

GENDER AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A New Discourse in Development

Prof. Ishrat Shamim & Dr. Ranjana Kumari

November 2002

GENDER AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A New Discourse in Development

Submitted to:

SANEI

(South Asia Network of Economic research Institutes)

Submitted by:

**Centre for Women and Children Studies
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

&

**Centre for Social Research
New Delhi, India**

November 2002

Contents

	<i>Page No.</i>
Abstract	1
CHAPTER I	
1.1 Statement of the Problem	2
1.2 Objectives of the Study	9
1.3 Theoretical Framework	10
1.4 Relevance of the Study	11
1.5 Methodology	12
Selection of the Study Area in Bangladesh	13
Selection of the Study Area in India	13
1.6 Organization of the Study	14
CHAPTER II	
History of the Local Self-Government and the Silent Revolution	
2.1 Local Government System in South Asia	15
2.2 Women and Local Governance in South Asia	16
2.3 Decentralization and Functioning of Local Government in Bangladesh	21
2.4 Women and Panchayati Raj: A Story of Token Representation in India	22
2.5 Concluding Remarks	25
CHAPTER III	
Emerging Leadership Among Women in Local Self-Government	26
3.1 Socio-Economic Profile	26
3.1.1 Age	27
3.1.2 Marital Status	28
3.1.3 Religion	30
3.1.4 Level of Education	30
3.1.5 Occupational Status and Income	31
3.2 Concluding Remarks	34

CHAPTER IV

Democratization and Gender Issues	35
4.1 Nomination to Indirect Election of Women Members in Bangladesh	35
4.2 Reservation for Women in India	37
4.2.1 Making of the Sarpanch-Pati in India	39
4.3 Women's Political Participation	41
4.4 Motivation for Joining Politics and Election Process	42
Issues Hindering Election Process	43
Problems Faced During Elections	44
Fulfilling Election Promises	45
4.5 Attendance and Participation in Meetings	48
4.6 Problems Encountered at the Local Level	52
4.7 Cooperation Received at Local Level	58
4.8 Capacity Building through Training Interventions	60
4.9 Concluding Remarks	62

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations	
5.1 Conclusions	63
5.2 Recommendations	65
5.2.1 Role of Government	65
5.2.2 Role of Political Parties	67
5.2.3 Role of NGOs and Civil Society	68

References	70
------------	----

Tables & Figures

	<i>Page No.</i>
Table 1.1 Study Areas and Sample Size by Sex in Bangladesh	13
Table 1.2 Study Area and Sample Size in India	14
Figure 3.1 Union Parishad Members by Age and Sex in Bangladesh	27
Figure 3.2 Panchayat Members by Age and Sex in India	28
Figure 3.3 Union Parishad Members by Marital Status and Sex in Bangladesh	29
Figure 3.3 Panchayat Members by Marital Status and Sex in India	29
Figure 3.5 Religious Status by Sex in Bangladesh	30
Figure 3.6 Religious Status by Sex in India	30
Figure 3.7 Educational Status by Sex in Bangladesh	31
Figure 3.8 Educational Status by Sex in India	31
Figure 3.9 Occupational Status by Sex in Bangladesh	32
Figure 3.10 Occupational Status by Sex in India	32
Figure 3.11 Monthly Income by Sex in Bangladesh (in Taka)	33
Figure 3.12 Monthly Income by Sex in India (in Rupees)	34
Figure 4.1 The Making of Sarpanch-Pati and the Emerging Leadership among Women in PRIs	40
Figure 4.2 Motivation behind Joining Politics by Sex in India	42
Figure 4.3 Election Promises by Sex in India	43
Figure 4.4 Extent of Fulfilling Election Promises by Sex in India	45
Figure 4.5 Hurdles in the Way of Fulfilling Promises by Sex in Bangladesh	46
Figure 4.6 Hurdles in the Way of Fulfilling Promises by Sex in India	46
Figure 4.7 Obstacles to Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh & India	47
Figure 4.8 Attendance at Union Parishad Meetings by Sex in Bangladesh	48
Figure 4.9 Attendance at PRI meetings by Sex in India	48
Figure 4.10 Reasons for Non-Attendance in Union Parishad Meetings by Sex in Bangladesh	49
Figure 4.11 Participation in Discussion by Sex in Bangladesh	50
Figure 4.12 Participation in Discussion by Sex in India	51

Page No.

Figure 4.13	Types of Problems Faced by Women Representatives at the Panchayats	53
Figure 4.14	Problem Faced while Undertaking Union Parishad Work by Women in Bangladesh	56
Figure 4.15	Problems Faced While Undertaking Panchayet Work by Sex in India	57
Figure 4.16	Cooperation Received from People/Groups by Sex in Bangladesh	59
Figure 4.17	Cooperation Received from People/ Groups by Sex in India	59
Figure 4.18	Training Received by Union Parishad Members	60
Table 4.1	Training Received by Women Union Parishad Members	61
Figure 4.19	Training Requirements by Sex in India	61

Abstract

In India and Bangladesh, the recent Constitutional Amendments have brought a considerable number of women into the mainstream political arena, bringing to the fore a range of issues involving not only women's rights but their role in politics. It had enabled women to come to power, but not actually empowered them in the political sense of the term. However, there was a considerable status enhancement among women and has made a difference in the perception among the men in the society with regard to their credibility in politics. The attitude of a large number of men towards women in politics has been changing from one of hostility and underestimation to reconciliation and trust.

The empirical study of the Panchayati Raj Institution and the Union Parishad has brought to the fore some emerging leaders among women at the grassroots level. The reservation given to women seemed to be quite inadequate as far as their empowerment was concerned since the number of women who came to power exceeded even the 33 percent mark in most of the states in India. However, in Bangladesh the one-third mark in the Union Parishads was more of a move in the opposite direction and a disabling factor since as against men who contested from one ward, a woman had to cover three wards with all odds stacked against her to contest for one position.

As far as the inspiration factor behind joining politics was concerned, majority of women and men revealed that it was because of a sincere urge for public service and for developing the village that they took such a step despite the fact that family response towards their joining politics were sometimes negative. Politics as a profession was not worthy, because of the dominance of muscle and money power, and that there was too much threat of violence.

It was evident that lack of effective and timely planning, lack of political background, absence of suitable socio-economic and political environment, lack of appropriate organizational framework, lack of skill and training put women behind in proving their competencies compared to their male counterparts. It had been identified that women had limited scope to exercise political rights, lack of control over resources and had a limited choice in decision-making.

The hurdles faced by women in participation started at the nascent stage itself, especially in Bangladesh where most of the women were not even allowed to vote due to religious fatwas by the fundamental groups. The Indian scenario is not diametrically opposite, but to a great extent still witnesses a great deal of forced silence among the elected women representatives. The women Panchayat members were the worst hit and the most peripheral in this 'silent revolution.'

Most of the women emphasized the fact that their participation could be better if they had functional education and also training on the various intricacies involved in the political field.

CHAPTER I

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The process of globalization has led to discourses on development having different perspectives. One of the major upcoming development discourses puts gender and governance on the forefront of these. In this context, the governments of India and Bangladesh have amended their laws for fair representation of gender in the local government to ensure good governance. Notwithstanding the fact that constitutional support and legislative measures are necessary for bringing about social change, but this, however, cannot be achieved single-handedly. Constitutional efforts are needed to strengthen and consolidate them for meaningful empowerment. The question is whether an intervention like the constitutional amendment is able to ensure women's empowerment or whether the patriarchal structures, manifested in the household and the state, will continue to dominate.

In recent times, there has been a common realization in Bangladesh and India, that a strong and effective local government is one of the essential preconditions for ensuring good governance. It is generally agreed that an empowered local government is the key foundation on which the success of any democratic nation rests.

In this regard, one of the significant goals set out by the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, in Beijing was adequate representation of women in all decision-making bodies (*Beijing Platform for Action, 1996*). It was suggested that in any representative body there should be a 'logical balance' of men and women to voice the concerns of the society *en masse*. Good governance means being participatory, accountable, predictable and transparent which reasonably calls for a gender balance in political decision-making. It is believed that women's

insights and values of governance can enhance and enrich the overall decision-making process. It is also generally observed that women at the local level are more sensitive to community issues.

Local government is part of overall governance. Local government institutions, being nearer to people, can involve them in various ways: (a) planning and implementation of projects (b) supervision of educational institutions, hospital and other government financed units (c) mobilization of support for new initiatives like campaign against dowry, child labour etc. (d) enforcement of laws regarding gender discrimination, violence against women, environment protection (e) mobilization of resources in the form of taxes, fees, tolls etc. Popular participation also assumes importance because of its potentials for holding the local government institution accountable to the community. On the other hand, local government institutions as the representative organization of the people can enforce accountability the central/national government authorities. The more aware, vigilant and active the community becomes through their participation in local government bodies, the greater is the pressure on both local government institutions and the government authorities to become transparent and responsive.

The potentials of local government institutions can be realized more effectively where there is decentralization and devolution of powers. Accountability, transparency, participation, empowerment, equity and all other attributes of good governance can be in full play and become a part of the daily work of both the government and local government bodies when decentralization and devolution take place. Without decentralization and devolution, local government bodies remain paper organizations without any effective role. It will be no exaggeration to say that it is in a decentralized local government system that most of the attributes of good governance have a chance to survive and prosper. Strengthening of local government institutions can, therefore, be seen as a positive trend towards good governance.

All successive governments in Bangladesh, since its independence, felt the need to have viable local government for ensuring effective governance. As a result, we have seen ‘decentralization’ as an important policy agenda of all governments. Thus, reforming local government is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The repetitive process of local government reform has been handed down to the sovereign state of Bangladesh from Pakistan as a postcolonial extension. However, the necessity to reform the existing structure of local government by various successive government in Bangladesh indicates their failure to create effective institutions for enhancing local democracy and delivering development programmes.

In Bangladesh there have been five major attempts to reform local government under five different governments. The objective of all, at least at the level of rhetoric, was to introduce participatory and accountable local governance through decentralisation of functions and powers to locally elected institutions. All these governments also recognised the relevance and important of the role of decentralised local institutions in planning and implementing need-based development projects for poverty alleviation and reduction of socio-economic inequality. However, the objectives were not realised and the governments failed to keep their commitment towards grassroots democracy and to devolve power to the people at lower levels to manage their own affairs. Consequently, the primary goal of poverty reduction, economic equity and gender balance remained unfulfilled (*Khan, Z.R., 1999*).

One of the important reasons why women have not received adequate benefits from years of planning and development was their inadequate representation, non-participation and non-involvement in the preparation and execution of plans for their economic development and social justice through decentralized institutions.

In Bangladesh, Article 9 of the Constitution promotes the special representation of women in local government. In recent years, a constant pressure on the *Union Parishad* from the academia, citizens and women's groups, a protected process, to provide adequate gender representation has led to the Union Parishad Amendment Act 1997. This is, in itself, a remarkable initiative for providing adequate representation to women.

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides for equality of men and women. There is no legal barrier to women contesting or voting for any elective office, including that of the head of the State. Article 9 of the Constitution promotes the special representation of women in local government (*Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972*). Although the constitution grants equal rights to all citizens in all spheres of life, there have been very few women in local government. In 1976, provision was made for two nominated female members in addition to nine elected members and one chairperson in each *Union Parishad*, which increased to three nominated women members in 1983. In 1992, it was changed to indirect election where three women members in each local government body were supposed to be elected by the chairperson and other elected members. This process of filling women's seats in the local councils totally ignored the scope of women's active participation and role in these political organizations where policies are decided and crucial plans for local development are formulated. The nominated women could not play more than the role of a 'yes' person of the chairperson and members, who were predominantly men (*Khan, Z.R., 1998*).

