a cup of tea. I was supposed only to offer a cup of tea and not to do anything else.

The third thing is that when we join a political party, we should see that within the party we should not be gender-centric. We should act according to the will of the party.

She felt that Government should allow the various options to be discussed.

Women needed to be given training as was being done in Israel. Women should be given positions on all National Commissions, in the Press Council. The Media is always negatively portraying women. When women are in distress, other women do not come to their support and fight for them. Women should unite together and strongly act against derogatory remarks made about women.

She recommended the establishment of a Women's Election Fund, about Rs. 2 Lakhs for those fighting for seats in the Assemblies and Rs. 5 Lakhs for those fighting for seats in the Parliament.

Smt. Mary Khemchand pointed out a Bill was passed in 1961 abolishing double member constituencies, why should that be revived again?

Smt. Maya Singh reiterated that the various issues raised and alternatives suggested may be taken up for discussion in the Parliament peacefully and a decision taken. She also pointed out that women candidates in MP and UP elections, who had lost, mentioned that men in their Party did not come and canvass as women did door to door canvassing for men. Women candidates do not get support.

Election Committees have majority of men and they do not take up the cause of women candidates. That is one reason why women do not get much chance.

Smt. Advani pointed out that whenever women united together and fought on a issue they were able to get something, like various legal provisions etc. If women unite together and take a decision now on women's participation in legislatures it is possible to achieve something.

Smr. Ranjana Kumari said that the Bill should be taken up for discussion as it is, and amendments made on it would be approved by the Majority, and that would be acceptable to us.

Let us engage political parties in a dialogue and remove whatever fears they have.

We can all join together and have a larger assertion from the women's side on the opening day of the next Parliament Session.

Poornima Advani agreed that now there must be a discussion in Parliament.

Smt. Medha Navlekar explained the various alternative formulae proposed. She also emphasized on the creation of a public fund if needed by imposing a tax.

Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi pointed out that in Norway 40% seats were reserved for women and 44% won seats.

If we are going in for double member constituencies than there must be 50% reservation in all constituencies, it need not then be limited to 33%.

There are a lot of capable women, and only capable women should be given tickets.

Smt. Primal Lomba pointed out Political parties must stick to their promises in the election manifestos and take up the Bill for consideration.

The Bill as it is in Parliament should not be diluted in any form, should be debated and put to vote.

Smt. Kamalam emphasized that the Bill as it is should be taken up for consideration. Elected women had done extremely well in Panchayats and local bodies.

Smt. Malaiya felt Rotation of constituencies is a disincentive. Individual members are not able to nurse it and ensure continuous development. This had to be sorted out first.

Smt. Padma Seth recommended the creation of a national funding agency to fund women contesting in elections to the State Legislatures and Parliament.

Smt. Jasodhara Bagchi said the Bill should not be diluted, it must be taken up for consideration.

Smt. Nirmal Sawant Prabhawalkar said the rotation of seats should be after two terms so that a member could nurse the constituency for at least ten years.

Smt. Pramila Pandhe emphasized that the Bill should be discussed and passed in the Parliament, no refinements should be suggested now.

We should insist on the parliament taking up the Bill for discussion as it is and not go into the details of dual member or constituency or rotation system etc. Let the Parliament discuss and vote.

Dr. Savitha Inamdar said that the working on gender issues takes a long time. We are working for the cause of women and we should continue to do so.

Smt. Meera Shastri referred to the complications involved in getting women into decision-making positions, and the issue relating to reservation for OBC within the women's reservation. Women had come into Panchayats and done well. Parliament was more complicated. It needed more effort.

The Chairperson, Orissa Commission, referred to the success of women in the Panchayats and asked why should it not work for State Legislatures and Parliament. She urged that the seminar passed a unanimous resolution and put out a declaration to highlight what had been discussed during the day.