In 1997, the Union Parishad Ordinance of 1983 was amended and through this Amendment, for the first time, provision was made for direct election for the female members to three reserved seats for women in the Union Parishad (*The Local Government Union Parishad Amendment Act, 1997*).

In 1997, again for the first time in the history of Bangladesh direct election for women representatives was provided in the local government at the lowest tier, the *Union Parishad*. Much enthusiasm has been observed among the women centering Union Parishad election. The number of voters was 50 million and the most striking feature of the election was the overwhelming participation of women voters. About 210,334 candidates including 45,000 female candidates contested in the Union Parishad election. A total of 13,000 women candidates were elected in the election to represent women's reserved seats (*The Daily Janakantha, 15 December 1997*). The whole process was a major breakthrough for the rural women in Bangladesh.

These are indeed, unique experiments in the world of democracy, wherein women at grassroots level of Bangladesh, irrespective of their educational, occupational and socio-economic background, have been found suitable enough to occupy political positions and participate in decision-making and economic development through local governance.

In Bangladesh, though the female chairpersons and members have gained enough confidence in their ability to discharge administrative duties, the discriminatory attitude of their male counterparts has been the main stumbling block. According to the Local Government Ordinance, elected women Union Parishad members will act as chairperson in at least three of 12 standing committees of the Union Parishad. But in reality it is found that in many of the Union Parishads, the Standing Committees have not yet been formed. Moreover, where they are formed, the women members have no responsibilities despite their inclusion in the committees (*Shamim, I., 1999*).

Women, however few, have been articulating and trying to sensitize local and national leaders and decision makers of the need for women's participation in the political process. Efforts are underway to take political scene more democratic, participatory, accountable and transparent so as to ensure a just, humane and equitable society. The urgency for political empowerment of women has therefore, increased manifold.

There is a need to enable women to be more effective members of local government bodies. Two aspects of effectiveness need to be considered, i. e. effectiveness in participating in overall Union Parishad operations and their involvement in the development issues.

The Indian Constitution has been committed to introduce socio-economic and political transformation. The initiatives of empowering women and the marginalized sections are the reflection of its democratic spirit that can be noticed from a number of amendments in these fields. Especially, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts provide for an opportunity for women's entry into political spheres. These Amendment Acts provide for a 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the governance of local bodies (rural and urban) with aspiration of good governance and fair representation in the development process at grassroots level. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is an important landmark in the history of Indian women's participation in the formation of democratic institutions at grassroots level. Not only do they have one-third membership, they also head, as chairpersons, one-third of the Panchayats. According to the estimates, there would be a total of 7.95 lakh women in leadership roles in three tiers of the Panchayati Raj alone. In fact, in Karnataka, 43.88 percent of seats were won by the women in the 1994 and 1996 elections, much beyond the stipulated 33.3 percent in the Constitution. The new government system in India has shown that given an opportunity, women too can perform very well in public life.

The most significant aspect is that the gender representation in the decision-making has been taken into account. Although, the Acts have enabled women to participate in the PRI as members, Sarpanch, Block and Zilla Panchayat Adhyakshas throughout the country for over five years, an urgent need is felt to strengthen them.

The reservation in Panchayats have provided for the erosion of the traditional gender, caste, class roles and hierarchy but it is a long and difficult process. Women not only have to fight for their right to be more than proxy members but also to break the barriers of gender division of labor, illiteracy, low level of mobility, seclusion, lack of training and information, which still continue to exist without enough support from the power structure. Women's low self-esteem at the household level and their new role in local politics where they are now expected to function as leader creates a contradiction between women's role at home and in local government.

It has only been four years for Bangladesh and about a decade for India since the enactment of these constitutional changes. This however, is too short a period to modify the dominant patriarchal structure of society that has continued to exist for last many millennia via the historical processes and social formations. The process of

empowerment in the local government institutions will enable women to re-examine their lives, recognize the source and structure of power and of their own subordination and initiate action to challenge the existing ideology as well as structures and institutions.

By contesting and getting elected to local government, women have shattered the myth of their own passivity - that women are not willing to enter politics. However, women's representation in the decision-making positions with monitoring power, is still negligible. The present rules of the game and decision-making procedure do not allow a greater participation of women and in the absence of women, there is no effort to recognize or change the game. The very absence of women at these levels thus leads to preservation and reinforcement of male-oriented and male benefiting types of decisions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study is broadly an attempt to analyze the emerging scenario of women leadership at local politics by focusing on the elected women representatives of Union Parishad of Bangladesh compared to their counterparts in Panchayats of India.

More specifically, the study will focus on the views, opinions, activities and training of the local government representatives in the following areas:

- ☞ Understand the grassroots level democracy, the decentralization of power and women's political participation
- ☞ Examine the role of gender in the functioning of local political institutions and focus on a comparative perspective on the experiences of India and Bangladesh
- ☞ Constraints and problems faced by women and men in the electoral process and as representatives in the local bodies
- ☞ The extent of devolution of power and active participation in the various committees
- ☞ The role of family networks, political parties and government and non-governmental organizations in their attainment of power
- ☞ Their participation in developmental works and programs
- ☞ Gender related obstacles encountered by women and men while undertaking development programs
- ☞ Strategies to overcome the barriers

☞ Needs, level of awareness and training as well as initiatives taken by the government and non-government organizations in those areas.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In recent times, the process of ‘globalization’ of goods, market expansion, liberalization, commercialization of agriculture and market-oriented growth has been profoundly influencing the rural areas. The fact remains that whether in terms of ‘food security’, feminization of poverty’, the rising environmental crisis, the import of worldwide economic and political change falls most heavily on women, especially rural women.

There can be no second opinion about the fact that national development cannot occur without broad based rural development and for rural development to happen there is an urgent need to empower the rural people, especially the rural women - politically, socially and economically. In this regard, it must be stated that the framework employed here shall work within the parameters of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, Schedules 5 and 11 of the Constitution of India and Article 9 of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The new leadership that has emerged at various levels, especially at the level of local government seems to have posed a serious challenge to the traditional power structures. The women emerging from their traditional household roles and demonstrating their capacities of decision-making, administration and execution at the local level have been observed in different forms in the two countries under study. These examples are few and far between and yet they reflect a great degree of hope for a positive change.

The main problem that concerns us here is whether the representation of such a large number of women in the local government institutions has made any significant departure to affect the

existing gender biased social structures and norms. These changes need to be assessed in terms of:

- ☞ Whether recognition of such constitutional structures, especially leadership of women for collaboration and joint efforts have been accepted by the traditional power structures
- ☞ Whether the new Amendment of the Union Parishad Act of Bangladesh and 73rd CAA in India have led to the overall empowerment of elected women and other marginalized sections of the society
- ☞ Whether the bodies of local self-governance have been liberated from acting as line agents of the State and empowered with functional autonomy
- ☞ Whether women have been able to bring in any new developmental alternatives as far as the local governance is concerned.

1.4 Relevance of the Study

The present study will be of some great significance as it is one of the few studies that attempt at linking gender issue with that of local governance. The study gains further importance due to the fact that it is a comparative study of two similar, neighboring countries and yet encrusted with significant differentials. As far as women at the grassroots are concerned, the study intends to give a new perspective on the prevalent notions of ‘women are not interested in politics,’ ‘women do not have the qualities and capacities to run local governing bodies,’ that the really marginalized women will not be able to benefit from the new set of arrangements since the upper caste/class women will usurp all the new forms of devolved power, etc.

The study will be extremely relevant in the growth of some comprehensive models and encourage further research within academia as well as the voluntary sector. Some of the significant features are noted below:

- ☞ To provide suggestions for the effective performance of both men and women as political leaders by understanding the constraints as well conducive factors in the process
- ☞ To bring out the needs and requirements of men and women leaders and suggest necessary measures

- ☞ To evaluate the necessity of training for them
- ☞ To analyze the need of reservation to involve a large number of women in decision making institutions at the local government level
- ☞ To focus on the change in attitudes and opinions of the people at large about women from one of hostility and underestimation to reconciliation and trust.

1.7 Methodology

The study focuses on the gender issues in the reconstituted local government system in Bangladesh and India and the extent of devolution of power to women and men in the latest amendments of the two countries.

The methodology for the study of local governance in Bangladesh and India differed to some extent because of some contrasting socio-cultural and political characteristics found in these two countries. These broad dissimilarities pertain to the domination of religion in Bangladesh and that of caste in India. The study was limited to six districts of Bangladesh and two districts of India given the availability of time and resources. The primary sources of data were a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods such as interview using structured interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion, case studies and observation. Statistical information were processed, analyzed and presented in tables and graphs to present the major findings.

Selection of the Study Area in Bangladesh

Six districts were purposively selected from six divisions of Bangladesh. A total of 202 Unions have been selected randomly from 34 Upazila of six districts. Since the districts have unequal number of Union Parishads, the number of sample Unions was unequal. A sample of 602 women and 399 men Union Parishad members were selected randomly from the list of Union Parishad members. These men and women members were selected from the sample Union Parishads.

Table 1.1 Study Areas and Sample Size by Sex in Bangladesh

Name of Division	Name of the District	Total Upazila	Number of Union Parishad	Female	Male	Total
Dhaka	Mymensingh	9	31	91	64	155
Sylhet	Moulvibazar	5	40	120	80	200
Rajshahi	Bogra	6	33	99	58	157
Barisal	Jhalakati	4	29	87	57	144
Khulna	Jessore	6	43	129	89	218
Chittagong	Cox's Bazar	4	26	76	51	127
Total		34	202	602	399	1001

Selection of the Study Area in India

Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP) were selected for the Indian study, which are very large states that have a very large number of districts and population within their territory. The selection of the districts was based on the nature and level of development with reference to literacy, health, life expectancy, sex ratio, access to basic amenities, etc. Indore and Varanasi were the most developed districts within their respective states, while Etawah and Chhatarpur are among the most backward ones.

The target group, i.e., elected representatives was selected on the basis of sex and elected hierarchy in the Panchayati Raj structure. They were members and chairpersons of the Gram Panchayats, Block and Zila level Panchayats of Madhya Pradesh (Indore and Chhatarpur) and Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi and Etawah). The sample included 600 women and 400 men.

Table 1.2 Study Area and Sample Size in India

State	District	Blocks	
	Uttar Pradesh (501)	Varanasi (251)	Chairaigaon
			Haraua (125)
		Etawah (250)	Chiraigaon (125)
			Saifai (125)
	Madhya Pradesh (504)	Indore (253)	Indore (126)
			Mhow (127)
Chatarpur (251)		Nowgong (126)	
		Ishanagar (125)	

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction with the statement of the problem and the methodology used in the study. Chapter two focuses on the local governance in South Asia and the institutional background of local government system in Bangladesh and India. Chapter third is on the socio-economic profile of local representatives, both men and women with special emphasis on the emerging women leaders in local self-government. Electoral democracy at grassroots level is the focus of the fourth chapter which includes women's political participation as candidates, motivation for joining politics and problems faced during elections and overall obstacles encountered by women representatives, as well as training needs and interventions for capacity building. The concluding chapter provides suggestions and recommendations for government, political parties, NGOs and civil society to ensure active participation of women in local government.

CHAPTER II

History of the Local Self-Government and the Silent Revolution

2.1 Local Government System in South Asia

The different countries in South Asia followed different paths towards political, social and economic development. India became a republic, a democratic and secular nation with a mixed economic setup that was overtly centralized, top-heavy and bureaucratic, besides taking recourse to import substitution and state sponsored industrialization. The state of Pakistan had experiments with the democratic form of governance at various intervals but remained largely and intermittently a military state where the State itself was the biggest producer of goods and services. Sri Lanka took the democratic road with great emphasis on social development. Bangladesh became a hostage to military rule for a while but settled on a democratic political system with increasingly greater emphasis on exports along with regional and global integration. The huge size at which the various activities were undertaken by these countries, viz., nation-building activities, development planning, economic stability, multi-level reforms and pressure for improving the quality of life led them largely to neglect their own local government systems at the micro-levels.

In India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as well as in Pakistan the national political scenario as well as the national economic initiatives have generally tended to over-centralize resulting in the gross neglect of their own grassroots governance (*Rahman, S., 2000.*). A recent study of local government system in Bangladesh concluded that although the constitution provides for an autonomous local government system the provisions have not been implemented. The local government system has been subject to many changes and experiments, which has not only destabilized the system, but has caused the community to distance itself from the local government which it was supposed to serve (*UNDDSMS, 1996*).

2.2 Women and Local Governance in South Asia

Women leaders in South Asia had and have been occupying the highest positions in their in their respective governments, e.g., from Indira to Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda Zia and Benazir Bhutto to Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Chandrika Kumaratunga. And yet, the statistics tell a different story. The vast majorities of South Asian women are illiterate, in poor health, invisible in the system of national accounts, and suffer legal, political, economic and social discrimination in all walks of life. Women in South Asia also have the lowest rates of participation in their governance structures. Except for India where more than 33 percent members of local government are women (*Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000*).

The 1999 Report on Human Development in South Asia advocated that if governance is to promote human development, it has to go beyond being pro-people or people-centered. It has to be owned by the people. Women account for half the population of South Asia, yet they remain mostly invisible in all governing institutions. Women hold the top positions in major political parties of the region, yet these powerful positions have not translated into positive outcomes for the majority of South Asian women. Most political parties do not even maintain data on their women membership and few women are granted party tickets for elections. In some countries, women are more visible in local governance structures than in any other governing institution. Most gains have been made in India, where one-third of the seats in Panchayats is reserved for women. However, gender bias pervades at all levels of governance in South Asia, which may be one of the reasons for the region's governance crisis (*Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000*).

Organization at the grassroots level allows people to contribute significantly to the governance of their communities. For women, successful grassroots experience has meant a chance to form coherent voice, to be heard and to make a difference in their communities. Across South Asia,

the experience of women in local government has been varied, with some countries being more successful than others in attaining greater women's participation.

With the exception of India and Bangladesh, women's representation within local bodies in South Asia remains minimal. But even in Bangladesh, female representation barely rises above 20 percent. In 1992, the Government of India passed the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India. Termed the 'silent revolution', these Amendments paved the way for women's entry into local governance by reserving 33 percent of seats for them in the Panchayats at all the levels, including that of the chairperson's seat. In most states, reservation of seats has met with success, with female representation exceeding the 33 percent quota in states such as Karnataka, Kerala and Manipur.

Experience over the last decade has shown that women who have gained access to the Panchayats and Municipalities have performed well. Some of them have already established excellent records of service and even won distinguished awards for their performance. Being mostly illiterate, a large number of them have placed a high priority on acquiring literacy to be able to perform better at their jobs. Substantial numbers of teachers, lawyers and other functionaries at the grassroots level have been able to win elections and become members of the Panchayats.

In Bangladesh, women have been incorporated into local governance through reservation at the Union Parishad level. Bangladesh has experimented different forms of local government throughout its political history – sometimes at the village level, the Gram Sarker and sometimes at the sub-district level, the Upazila. But the Union Parishad, which consists of representatives from several villages, has remained the most effective local body at the local level. Currently there are about 4,276 Union Parishads in Bangladesh. Since 1997, a quota of three seats or one-fourth of the total has been reserved for women in the Union Parishads. This has brought up women's representation from a very few to over 20 percent. However, reforms suggested for one-third female participation at the sub-district and district levels remain unimplemented.

Local government is also an integral part of the Nepalese governance system. Since adopting a policy of decentralization, local governing bodies have over the years acquired increasingly greater authority in Nepal. The Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 is by far the most progressive Act in terms of devolving authority from central to the local governing bodies. Local governing institutions now have some taxation authority at the local level as well as limited judicial authority to tackle local level disputes.

However, female representation in local governing institutions has been very limited in Nepal. Currently, there is less than 10 percent of women in the District Development Committees (DDC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) combined. Not a single woman is the chairperson of a DDC or mayor of any municipality. Out of 3,913 VDCs, there are only 13 chairpersons who are women. On the positive side, one of every five seats in each ward of a VDC and municipality that is reserved for women candidates has ensured the participation of an additional 36,023 women at the ward-level governance of VDCs and municipalities.

Sri Lanka's current system of governance consists of three tiers - the Municipal Councils, Urban

Councils, and the Pradeshiya Sabbas. While total membership of these councils exceeds three thousand, less than 3 percent are women. In the last bodies' elections, held in 1997, only one woman was elected mayor of a municipal Council in the province of Jaffna. Unfortunately, in 1998 she became the victim of political assassination. In the Urban Councils, while there are currently two female Vice-Chairpersons, women occupy none of the 36 posts for Chairperson. At present, three of the Chairpersons and two Vice-Chairpersons in the Pradeshiya Sabbas are women. Despite this, women represent only 1.72 percent of the total membership of the Pradeshiya Sabbas. Currently the government has also put forward a recommendation for fixing a quota of 25 percent for women in local government.

Until recently, female representation in local governance in Pakistan was negligible. The current government has scheduled fresh elections, starting December 2000, for local government at three levels - the Union Council, the Tehsil Council and the District Assembly. Fifty percent of seats at the union level have been reserved for women. At the Tehsil and district levels, women will be allocated 5 and 10 seats respectively, forming roughly about 15 percent of the total seats.

Since politics is traditionally a male domain and all financial, economic, commercial and political negotiations conducted outside the home are by males, South Asian women have very limited access to decision-making process, and they have a severe lack of access to and control over financial resources. This effectively reduces women's chance of contesting elections. Political equality is still elusive in most South Asian countries, though some progress has been made. As men have control over assets and have relatively better education, they have a dominant position in terms of political power remain surrogate actors in the political process.

Tokenism is more evident and problematic at the local level than at higher levels of government. Women councilors may not necessarily be educated. Lack of awareness leads to situations where

they may become dependent on male councilors or political parties, focusing more on issues of men's interest than on women's concerns. In some cases women are elected as councilors without actually participation in the functioning of local bodies. Most women lack any effective power or influence in local governance structure. Many of them do not have the necessary skills to present ideas effectively. Lack of awareness of the possibilities of political participation means inadequate contribution to public affairs on the one hand and women's empowerment at the other. Women councilors themselves recognize these problems.

Local bodies, if properly utilized can vehicle of women's active participation when it is effectively mainstreamed. Since these institutions function at the grassroots level, representatives, both men and women, are more aware of, and can be more responsive to the needs of women and children as well as to the problems of rural communities. Tapping into the latent capacity of women is essential to substantially enhancing the socio-economic development of South Asia. Decentralization is thus a prerequisite for effective mainstreaming of women's concern in development. However, unless existing mechanisms and attitudes that deny women equal chances in decision-making are not modified, simple devolution of power will not be enough to ensure greater female participation in decision-making (*Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000*).

2.4 Decentralisation and Functioning of Local Government in Bangladesh

The history of local government in Bangladesh goes way back to the British Colonial period. It can be traced back to the Bengal Local self Government Act of 1855, which established the three-tier system: District Board, Local Board and Union Committee.

During the British period, several acts were passed to promote local-level self-rule and people's participation in the administration was almost absent (*Siddiqui, K., 1994*). A study of local government system in Bangladesh concludes that although the constitution provides for an autonomous local government system these provisions have not been implemented resulting in a local government system that is not functioning properly. The local government system has been subject to many changes and experiments, which has not only destabilised the system but also caused the local government system to distance itself from the community it is supposed to serve (*UNDDSMS, 1996*).

Local Government Upazila Parishad Act was passed in Parliament in December 1998, providing for creation of an elected council at the Thana/Upazila level. In the new Upazila Parishad system, the chairman to be elected directly by the people, will head the Parishad and have the executive power. Chairmen of the Union Parishads and municipalities will be the members of the Upazila Parishad. One third of the total number of women members of the Union Parishads and municipalities concerned will be the members of the Upazila Parishad. The women members of the Union Parishads (UP) and the municipalities will elect them (*The Local Government, Upazila Parishad Act, 1998*).

According to the Local Government, Union Parishad Ordinance 1983, a Union Parishad shall consist of one chairman, nine elected members and three nominated women members. The Union Parishad Act, 1993 has brought about some changes in the composition of Union Parishad. The Union Parishad shall be divided into 9 wards and 9 members, one from each ward shall be elected by the voters of the concerned wards. Instead of nomination, the 3 women members will be indirectly elected by the Chairman and members of the concerned Union Parishad.

The right to vote in local bodies was dependent on the possession of property, tax payment and education. Women ordinarily being deprived of property and educational opportunities were automatically left out of this voting right, which in a way amounted to discrimination. Till 1956, women were not even able to cast vote in the election to rural local bodies, when for the first time election was based on the basis of universal suffrage.

However in 1997, on the basis of the recommendations of the Institutional Review of the WID Capability of the Government of Bangladesh and the Local Government Reforms Commission, direct election for women representatives was provided in the Union Parishad. According to the new law, a Union is divided into wards. One member will be elected from every ward. Furthermore every Union comprising 9 wards has been divided into three parts for women members who will be elected through direct vote.

2.5 Women and Panchayati Raj: A Story of Token Representation in India

It would be least incorrect to state that none of the successive governments at the Centre or at the State levels went beyond paying a ceremonial lip-service of promising empowerment to the Indian women and took no serious measures to alter the existing power relations to bridge the gender-gap. It took almost half a century for the Indian Parliament to understand the rationale behind providing reservations for women at the Panchayati Raj level. In fact, there appears to be little difference between the attitude of the British colonial regime (whose one the deliberations with regard to the franchise of Indian women vide the Act of 1919 was that it was a matter to be settled by the legislative councils of India through legislation) and that of the makers of the COI. The Constitution of Independent India, similarly, after quarantining equality to all women in all spheres, left their political representation to their own willingness, opportunity and support even while providing for reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

As far as the Panchayats are concerned the question of reservation for women sounded meaningless, once the enactment about PRIs was pushed into DPSP. Like the Act of 1919, the

Constituent Assembly also left the issue of reservation for women to the various state legislatures.

The decade of the 1980s was one that saw a movement and a general consensus building up towards reservation of seats for women of not less than 33 percent. But before the much required corrective via the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) came, another bill in 1989 had been tabled before the Indian Parliament, known as the 64th Amendment Bill, seeking “as nearly as may be” up to 30 percent seats in favor of women in the membership of Panchayats at all the three levels, including in the provided for SC/ST and in the total seats. However, it did not provide for reservation among chairpersons. It is important to mention here that after the 64th Amendment Bill fell and before the 73rd CAA was passed, several States initiated some correctives in their Panchayat laws in order to bring reservation for women as if in sheer anticipation of the 73rd CAA. These States were Orissa, which provided 30 percent reservation for women in the membership of the Panchayat; Maharashtra, which introduced a 30 percent reservation for women in the membership of the Panchayats in 1991; and Kerala, which also late did before 1992. The most crucial difference between the 73rd CAA and the earlier 64th Amendment Bill was the fact that there was not provision for reservation for the seat of chairpersons in the 64th while the 73rd contained it.