Smt. Rami Chhabra emphasized once again that the issue was how to women go into political participation on critical scale. She reiterated that by making 50% of the seats as double-member Constituencies as part of the delimitation exercise more women would be able to come in and there was no question of discrimination in this way.

Smt. Gurkanwal Kaur, gave the example of the SGPC Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee which agreed to give 33% representation to women. She felt that a resolution must be passed today to facilitate things to happen.

Mrs. Reena Ramachandran, emphasized the need for a Political Will. She felt that a resolution should be adopted today and the Members of the Parliament, particularly women should take this up in the next session and forcefully put the views through. It was important to create the critical mass. It was therefore necessary to persevere. Insist on the matter being put to debate and for voting. If it is defeated it should be taken up again.

Prof. A.K. Prema Jain, said there need be no apprehension about the competence of women. We want to see the women have competence. This has been proved in the Panchayat Raj. The caste is being brought just to block the Bill. If they are so much interested in Backward Classes, SCs and STs then this should be taken care of while giving tickets. As the bill has already been introduced it is the property of the House and any amendment should be brought in by the members in the House and put to vote.

Ms. Girija Dhar, suggested a signature campaign. It was felt that the Members of the State Commission who had come together for two day Conference could further discuss this.

Smt. Maya Singh felt that those who were opposing the bill in the House should be sent out by the Speaker and the Bill taken up for discussion and passed. Otherwise discussion would be difficult.

Dr. Ranjana Kumari said maybe women should not allow those who have been opposing the Bill to come out of their house on the day it is to be taken up for discussion.

Smt. Vina Shahi, Minister of Cooperation, Bihar, felt that women in politics should support other women politicians. There must be political will and a conscious effort on the part of senior politicians to groom the younger ones. The senior politicians should not feel threaten by the younger ones. She felt that the women Reservation Bill should be taken up in the form in which it was for discussion and passed.

Smt. Sarala Gopalan summarized saying that the majority resolution was to have the Bill taken up for discussion in the Parliament. Political parties have to be told that they have not fulfilled their promise stated in the manifestoes for the last election. Intensive and vigorous action should be started right now for the next election to demand representation for women in the lists of the political parties.

The following resolutions were passed :

- (i) The 33% Women's Reservation Bill should be debated and put to vote in Parliament.
- (ii) A National Funding Agency should be established for women contesting election in State Legislatives and in Parliament.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Smt. Baby Rani Maurya, Member, National Commission for Women.

PART - IV

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION
RECOMMENDATIONS
ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION
ON
WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

Women in Public Sector Undertakings

General :

- (a) Needed new approaches to education system from an early age which would develop a positive view of women's economic role, their capacity in decision making and their effectiveness in achieving business objectives.
- (b) In view of continued occupational segregation and problems for qualified women moving to top level in organizations, there is a need for a joint effort by governments, employers and associations in removing barriers for career advancement. This is crucial for enterprise competitiveness, general well being of society and optimizing the full potential of women in terms of knowledge skills, increased levels of education and experience, large share of labour market, creativity and commitment.

(A) At Enterprise Level :

Research :

1. Information and data collection; annual reports of PSU, banks, insurance and railways should have quantitative and qualitative information on women.
2. Enterprises to carry out surveys and publicly promote best practices.

Training :

3. Training, compulsory gender sensitisation programme for men.
4. Training for women in capacity building, assertiveness, leadership training, decision making, public speaking, team building and multi skill building. Learning and on the job training should be accessible to women and men on the same terms.
5. When women or men opt to work part time at managerial levels, they should not be excluded from training opportunities and promotion considerations.
6. Special programmes for business skill training and entrepreneurship development.

Administration :

7. Equal opportunity policy. Commitment of top executives to gender equality, making middle managers aware and accountable and adopting a range of measures vital for ensuring the success of equal opportunities policies at the enterprise level. Recognition of best practice through awards at the national level can be important incentives to enterprises in promoting women.

8. Recruitment and promotion procedures, to be transparent. The selection panels should have women representatives. If the women are not there at senior positions, the enterprise must induct them from outside and outsource them.
9. It is essential that clearly defined job descriptions are established free of gender bias and that there is an objective system of job evaluation, and a well structured management performance appraisal system. It is good for enterprises, institutions, organization and governments to set targets and goals and to monitor progress.
10. Enterprises, institutions and governments should take appropriate steps to ensure that employees are aware of obligations and rights stemming from fundamental rights, equal employment laws, where applicable, and related legal requirements.
11. Women should be given opportunities for strategic assignments and job rotation to improve their promotion prospects to higher echelons of management. Upward mobility and career progression should be more flexible to allow women more opportunities, based on their ability and competence. Career and succession planning and the tracking of women in enterprises and organizations, help them gain visibility and experience, as well as provide a mechanism for monitoring their progress. Adopting objective policies of internal recruitment combined with the necessary job and coping skills training can give more opportunities to women to advance in their career.
12. Ensuring women's equal access to networks both formal and informal, not only in the enterprise but beyond, can provide support and visibility, as well as be a source of invaluable information.
13. Diversity management conceived in response to specific needs, career aspirations, contributions and lifestyles of the workforce, can be an important strategy to promote women to the top and may be good for business.
14. The development and dissemination of guidelines, as well as publication of success stories and awards on best practices are important for encouraging interest of women in management issues. Information sharing, counselling centers to encourage women to take up non-traditional occupations and to move faster up the career ladder are critical for women themselves, as in information sharing among entrepreneurial women.
15. Effective women resource management reflected in career planning, adequate record keeping for tracking career advancement of women.
16. Gender audit; enterprises should develop a self audit mechanism for achieving gender equality and implementation of various strategies.

Support Services :

17. In order to allow more women to enter managerial positions, support structures need to be established where there are none, and strengthened where they are weak. Support systems, such as day care centres, care of older persons etc. need to be initiated.
18. Flexible working hours, but it should be only for a short duration during the child nurturing period.
19. Sabbatical leave especially during child birth and rearing. Unpaid leave of absence, maximum twice in the entire service for a total period of five years. It should assure lien on the job, enabling her to return to work without losing or quitting the job. If one is looking at gender equality or equity, this is necessary.
20. Mentoring of women not only by other women but also by men.
21. The governments, enterprises and employee's associations have an important role to play in raising awareness, developing strategies, sharing information, monitoring, implementing and strengthening equal opportunities for women. A tripartite approach is particularly strategic, especially for countries in transition and developing countries. Government, enterprises and associations need to find common ground and goals to improve the situation of women at work.

(B) At the Level of Government :**Research and Data :**

1. Creation of a data base, should be made absolutely mandatory. Information and data collection to be improved, tracking women's progression, tracing the main obstacles to women's career development; publicising the success stories of women.
2. Publication of data and information on women (both quantitative and qualitative) dealing with recruitment, promotion, training both within the country and abroad, critical gender ratios etc., as part of annual surveys of public enterprises and annual reports of the Departments.
3. The DPE, Ministry of Finance and Department of Women and Child Development should create a system of not only generating data but updating it on a continuing basis.
4. Recognition of best practices : DPE and SCOPE should include those companies which do well for women, in their criterion for the recognition of best companies.
5. Governments should ensure that equal opportunity policies and measures are integrated in the general and vocational educational system to overcome

stereotypical roles of men and women and create the opportunities for a wider range of occupation choices, especially in non-traditional areas.

6. Governments should set an example by implementing equal opportunity policies. More women should be appointed to high level positions.