Panchayati Raj: An Act of Positive Discrimination

In India, the government functions at three levels - the federal, the state or regional level and grassroots level, called the Panchayati Raj. The Panchayati Raj system covering the village, tehsil and district has brought government to the doorsteps of the masses.

In 1992, the government of India enacted the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India to provide for one-third representation of women in local government. By 1993 all states except Bihar had ratified these amendments. Previously, Panchayats were governed by State Panchayat Acts, which allowed the nomination of only two or three women. As a consequence, in all the 223,000 Panchayats across India, only 13 percent members were women. However, with the onset of the silent revolution in the form of these Constitutional Amendments, the numbers of women rose to 33 percent or one million. Presently, there are 655,629 women members in the Gram Panchayats, 37,523 in the Panchayat Samitis and 3,161 in the Zilla Parishads. Under the Constitutional Amendments, women can be members as well as Chairpersons of these local government institutions. Elections under this system have already been held once, and some states are preparing for a second round.

The experience has been positive in states such as Gujarat and West Bengal but hosts of issue still remain. Resistance from male power centers to devolution, discrimination on the basis of class and casts and opposition from religious elements are just some of the

Whatsoever might have been the logic behind zeroing in on not less than 33 percent figure, the number was inadequate to represent women. Unfortunately, a 33 percent only for all the states, on the one hand, and on the other, even this 33 percent was not vertically maintained to the level of various quorums of Panchayat meetings where the most crucial decisions regarding Panchayats were taken.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

It can be concluded that despite some advances, both in terms of devolution and delegation to the local government system of South Asia, with a fair degree of certainty the local government systems are generally handicapped and ill-governed. Most of them lack technical as well as functional know-how, and in the absence of adequate financial resources to undertake the activities within their domain they still continue to be largely dependent on the Central and State government. As a matter of fact, dependence on grants from higher levels of government has increased overtime instead of declining. A prime example of such micro-management and intervention is the practice of deputized central administrators to the local government systems. There is also a strongly prevalent myth across the subcontinent that local governments are incapable.

CHAPTER III

Emerging Leadership Among Women in Local Self-Government

The Constitutional Amendment Acts of both India and Bangladesh have brought in a large number of women into the realm of politics at the local level, which was unthinkable earlier. Before these Acts women did take part in the political process at the national, regional and local levels but their presence was negligible. This glaring lack of representation can be attributed as a spin off factor of the larger socio-cultural and politico-religious dimensions of the South Asian structural reality. This then meant that in a democratic setup where numbers tend to be crucial, women and their issues were always marginalized.

The emerging trend of women's leadership in the local self-government shows that a large number of women were young, married, illiterate/literate, and agriculturist by occupation and equally divided between very poor, poor and middle-income groups in India. Secondly, there were two elections in India as against Bangladesh where there was only one election. In India, about 83.4 percent women were first timers in local politics. On the other hand, 16.6 percent women had contested and won posts in Panchayats at different levels even for the second time, especially when the seats were not reserved.

3.1 Socio-Economic Profile

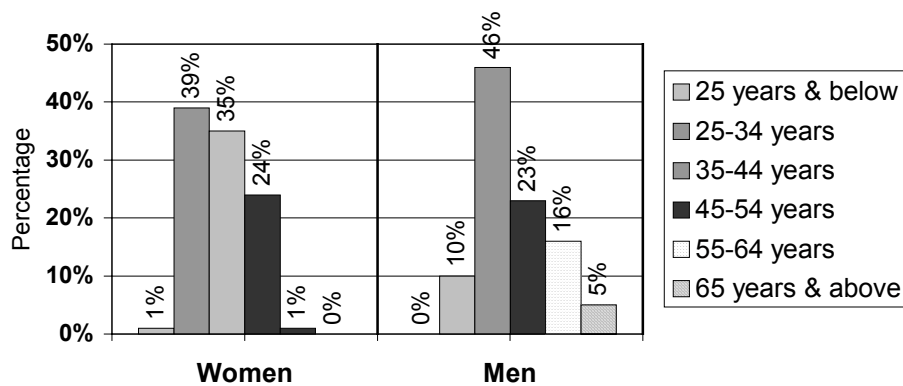
Women leaders' socio-economic profile provides the background the representatives have come from. When we take a gender perspective in political leadership, the socio-economic profile becomes even more important standard to analyze the impact of women's political leadership, whether their background is a hurdle/barrier or a major constraint for quality functioning.

3.1.1 Age

In Bangladesh, majority of the women members were in 25-34 years age group, in contrast to

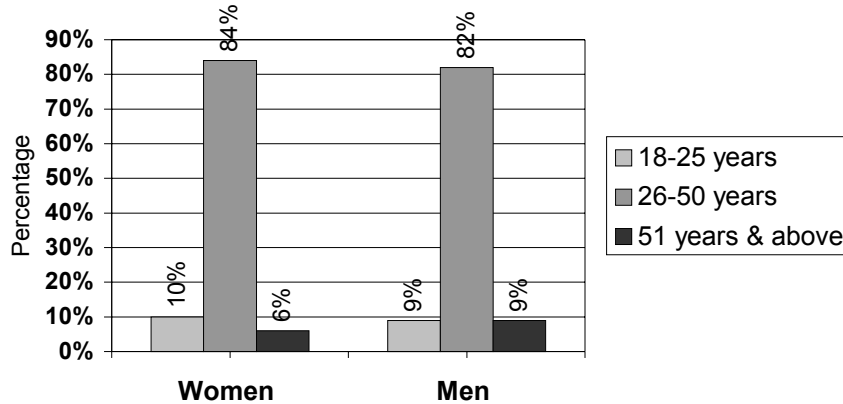
majority of men members who were in 35-44 years age group. However, 16 percent among men members were in the age group of 55-64 years, while there was only one percent among women who belonged to the same age group. Moreover, it is interesting to note that men continued to be involved in local politics even when they were above 65 years of age. On the other hand, there was no elderly woman member of that age. Only 4 women members were below 25 years of age. It might be explained by the fact that men members were in politics for longer time, but women began their political career at the local level in 1997 after the amendment of the Ordinance.

Figure 3.1 Union Parishad Members by Age and Sex in Bangladesh



In India, there were hardly difference in percentage of men and women of the different age groups. Nearly 10 percent of women members were below 25 years of age. They were not only new to politics, but were also new to the functional maintenance of society. However, overwhelming majority of 84 percent of women were of the age group of 25-50 years who were expected to bring change in village development. The same was true for men (82 percent). Women once taken as the maintainers of status quo were now expected to be the ‘change agents.’

Figure 3.2 Panchayat Members by Age and Sex in India

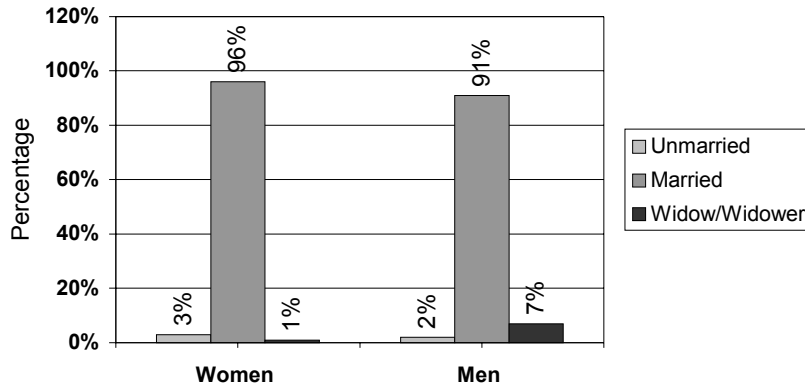


3.1.2 Marital Status

Marital status signified a change in perception and attached honor and responsibility of the representatives for community work, whether married or not made a tremendous difference in a traditional society. While a married woman was considered to be responsible, the single woman was taken on a tentative basis. As long as she was unmarried, she was considered to be irresponsible, while the stigma on a widow was appalling in our society. The level of participation in such hostile circumstances does affect quality representation.

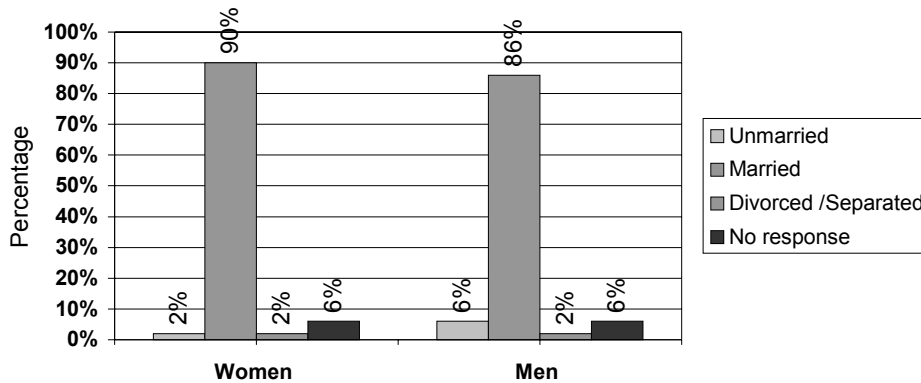
Marital status played an important role for participation in politics at the Union Parishad level in Bangladesh. An overwhelming majority of both men and women were married, with higher percentage for men (97 percent) compared to that for women (91 percent) as married people were more accepted as political leaders in rural Bangladesh due to maturity and stable family life. Only one man was a widower, while 43 females were widows was significant because they were usually the heads of their households and hardly received support from other men members of their in-law households. Only 2 percent of both men and women members were unmarried, as they were less acceptable due to their age as well as their lack of experience.

Figure 3.3 Union Parishad Members by Marital Status and Sex in Bangladesh



The same trend was found in India where nearly 90 percent women were married which was nothing, but a mere reflection of kind of women socially accepted as representatives. As such, there were only a few single men and women at local level politics.

Figure 3.3 Panchayat Members by Marital Status and Sex in India



Moreover, in both India and Bangladesh we find the practice of child marriage quite prevalent. Nearly 54 percent of the women in India said that they were married before they were 18 years of age, which is quite alarming although the government is continuously trying to make it obvious that child marriage is illegal.

3.1.4 Religion

Religion had been a major source of enforcing the gender-gap in our society. In Bangladesh the number of Muslim women representatives was almost 83 percent, while in India, 96.3 percent women representatives were from the Hindu religion.

Figure 3.5 Religious Status by Sex in Bangladesh

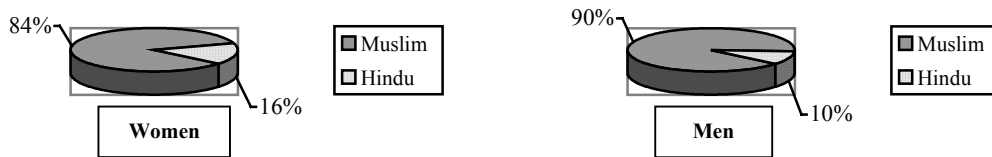
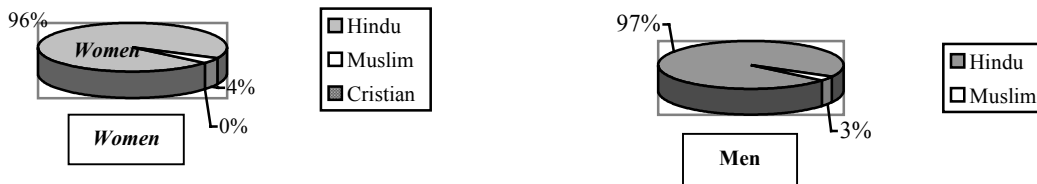


Figure 3.6 Religious Status by Sex in India



3.1.4 Level of Education

It was assumed that women could not fare well in politics since they are neither literate nor exposed. In Bangladesh, majority of the members both women and men were educated up to the secondary level. In India, 30 percent women were illiterate compared to only 7 percent men. Women were found to be at the receiving end of the patriarchal set up since only 5 percent were found to be graduates in India. However, majority of women as well as men had primary and secondary education. However, interestingly in both the countries, some of the women were graduates and masters degree holders despite class, caste and religious fundamentalist forces in these countries.