Administration :

7. Job clarity; what are the pre requisites for the job should be spelt out and standardised. Instructions to be issued by the Department of Public Enterprises for job description to be clearly spelt out for different level of management to facilitate the women understanding the job criteria, and have better appreciation and prepare themselves for such positions.
8. The experience of Panchayat Raj with 1/3rd representation of women is well recognised. It is, therefore, imperative that reservation is adopted as a method for ensuring fair representation of women which would go a long way in improving the critical mass and the visibility of women in the decision making level. Need for the creation of awareness on the reservation for women.
9. Identification of effective measures to prevent segregation by gender; working out a concept of positive action.
10. Identification of policy interventions by the government and public enterprises for improving the career opportunities, such as diversity management.
11. The MOU of companies should include some points for the companies which take care of the empowerment of women.
12. Measures should be adopted to make institutions more transparent.

Training :

13. Training programmes should be multi-disciplinary; there should be training in every department for ten days or so at the induction level. This should be a practical experience and applicable to both men and women. It should have different job exposure. The organisation should encourage this.
14. The training should deal with the competence building for women, confidence in women's capacity and commitment to use the training for performance. It should emphasis the development of determination, interest in the profession and performance and enthusiasm; and not be a routine programme.
15. Women should not be ignored for vital training and foreign training. The PSU should work out gender ratio statistics in their employment, training and foreign training.

16. There should be a follow up for the training programmes, to know the impact of the programme.

Support Services :

17. Enterprises should provide safe environment and transport facility for women.
18. In the industrial areas, it should be mandatory that there are working women's hostels. It could be run by any outside agency or by the company.

Women in Local Self Governance

Documentation and Data Collection

1. Data should be collected on gender segregated basis, of the various local government elections in different states of India, both for Panchayat and municipal bodies. This should also include the number of total women, SC and ST contestants, socio economic profile of the elected women, party wise figure etc., for all the three levels of both urban and rural bodies.
2. The data available with the State Election Commission should be made accessible to researchers.
3. A monitoring exercise should be undertaken to see why the number of women elected is less than the minimum stipulated figures in the various states.
4. Research with a view to analyse the impact of financial grants on the Panchayats. There is also need for more information on the functioning of PRIs.
5. Need for more data collection, dissemination and documentation on the participation and performance of women. Data on SC and ST women are singularly lacking.
6. There is a need for documenting the functioning and performance of SC women elected representatives to local bodies (both Panchayat Raj institutions and municipal bodies) and to analyse the problems and discrimination they face.
7. Research needs to be undertaken on an all India scale on the factors that helped the women to participate in politics, as well as those that deterred or prevented them.
8. Need for a study of the utilisation of MP's and MLA's Local Area Development Fund and the procedure adopted for identification and implementation.

Administrative and Structural Action

9. The reservation for women should be raised to 50 percent; and the rotation should be withdrawn or at least extended to two terms.

10. Women below poverty line should be helped when they get elected to the Panchayats. There should be provision for payment of adequate honorarium to women elected representatives to Panchayati Raj institutions and municipal bodies belonging to low income groups to compensate the man-hours lost/wages lost in performing official duties connected with the post.
11. Greater devolution of political power, authority, financial power and functions by the state governments. Schedules 11 and 12 should be enforced and the various areas mandatorily transferred to the local governments. Needed amendments in the Acts should be undertaken (for instance changing “may” into “shall” in the 73rd and 74th Amendments).
12. The elections of Mayors, Municipal Chairpersons and Sarpanches should be made direct. This will eliminate the frequency of no-confidence motions, corruption and factional politics.
13. To prevent the bringing of no-confidence motion on frivolous grounds against women Sarpanches, members, etc. a fifty percent support for tabling the no-confidence motion could be statutorily provided for.
14. The system of Mayor-in-Council should be adopted uniformly all over India, so as to enable the women Mayors and Corporations to do effective work.
15. All the State Acts should stipulate that the Executive Committees, Standing Committees, Planning Committees and quorum should have at least 50 percent women. Women members should be included in the Planning committees.
16. The Thirty Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development of Parliament needs to be disseminated among the elected women, NGOs, concerned government agencies and officials.
17. Extension of infrastructural support to the chairperson, like TA and DA for attending the meetings, working expenses and facilities like telephone etc.
18. The MP's and MLA's Local Area Development Funds needs to be monitored and not be allowed to lapse. In planning the projects, as well as implementation the Chairpersons of the panchayat and municipal bodies of the area should be involved.
19. All schemes, information about women agencies and other relevant materials which have a concern for women, should be made accessible to the State Women's Commission, and through them to the elected women representatives.
20. The number of women among local officials like Panchayat Secretary, Panchayat Karmi should be increased. This will help in some of them being attached to women chairpersons.

Counselling and Guidance :

21. The males proxying for women has been deliberately fostered and encouraged by the bureaucrats. They hand over cheques and other papers to the males like husbands and brother in law. This should be stopped. Only the chairperson or others occupying posts should be given the cheques and other papers.
22. Community participation in identifying and solving the local issues will be effective in quick resolution of local problems. Mechanisms like gram Sabha and ward meeting for such participation should be strengthened.
23. There should be expert committees at the central, state and local levels, to deal with the problems faced by the elected women in local governments. The women should be able to reach the committees with their problems and get proper guidance. The NCW also could have such an expert committee.
24. Sustained, frequent and localised training programme for capacity upgradation of women, before and after they get elected.
25. At the level of district, there should be some counselling centres for the elected women where they can learn about the legal provisions, their own powers, the ways to utilise them etc. This will remove their tensions and restore self confidence.
26. There is a need to reconsider the 2 child norm and discuss its implications as it puts enormous pressure on the women elected representatives and limits future women candidates.
27. The Reservation Bill pending in the Parliament for 33 percent reservation to Parliament and the state assemblies should be taken up and passed immediately.
28. Political Parties should recognise the good work done by the elected women and nominate them for recontesting, even if the constituencies are opened out.
29. The political parties should take special efforts to identify the capable women in local government and nominate them for higher positions for local and state government elections, and also utilise them in the party positions.

Training :

30. There should be periodic training and capacity building activities for the elected women. They should be sustained, frequent and localised training programme for capacity upgradation of women, before and after they get elected.
31. The government training institutions and NGOs should undertake such training soon after they are elected and not wait for a later date. Such training should be done at an easy distance or in the locality/village itself.

32. The training methodology should be on a practical basis and not bookish. It should be interactive, based on the experiences of the elected women and not be monologues.
33. Models need to be presented so that the women can understand and replicate them.
34. The training should include officials and male counterparts so that they understand and recognise women's rights and roles. It should be jointly for women and men.
35. There should be training workshops specially on negotiating skills. This will help in their dealing with higher authorities and powerful persons.
36. Mere training of the elected women will not be enough. There should be constant guidance. The committee suggested above should be able to help them to function better. There is also the need to discuss ways of making the committees functional.
37. Need to create an environment of social acceptance of women in local government and politics. Towards that, the need to change the pattern of social conditioning of both women and men through a process of gender sensitisation for affirmative social action by NGO's.
38. The media should be sensitized not to play up only the negative side of the elected women's functioning. There has to be a responsible reporting so that the elected women do not feel diffident. They also need to highlight the best practices and give the elected women their due credit. The media also should have some onus of building up the image of women in the political process.

Networking :

39. Elected women representatives need constant guidance and support. Hence, there should be a system of networking established in each State. NGOs and State training institutions could be involved in building up the network.

Women in Civil Services

Preparation of Girls for Civil Service :

1. In order to bring girls from the rural and tribal areas into civil services, there should be more schools in the villages. The good students should get 100 percent free schooling upto higher education level.
2. More opportunities for women from rural areas for education and training in civil services.