Figure 3.7 Educational Status by Sex in Bangladesh

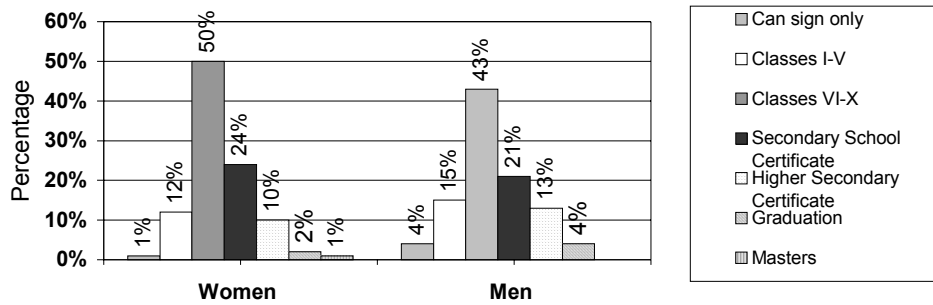
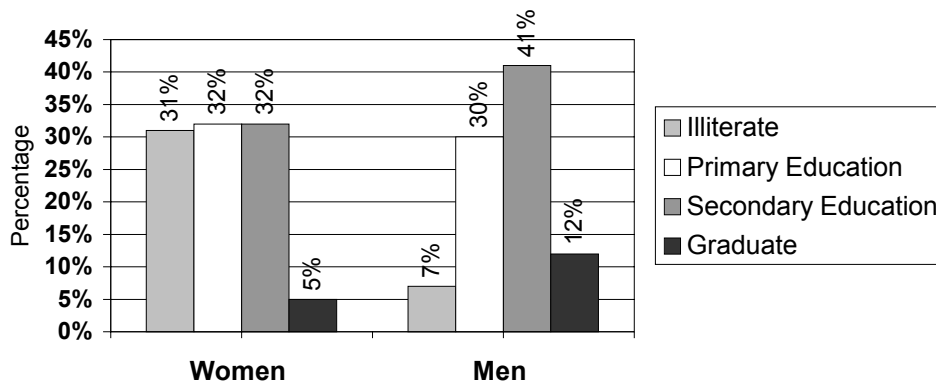


Figure 3.8 Educational Status by Sex in India



3.1.5 Occupational Status and Income

In Bangladesh 82 percent women were housewives and had the strict sense of purda culture, which made their quality representation impossible owing to lack of exposure and movement. Unlike their Indian counterparts, they had only the domestic chores to deal with while the Indian women representatives were more involved with outside work as well as for their livelihood as they were mostly from below poverty line families. Men were mostly farmers and businessmen.

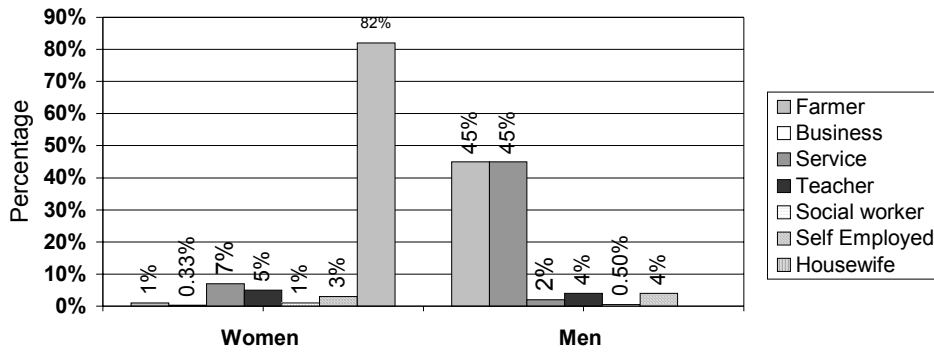
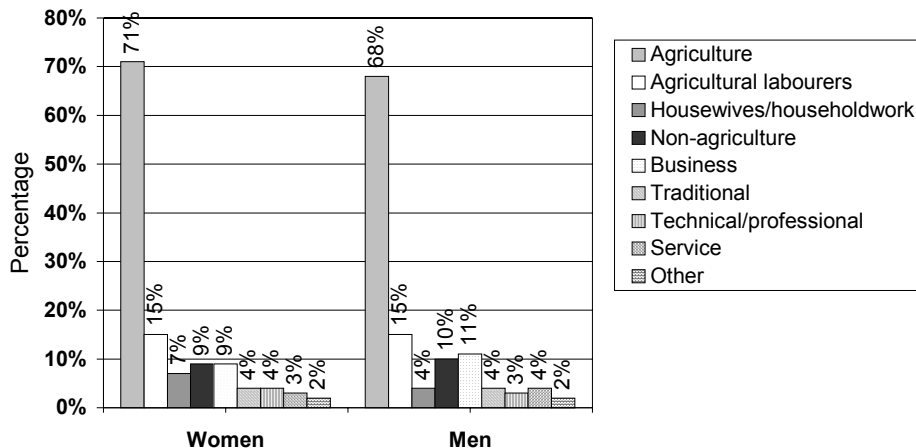


Figure 3.9 Occupational Status by Sex in Bangladesh

In the rural area, the economic set-up is characterized by land holdings that are ‘inherited’ through male line. Women are excluded from owning any land/property. Access to land control over material and economic resources, especially land, the single most important means of production in rural Bangladesh and India, women were ingeniously removed. They are merely working on it but not owing it. However they do earn, especially for their family’s livelihood.

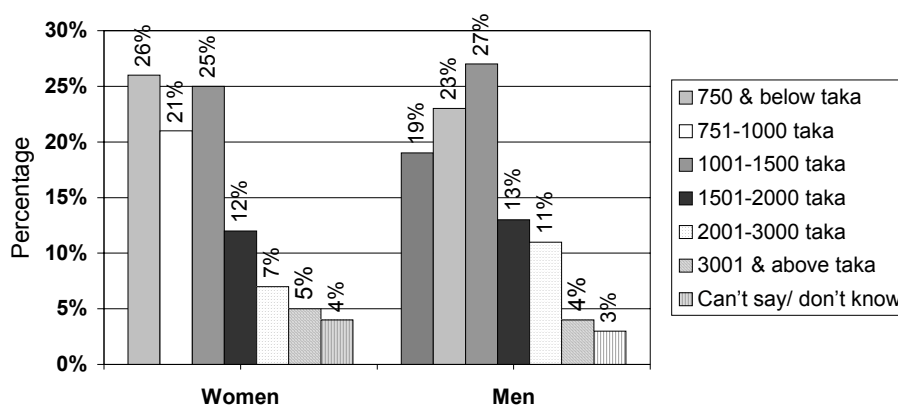
In India, housewives were only 7 percent. Majority men as well as women were involved in agriculture-related work and agricultural laborers, while very few were involved in business, non-agricultural work, different professions and service.

Figure 3.10 Occupational Status by Sex in India



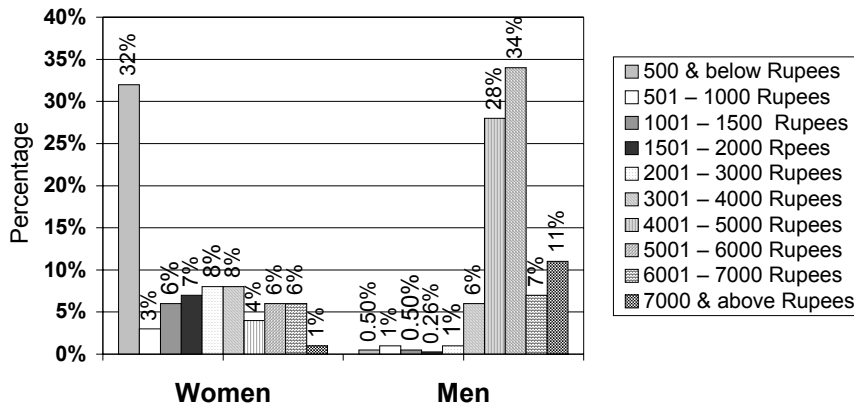
Monthly income of women representatives was an important indicator of economic solvency as well as economic empowerment. In Bangladesh, there were sharp differences between the level of income of women and men members. Majority of the women members (84 percent) had income below taka 4,000 per month, while the men members (89 percent) were in higher income brackets of taka 4001 and above. Moreover, 32 percent of women members earned as low as taka 500 per month. Women were mostly dependent on their husband's incomes and her income was perceived as a supplement to the household income. As such, women members were dependent on family decision for contesting in the election and getting financial support.

Figure 3.11 Monthly Income by Sex in Bangladesh (in Taka)



In India, women as well as men were mostly in the lower income category, hardly earning 2000 rupees a month, while only a few had a viable income. However, case studies from all over India revealed that Panchayat work had not suffered because of their poor economic status.

Figure 3.12 Monthly Income by Sex in India (in Rupees)



3.2 Concluding Remarks

In Bangladesh as well as in India, majority women members were above the age of 25 years and married. It seemed that maturity of the members was a very significant criterion not only during election campaigns but also as an important factor to have an impact on the decision making process. Maturity in age and honor attached to marriage were yardsticks to be acceptable to the members of the community. Level of education was very depressing for both men and women, but for women it was even worst. For example, about 30 percent women were illiterate in India. However, in Bangladesh, they could at least sign their names owing to NGO programs related to adult literacy. Occupational status of women in India and Bangladesh were different. In Bangladesh, majority of women representatives were housewives, unlike in India where they were more involved in agriculture work and laborers outside their home. In both the countries, women earned far less than men. Given the deprived socio-economic status, women had to face more hurdles than men during elections and as members of the local self-government.

CHAPTER IV

Democratization and Gender Issues

Political participation is one of the major ways to ensure women's empowerment, to increase decision-making power and greater ability and to influence matters that affect their lives in the community and the larger society. In the broader sense, participation in politics goes far beyond electoral politics, such as voting and election to public office. Women's empowerment begins with their consciousness - perceptions about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness of her gender and socio-cultural, economic and political forces that affect her. Women's political empowerment and equal representation in all decision-making institutions are critical inputs in their struggle for freedom from patriarchal subjugation. Local government bodies have a vital role in the developmental processes. Therefore, importance of local level government to women and men is twofold. First, decisions made at the local levels have implications for the distribution of resources and opportunities between women and men. Second, the lower tiers of government are also arenas in which individuals gain experience and knowledge and a political base for seeking office at higher levels. Within local bodies, women are generally, expected to represent women's interests. That is, women's development is seen as women's business rather than the responsibility of both men and women members. Allied to this is the perception that women serving at the local level should focus on women and children's issues rather than the full range of issues at the grassroots level.

4.1 Nomination to Indirect Election of Women Members in Bangladesh

In 1976, provision was made for two nominated women members in addition to nine elected members and one chairperson in each Union Parishad, which was increased to three nominated women members in 1983. The nomination system in local government was changed in 1992 to indirect election where three women members in each local government body will be elected by

the chairperson and other elected members.

There was an extremely low level of women's presence in the most important local council, the Union Parishad. No woman was elected in the local government elections of 1956 and 1969. One woman was first elected as chairperson in 1973. Although in 1992, the number increased to thirteen women, Union Parishad chairpersons being elected and subsequently twenty in 1997, still in the case of local government bodies, women were grossly under represented.

However, the process of filling women's seats in the local councils totally ignored the scope of women's active participation and role in these political organizations where policies are decided and crucial plans for local level development are formulated. The nominated women could not play more than the role of a 'yes' person of the chairperson and members, who were predominantly men. In addition, such nomination also takes away the credibility and acceptability of the women to the women's constituencies whose causes they represented. Once again, in the provision of reserved seats for women to be filled through nomination reflects the male biases in policy making with the net result that the elected bodies become extremely male dominated (*Khan, Z. R., 1998*).

The 'selected' or nominated women members usually came from a rural elite group. In the nominating process - status, kinship and especially the relationship with the chairman were considered. The constituents, especially the rural women, had no way of 'electing' their own representatives. As the 'selected' representatives do not come through the election process, they usually do not know or care about their role and functions as people's representatives. Even most of the women voters do not know who their representatives are in the local government and what responsibilities and duties the representatives have towards constituents.

Therefore, the nominated female representatives are far less accountable to than those elected. In

fact, they are more accountable to the men who have 'selected' them, if they wish to retain their posts, than to the electorate or the people who should really matter (*UNDP, 1994*). Hence in 1997, direct election for women representatives was provided in the local government at the lowest tier, the Union Parishad.

4.2 Reservation for Women in India

In India, reservation for women in political bodies became necessary, considering the social conditions in which women of the country lived even after the constitutional guarantee of their rights to equality and political participation it became necessary for the state to remind the political institutions at different levels, particularly the Panchayat level (district, block, village) to give adequate representation to women. The 73rd Amendment envisaged a significant structural change by decentralizing power and redressing the gender imbalance in the institutions of self-governance. Once the bastion of upper caste/class male power structure is now forever changed. What reservation has basically done is to give the other half of the state, i.e. women a say in the political system in a country, albeit at the grassroots. If we see it in another way, once these women taste power at the local level and understand its intricacies, they could very well enter national politics, with or without reservation, provided the political parties give party tickets to the women participants. After all, in a plural society like India, the political system has to ensure a modicum of equality between all the groups and communities if history's longest oppression is to be seriously tackled.

The 73rd CAA has certain intricacies. The Act suggests that the constituency at each election keeps rotating, the constituency reserved for women will be chosen by lottery, with those that have just been reserved excluded. Consequently it would damage both women and the parliamentary system. For women, since the fixed reserved constituency would mean ghettoisation, they would forever keep campaigning only against other women. For parliament, it

would be destabilizing since with a minimum of two-third of the sitting members are due to change at every election (*The Hindu, May 20, 2000*). Another argument is that if a particular constituency is declared reserved for women for more than one term it would end up in the hands of those with vested interests. The rotation system gives more women the opportunity to participate (*The Deccan Herald, October 22, 2000*). But the purpose of reservation is not only giving an opportunity to women in politics but also for the betterment of the society and to quicken the process of development; the whole purpose behind decentralization of power. This could happen only when those participating are for a longer term in the office and are experienced in the art of politics.

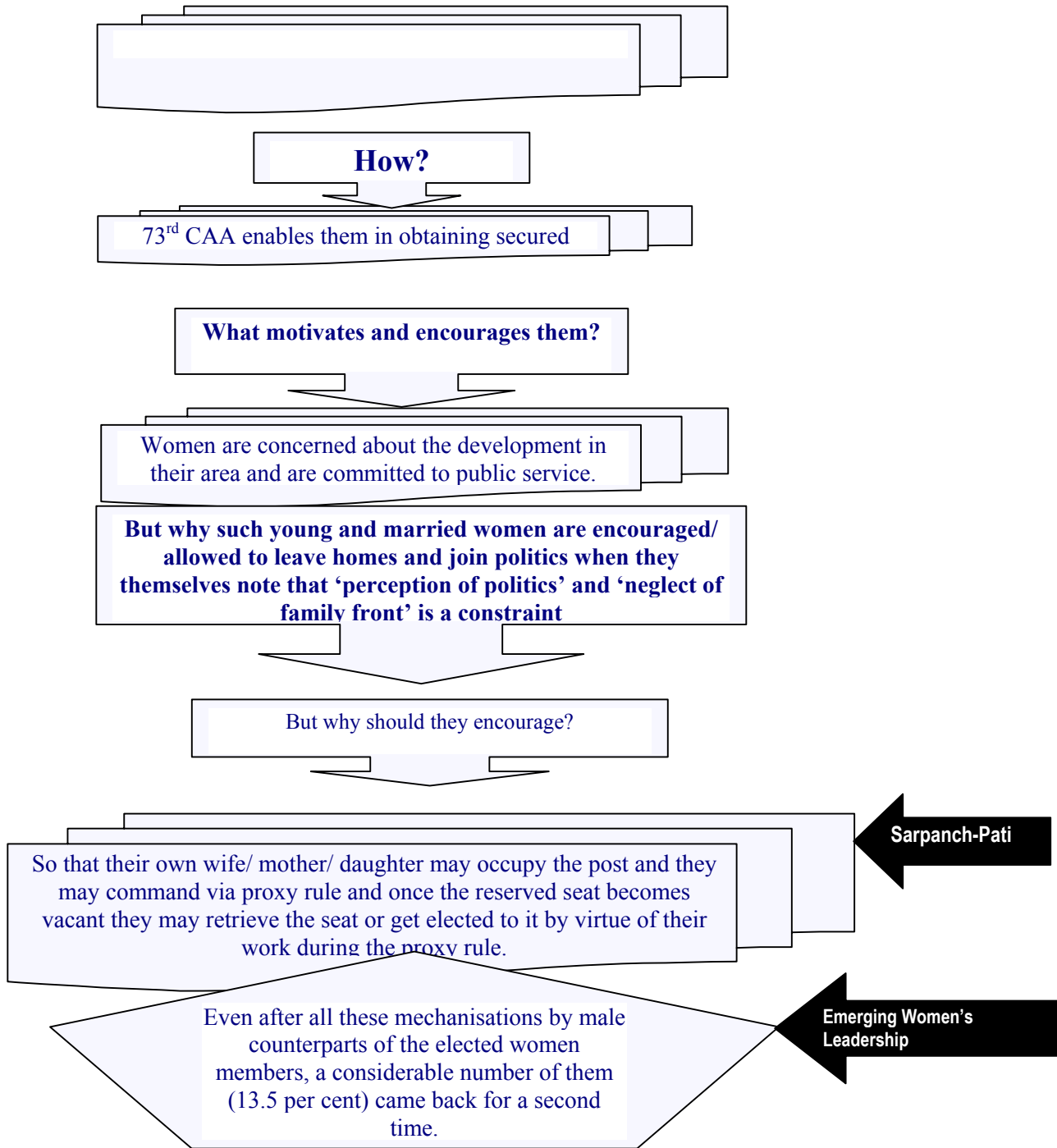
The discussion on reservation after almost a decade needs to appraise the impact on the society at large and in particular its effect on the village power structure. While the positive side shows women's alacrity in participating, in managing funds, on developmental works and last but not the least in cutting across the class-caste-gender barriers. The other side has a grim picture, where once the male bastion of power/status is challenged, changed and given a new meaning, 'full-fledged democracy', led to averse male response leading to violence, public ridicule, defamation, no-confidence motion, etc. The aversion was not only because women have entered their space but also because women's work procedure is different compared to the men counterparts. Moreover, women laid emphasis on development works to be planned and executed - a phenomenon not appreciated by many who had been in the past siphoning off the development funds by showing most of the works on paper (*The Deccan Herald, January 1, 1997*). It was assessed that women in politics would affect development in a profound manner. A global assessment of women in politics arrived at three conclusions. "Firstly women choose issues of importance to themselves using a variety of meanings in different cultural contexts.

Secondly, no issues are tied solely to one political context and a condition and thirdly the political problems, facing women cluster into four topics: personal safety, security and autonomy, reproductive rights and maternal and child health problems, equalizing access to public, communal and market resources for problem solving and empowerment, and remaking the political and legal rules of the game” (*Sharma, 1998*). Women are closer to the environment and demand facilities that affect their immediate surroundings like drinking water facilities, healthcare, education, etc.

4.2.1 Making of the Sarpanch-Pati in India

The emerging women’s leadership and the making of the Sarpanch-Pati was a pattern emerging among the young, new, development-seeking men and women with constraints that hampered their work, but it was the women who were bigger losers at the present state owing to the guile of their men folk. The flow chart given below explains the whole process of how men have become Sarpanch-Pati.

Figure 4.1 The Making of Sarpanch-Pati and the Emerging Leadership among Women in PRIs



4.3 Women's Political Participation

What participation means is the functioning of the whole array of public institutions and forces which are involved in molding the lives of the people by way of decisions and policies that impinge on their relations with one another (*Kaushik, 1992*). Participation of women in the local bodies would include:

- Women as voters
- Women as members of political parties
- Women as candidates
- Women as elected members of local government bodies taking part in decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation
- Women as members of women's organizations, their association with voluntary organizations
- Women in developmental works and dealing of priority issues in the village level.

Gender empowerment is determined by the degree to which women and men participate actively in economic, professional and political activity and take part in decision-making. Women's political participation was hindered by a system of social relations in the male-dominated society, reflecting the orthodox male-centric mentality like religious fundamentalism. Only men were consistently educated and trained for leadership, while very few rural women had the opportunity to pursue their education because of tradition. Women themselves had been strongly influenced by male-dominated village communities and had little faith in their own capacities to take on leadership roles.

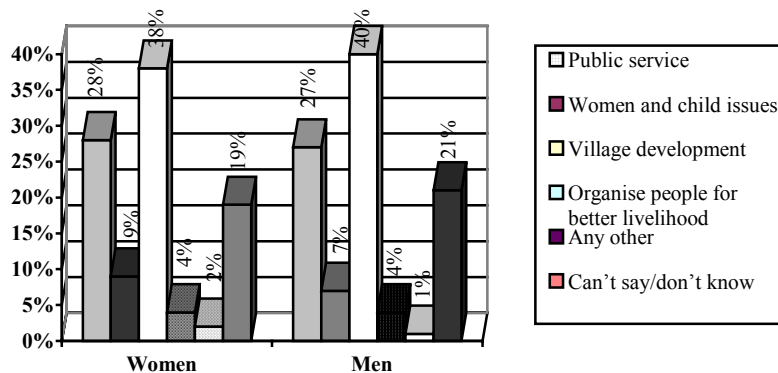
In India, among the women who became Sarpanches, elected Panchayat members, intermediaries in Panchayati Samitis and chairpersons at Zilla Parishads, nearly 83 per cent of these women

were first timers in politics and 74 per cent of the women stood independently. About 23 per cent stood as party candidates. These women were predominantly married, illiterate/literate and from very poor families. This trend focuses on whether these rural women, always in veil, inarticulate and ignorant of the rules of the political game would be able to make even a dint in their self-identity. While in Bangladesh, most of the women members attained school level education and were married. Though these women had attained some school level education, they were not employed thus leading to dysfunctional educational syndrome. This was one of the major reasons for the lack of effective participation among these women in Union Parishads in Bangladesh. But we still find some sporadic cases among these women who have made a mark in the Parishad cutting across the gender-class-traditional bias of a primarily Islamic society.