3. Young women in colleges should receive career counselling as well as counselling on reproductive health.
4. There should be counselling among the college girls who believe that administrative services are difficult to enter and that it involves difficult tasks. This fear should be removed through counselling.
5. There should be adequate publicity through the media which should give the rural women and young girls awareness about the opportunities. This should be done through the TV during the prime time.
6. The allocation of funds for education should be increased and more hostels for rural girls and vocational centres for training / coaching them for civil services should be started.

Recruitment and Promotion Policies :

7. In view of the low representation of women in government service there should be clear reservation of posts for women at the recruitment stage.
8. Women should be mandatorily included in the recruitment promotion boards, committees and decision making bodies. This will facilitate more women as role models at the decision making levels. It will make a lot of difference to the selection of more women.
9. To formulate rules/regulations providing for such mandatory and adequate representation of women in all recruitment/promotion bodies commissions, committees, boards, etc.
10. In Maharashtra there is a 33 percent reservation for women in government services but if this can not be filled up, the vacancies are filled up with male candidates. As in the case of SC and ST posts, the vacancies should be carried over.
11. There should be more transparency in postings, promotions and transfers etc. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that couples can stay together and live as a family.
12. There should be a relaxation of age of entry for women. At the lower levels of civil services, there can be flexi timings.
13. In the case of Indian Foreign Service the participation of women is higher at the level of Secretary, Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary (14.6%), it will be worthwhile to study the policy which encourages women in the Foreign Service to reach the top and hold crucial post.
14. Media should project the positive image of the women. Social messages should be given free slots on television. All TV channels must provide slots for positive

images of how women are performing well in Civil Service. This will encourage more women to join the service and participate in the development work and decision making.

Family and Career :

15. For the women civil servants who are already in service but want to have a break to look after the family responsibility, there should be a provision to do so and join back with some protection for the seniority. One should also recommend multiple entry.
16. Any house, for instance, allotted to the couple should be in the name of the husband and wife, where both are government employees.
17. Officers should be kept in the place of posting at least for a certain period, and frequent transfers should be avoided.
18. Men's role and responsibilities in the household work and child care should be equally emphasised, just as one talks about women's role and responsibilities in civil services and governance. Both men and women should share equally all the responsibilities.
19. Setting up Daycare Centres/Creches for children for working women at all levels after discussions with them on various aspects like location, facilities, working hours of creches, need for contribution from parents etc. it is also to be ensured that qualified/responsible workers run such Centres/Creches.
20. There should be provision for maternity/equivalent special leave for adoptive mothers.

Training :

21. In the training programmes, women should have special slots, so that they can enhance their capacities and improve their skills.
22. Not merely the secretarial services, but the general services also should get equal opportunities for training.
23. Need to change attitudes, particularly gender sensitisation of men. Men (and not women alone) should be sent to the gender training programmes undertaken by the Ministry of Personnel.
24. To run Gender Sensitizing Training Programmes at all levels and not restrict it to only officers, and to incorporate a module on gender issues in the training programmes run by the Cadre Controlling Authorities, on a regular basis.
25. Institute a Gender Awareness Week to be observed by all Ministries/Departments every year.

Women in Legislatures

1. For political empowerment of women it is essential that the 33% Women Reservation Bill should be debated and put to vote in Parliament.
2. A National Funding Agency should be established for women contesting in elections to the State Legislatures and Parliament.
3. A system should get established by which all political parties sensitize prospective women candidates through training and effective support.
4. Political parties should enroll more women and bring more of them into polls.
5. Elected women should be imparted training.