4.4 Motivation for Joining Politics and Election Process

The level of participation could be understood from the reasons to get interested in politics in the first place and what were the issues promised in the election manifesto and their success and failures in implementing them.

Figure 4.2 Motivation behind Joining Politics by Sex in India



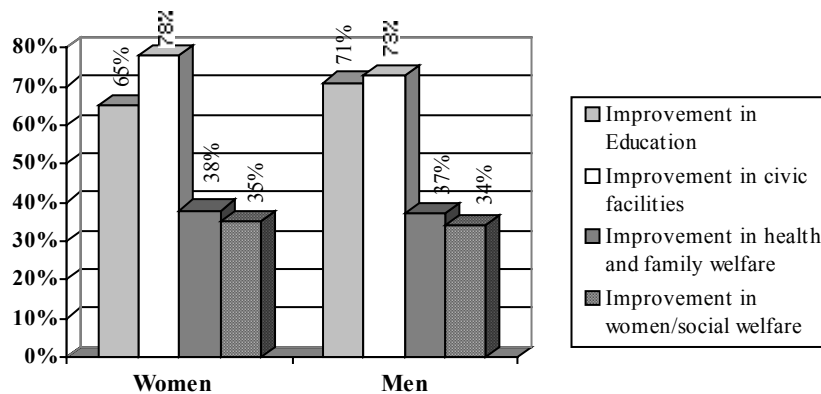
Both men and women who became representatives of the Panchayat, i.e. 40 percent men and 38 percent women were interested in village development, while 27 percent men and 28 percent and women respectively were interested in public services. The assumption that only women take up social development issues and men opting for infrastructure development was grossly mistaken.

The way a man aspired for a link road closest to the city was also a woman's aspiration. The difference was that women's priority lies in the development of the immediate surroundings due to the fact that they were the ones who suffered the most without the civic amenities, water supply, fodder and fuel sources and access to credit. It was clear from the election promises the men and women candidates had made before the elections.

In Bangladesh, women who contested elections were usually motivated by NGOs or came from families having political background where male family members were active in local level politics. Very few entered politics as replacement after their husband's death.

There were hardly any differences in priority areas and election promises between men and women candidates. Education and improvement in civic facilities were commitments of an overwhelming majority of men and women candidates in both Bangladesh and India. In India, nearly 34 percent women as well as men contesting elections had priority areas such as women development and social welfare. The myth that women only feel about women's needs and problems no more holds true.

Figure 4.3 Election Promises by Sex in India



Answers in more than one category.

Issues Hindering Election Process

In Bangladesh, lack of economic resources was a major obstacle because most of the candidates were not very well off. It was more true in the case of the women candidates. Women candidates hardly had viable income or landed property of their own and were usually dependent on their husbands' earnings. As such, they also encountered social constraints and

lack of family support. However, social security, especially during campaigns seemed to be a major problem, irrespective of gender and it was mostly threats from opposition. In the case of a woman candidate, opposition even tried to convince the candidate to withdraw her nomination paper. Lack or lower level of education of candidates also played a negative role during campaigns and receiving votes. Women candidates often suffered from lack of self-confidence. However, an overwhelming majority of the candidates did not face any problems during the election, 82 percent among women and 84 percent among men candidates.

Problems Faced During Elections

In Bangladesh, professionals stated that campaign for votes at night were difficult and risky for the women candidates, especially because women could not move easily as men did. Moreover, women candidates had to face some social and religious constraints during their campaigns. They also faced financial problems due to lack of political support. It was very difficult for women candidates to campaign throughout the constituencies under three wards. Violence was more pronounced due to the fundamentalist forces by not even allowing the women to vote.

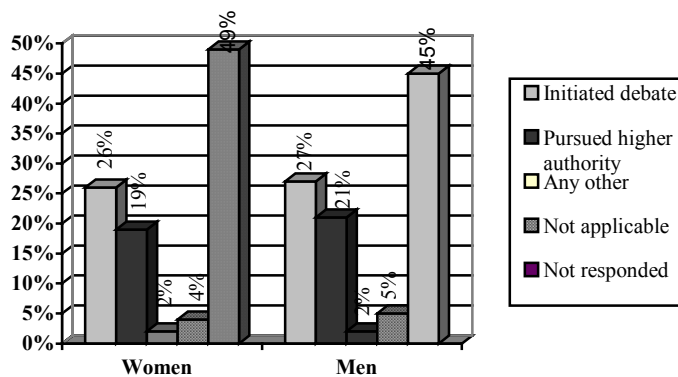
The major fact that cannot be ruled out while discussing of women's participation in the Panchayats in India is the "violence" in the Panchayats that rather increased with the 73rd CAA. Violence against women, which in the villages was usually confined to their houses and of course inter-community violence had now spread its diabolic tentacles in the socio-political arena. During elections and decision-making also in everyday matters, violence against women was ever present. Beating up these women or their husbands, sexual harassment in public and molestation were imploring the society's equality front. Women due to the very patriarchal structure were as it was submissive and could not speak freely. Violence was the only aspect impeding women's ultimate overt participation in the Panchayats. Apart from overt violence, the

fear of violence was something that had severely impaired women from actively participating in the Panchayat activities.

Fulfilling Election Promises

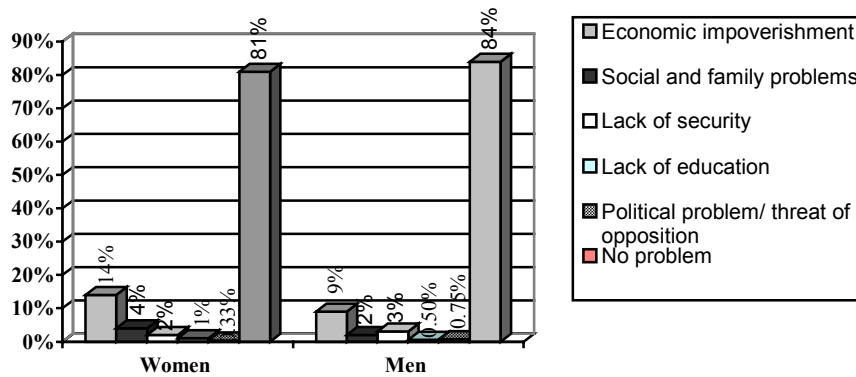
As to the extent of fulfilling election promises, both men and women in India initiated debates on the issue or persuaded these with higher authorities. But, unfortunately a vast majority did not response, which may be owing to the fact that they could not accept the work on their terms and complete it or maybe they did not understand the questions.

Figure 4.4 Extent of Fulfilling Election Promises by Sex in India



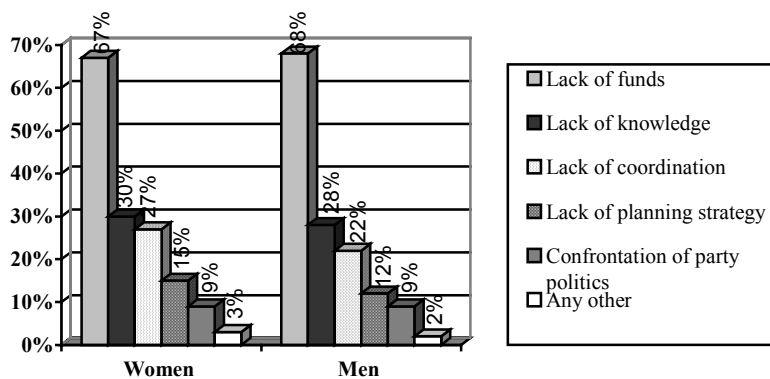
In Bangladesh, majority of the members had no problems in fulfilling the commitments they gave during election campaigns as they had not many priority areas except expansion of education and infrastructure development which were also priority areas of the annual development plan of the local government. However, both men and women could not fulfill some promises due to their own economic impoverishment, social and family problems, lack of education and security and last but not the least threats from political groups.

Figure 4.5 Hurdles in the Way of Fulfilling Promises by Sex in Bangladesh



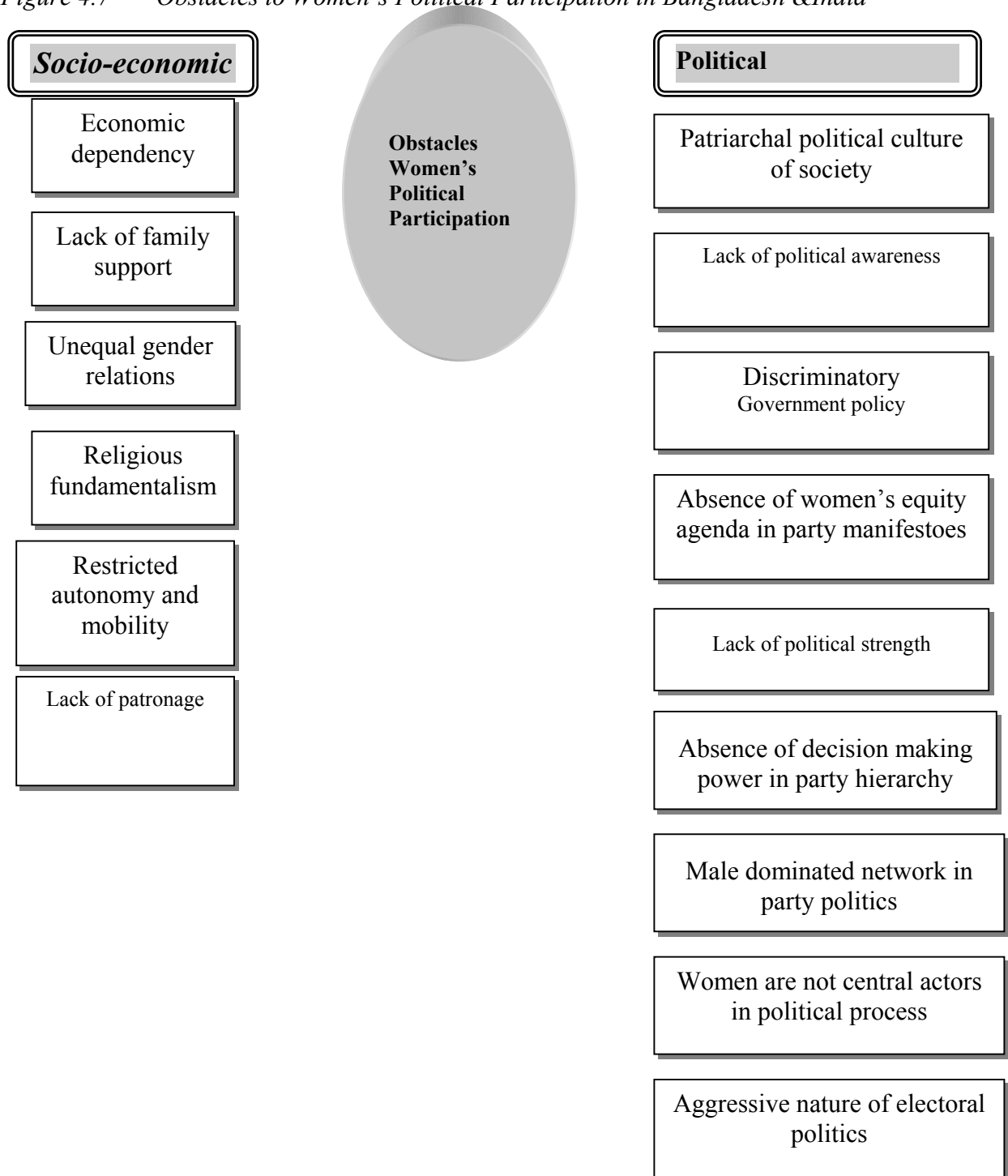
Though a large proportion of women and men in India mentioned that lack of funds had tied their hands, lack of knowledge, coordination, planning strategy and confrontation of party politics lead to hindrances. The main reason behind decentralizing the power structure was that corruption would not/could not reach the grassroots. Here comes the effective role of women, who were considered to be less corrupt in management.