For the National Commission for Women

Women in Local Self Governance

1. The National Commission for women should review the state Acts and Panchayati Raj Acts.
2. It should also undertake the study of the impact of women's participation on the functioning of the Panchayati Raj, on the political empowerment of women, on their relations with bureaucracy. On the basis of it, NCW should suggest the needed institutional reforms.
3. The National and State Commissions for Women should interact frequently with the elected women representatives (EWRs).
4. They should undertake to highlight the problems faced by the EWRs and recommend for policy changes needed.
5. The creation of an election fund for women in local government should be recommended; the NCW must hold consultation and work out the procedure.
6. The NCW and the government should recognise the women who have done good work in local governance and reward them.
7. The NCW and SCWs should initiate debates on the concept and practice of grass root planning and monitoring of the actual performance in this context.
8. The NCW, government and the NGOs should facilitate the formation of a machinery to represent the elected women in local government. They should be enabled to interact with MPs, MLAs, judiciary, bureaucrats etc.
9. The State Commissions for Women should undertake similar types of workshops

on women in local governance. They should organise at the state and block level, conferences of elected women.

10. The NCW should hold national and regional conventions of the elected women to Panchayati Raj and Municipalities and interact with them to learn about their problems and to seek suggestions for strengthening the local governments and women's performance.

Networking :

11. The women elected to local governments should network among themselves on national and regional basis. The NCW should facilitate such a networking.
12. There should be all India bodies of chairperson of all levels.
13. The NGOs should facilitate the elected women and the people meeting and sharing issues.
14. Collection and collation of gender disaggregated data in all offices/institutions for all posts at all levels so that a clear picture about percentage of working women emerges. This needs to be done every five years, in order to understand the trends.
15. More studies to be undertaken on the implementation of the Supreme Court directive on Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place. We need to find out how many cases are actually filed, and with what results; who constitute these committees, and who take these decisions; how gender sensitive are the committees and their decisions?

Women in Public Sector Undertakings

1. The NCW should take up immediately the issue of the provision of at least one woman on the Board and the Departmental Promotion Committees of the Companies. It should insist on getting information on the recruitment in the public sector, as well as the promotion procedures.
2. Gender audit : NCW, and the Parliamentary Committee for Empowerment of Women should recommend a compulsory system for gender audit as to know whether the companies are really getting the policies implemented.
3. NCW to develop case studies for awareness building. Mass media should help in this direction.

WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE



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FOREWORD



Governance may be viewed as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. In a holistic approach, good governance would imply that the state, the civil society and the private sector would all ensure participation of all sections of the society, including particularly women, children and the poor in decision-making processes at all levels and also build capacities of these sections for the purpose. Governance coupled with sustainable human development gives a legitimate claim to each person in a society to be an active and a productive participant in the development process. It is also a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse views and interests are accommodated and cooperative action taken.

The Beijing Platform recognized that women's equal participation in decision-making and political life is vital for the country and for their own advancement. Its importance lies in the fact that such participation can transform the perspectives for decision-making. Equally, women's development also demands that apart from their social and economic needs being met, they should be in charge of their own destiny. Equal participation of women in every aspect of governance is crucial to the growth of the country's economy as well because an economic system cannot realize its full potential if half of its human resources are out of the reckoning.

However, India's score-card on governance, from the angle of women's participation is, at best, a mixed one. While the female face can be seen in all spheres, its presence is both qualitatively and quantitatively rather insignificant. Not only are their numbers small but their impact is even less meaningful. In every sphere of governance, women have been constantly marginalized and discriminated against. They remain in a position of inequality compared with men partly because their situation, needs and concerns are not considered in decision-making and partly, when considered, these remain peripheral and incidental to the mainstream agenda. The advancement of women demands that women participate actively in setting the agenda and determining the issues on which decisions are to be made and that they put their own stamp on these decisions.

In India, outside the State's sphere, tradition rules supreme. Therefore, in the private arena, both religious and secular, be it business and industry, or civil society institutions, the scope for women's participation is circumscribed by the customs and value framework of a male-dominated structure. In religious institutions of every denomination, by and large, women's

role is one of passive participation. Only recently some very feeble attempts have been made to challenge the male hegemony in ritual functions. In the vast majority of family-owned businesses not only is the succession line predominantly male, there is also a strong, though silent, prejudice against women's recruitment even in the lower echelons. In the non-family business sector, the so-called professionally managed organizations, too, there is little beyond lip-sympathy or formalistic and token compliance with statutory norms on recruitment, protection and other benefits meant for women employees. There surely are individual exceptions, with lady business executives distinguishing themselves. In the higher rungs of business hierarchies. But these have no relation to the vast numbers of competent and qualified women who are available for (wo-)manning jobs of any description in trade, commerce or industry.

The focus of this workshop is on the state sector. The State controls the bulk of the resources of the country, it shapes policies that can affect the destinies of individuals and forges institutions which can empower or disempower classes of people. Therefore there is an urgent need to evaluate the status of women and to highlight the plight, difficulties and barriers faced by them in various sectors of the Government, such as the Public Sector Units, Local Self Governments, Civil Services, and the Legislatures.

The Legislature is the fountainhead of all power. The experience the world over has been that a critical mass of women, present at the policy and decision-making levels, can usher in changes in the society with the distinctive perspective brought in by them. It can, under favourable circumstances, lead to adoption of affirmative and developmental actions to enable women to shape the circumstances of their lives. There is also an expectation that a greater presence of women in these bodies can have a transformative effect on the nature of the polity itself making it more humane and sensitive.

In the case of federal and state legislatures in India, however, there is gross under-representation of women leading to what has been called a grave "democratic deficit". The absence of a critical mass of woman-power has meant inadequate female influence on legislative and policy decision. The performance of women members in the legislatures also does not get adequate visibility both due to a numerical deficit and also due to lesser importance given to them in the hierarchies of political parties. The media also give only perfunctory coverage to women's participation or performance. It is this lack of adequate space for women in the totality of politics that has given rise to the demand for affirmative action by way of reservation of seats for women in legislative bodies. The debate over the issue of 33% reservation in the Parliament and state legislatures for women has been raging for the past decade with no end in sight.

In the case of Local Self Government, greater participation by women is seen as a means of enhancing their confidence and self-image on the one hand and realizing good governance at the cutting edge level on the other. It is argued that it can make our cities and villages more friendly and liveable. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1993), provided for 33.3%

reservation of seats for women at the Panchayat Level. But in reality, even with reservation the situation of these women has not improved to a significant extent leaving aside a few success stories. In fact, by and large, women remain marginalized in this important decision making area and are confined to a secondary status in relation to men. Nor have the benefits in terms of better governance been realized to any noticeable degree.

In the case of Civil Services, women constitute 7.51% of the total Central Government employment. Their share at other levels of Government, state or local, is not very different. Further, they tend to preponderate at the lower end of the ladder. The main problems with women in this sector arise out of dependent children, shouldering family responsibilities, accommodation, indiscriminate transfers and the nature of postings of the husband and wife. The last problem has resulted in enormous difficulties for women forcing some of them to retire early.

In the case of PSUs, the problem dwells in the fact that industry being a male-dominated field, women find it difficult to secure space in this sector. Of course, banking and insurance sectors have provided immense opportunities for women in the public sector. There also lies a structural defect in the gender ratio making equitable participation nearly impossible. While there may not be any barriers to entry, the traditional stereotypes tend to concentrate women in the softer jobs like HRD. Rarely do they make it to the key management areas where the real action lies. An invisible glass ceiling is experienced by the women employees in the public sector as much as in the private sector. There is a feeling of discrimination with regard to promotion, training and career growth opportunities etc.

To throw further light on the above scenario and to pursue its mandate of examining the politico-legal framework within which women's rights can survive and flourish, the National Commission for Women has been holding national consultations on 'Women in Governance', particularly on women in Public Sector Units, Local Self Governments, Civil Services, and Legislatures, to take stock of the current status and to formulate strategies and approaches to ensure equitable participation of Women in Governance. These findings will be presented in a National Conference on the 7th March 2003 and then sent to respective Ministries for consideration and resulting hopefully in implementation of the recommendations.

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Chairperson