Figure 4.6 Hurdles in the Way of Fulfilling Promises by Sex in India



There were some common obstacles that had hindered women's political participation in Bangladesh and India. Some were socio-economic, while others were mainly political.

Figure 4.7 *Obstacles to Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh & India*

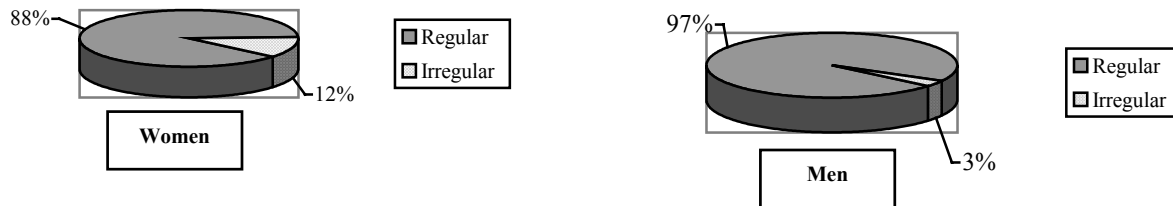


4.5 Attendance and Participation in Meetings

Attendance of meetings is not only an important indicator for active participation but also a forum to discuss development activities and decision-making. Moreover, active participation of members and the level of acceptance at meetings were important indicators of their involvement in development activities at local level.

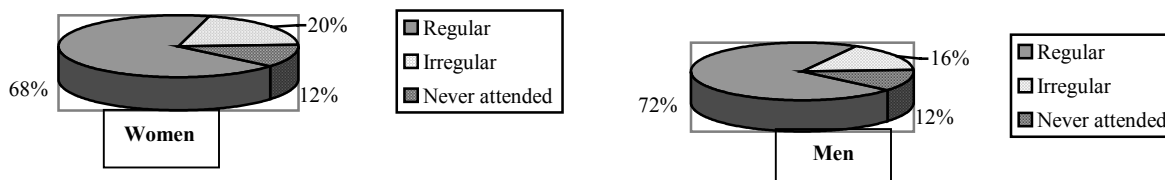
In Bangladesh, an overwhelming majority of 96 percent among men members and 88 per cent among women regularly attended the meetings. But the majority of the women members who attended the meetings could not play effective roles in the decision-making process except giving support to their male counterparts.

Figure 4.8 Attendance at Union Parishad Meetings by Sex in Bangladesh



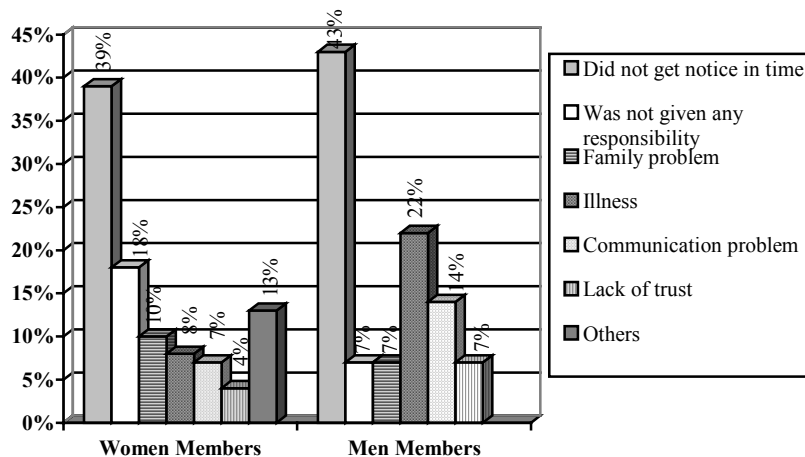
In India, nearly 68 percent women attended the meetings regularly, against 72 percent men. At least 32 percent women were either irregular or never attended the meetings. This was also true of 28 percent men.

Figure 4.9 Attendance at PRI meetings by Sex in India



Unfortunately in Bangladesh, there were about 12 percent women and 3 percent men members who were irregular at meetings. Majority of them explained that they did not get notices of the meetings in time (39 percent women and 43 percent men). A few members reported that although they did not attend the meetings, their signature in the resolution book and attendance registers were collected after holding the meeting. As for other reasons, there was a difference between men and women members. For example, 18 percent women members complained that they were not given any responsibility, and that was why they lacked the interest in attending meetings regularly. Sickness was another factor for irregularity, which was as high as 21 percent among men and only 8 percent among women. Family problems were another valid reason for 10 per cent women such as household work, lack of cooperation of in-laws and husbands, child rearing responsibilities, etc. A few women members about 4 per cent did not trust the chairmen.

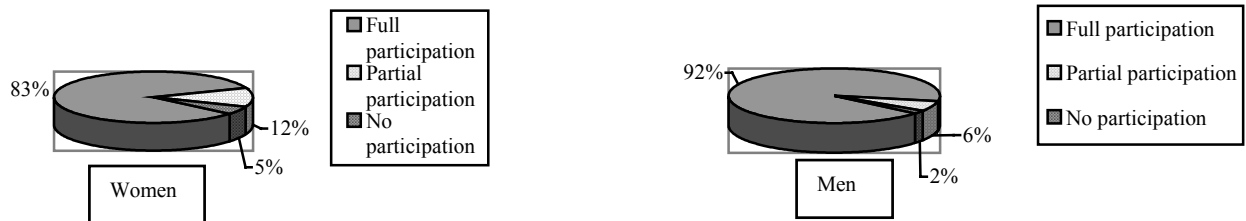
Figure 4.10 Reasons for Non-Attendance in Union Parishad Meetings by Sex in Bangladesh



In Bangladesh, an overwhelming majority of 83 percent women were active participants against 92 percent men who attended the meetings. Partial participation and non-participation were very low among both men and women. In Bangladesh, there were several reasons for the acceptance at meetings. Women members reported that their opinions were accepted because their

comments/suggestions were logical (79 percent) and when most of the members expressed the same views (17 percent).

Figure 4.11 Participation in Discussion by Sex in Bangladesh



With regard to partial and non-acceptance of the opinions of women at the meetings, majority of women reported that because they had minority representation in the Union Parishad, their voices were not heard. It was also pointed out by a large number of women (56 percent) that their identity as ‘women’ worked as barrier for their opinions to be accepted at meetings. Among other reasons given by women was the chairman’s ignorance of women’s opinions and reluctance of men members to allow women colleagues to speak. On the other hand, men’s opinions were fully accepted more than partial acceptance. Their opinions were only rejected when they did not have a good relationship with the chairmen.

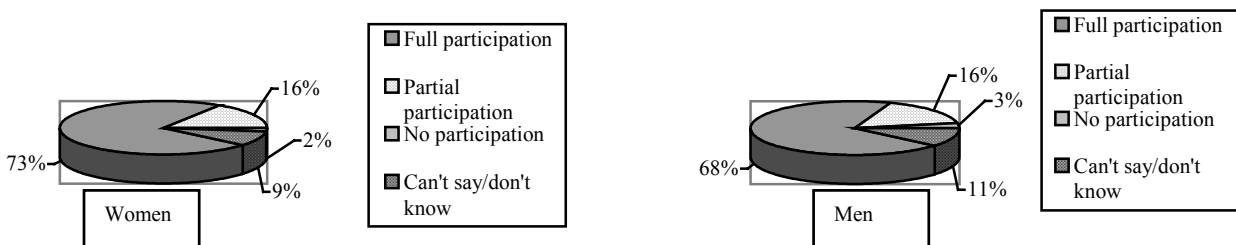
One such case of a woman member is given below:

Khadiza Khanom: Conflict with Chairman

Khadiza Khanom, elected from the reserved seat of Chakmerpull Union of Cox's Bazar, came from a renowned family. She was a strong willed widow. She gets moral support from her educated son. However, Khadiza gathered measurable experiences as a woman Union Parishad member. At the meetings the chairman misbehaved with women when they talked about their rights. The chairman misappropriated government allotments with the help of his musclemen. No one had courage to protest against the chairman's illegal activities for fear of being harassed by his musclemen. However, Khadiza published all the chairman's illegal activities in the newspaper. The chairman became angry and published false news in the newspaper about Khadiza to smear her image. The Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar helped to minimize the dispute between the two and compelled the chairman to apologize to Khadiza. The chairman, however, felt insulted but there was no change in his behavior towards Khadiza. Khadiza felt the necessity of the interference of the higher authority to solve the problem.

Though in India, majority of women (68 percent) and men (73 percent) participated actively in the deliberations and discussions, still 17 percent women and 16 percent men participated partially.

Figure 4.12 Participation in Discussion by Sex in India



One such case of partial participation in India is worth mentioning:

Smt. Dhan Devi, a Panchayat member of Bahadurpur Luhiya Gram Panchayat, Basrehar Block of Etawah District said, "In our Nyaya Panchayat the Pradhan and other officials work according to their personal whims and fancies. Though we attend the meeting but deliberately keep quiet. In my locality not even a brick lane has been made and the common passage that existed earlier has been closed down indefinitely. We women have been made Panchayat members only to behave as passive 'yes' people *sans* respect and importance whatsoever."

4.6 Problems Encountered at the Local Level

Active participation not only included their attendance at meetings, level of participation in the meetings, how acceptable were their opinions, but also the hindrances while undertaking development works at the local level. At the same time, their election promises were important indicators of whether they were able to fulfill them and if not what were the obstacles.

As far as women and their new relationship with politics is concerned, there were two kinds of women representatives in the Panchayats: those who had and are facing problems, and those who have had a smooth entry.

Figure 4.13 Types of Problems Faced by Women Representatives at the Panchayats



Women representatives faced problems when she did not have any political or organizational affiliations, did not have any family members in politics and fought independently without any party support for which she had to contest elections. On the other hand, women who were associated with political parties, claimed to have a family member in politics, accepted party ticket for election and was elected without contesting and did not even made any promises had hardly any problems. Moreover, 79 percent women did not face any election violence due to the fact that they had political backing and about 49 percent women were encouraged by the male members of their families. While 40 percent opined that just being a woman, male dependency, dual responsibilities and purdah were some of the social problems that women had to live up with. The above analysis clearly indicates that women who were active in party politics had support from political groups and gained more recognition in the Panchayat meetings. On the contrary, women who were independent of party affiliation had to struggle on their own to establish their rights and get things done because their voices were hardly considered in the local level meetings.

In Bangladesh women had some schooling, still there were orthodox fundamentalist patriarchal men in the Union Parishad. A case in retrospect was of Saleha Khatun, an elected Union Parishad Member of Sukhpuria Union of Chougcha Thana under Jessore district. She faced various problems while performing her duties. Saleha knew that according to Union Parishad Ordinance, each female Union Parishad member should preside over at least one project. She also learnt that they had the right to participate in one-third of development programs. However, the chairman did not respect the Ordinance and left women out of development activities. Moreover, he threatened women if they raised their voices. There were no arrangements for holding monthly meetings. As a result, women failed to participate in the decision-making

process and undertake development activities.

Thus we find that the Bangladeshi counterparts faced a stronger opposition in participation itself, while in India women representatives did participate but their voices got submerged in the men's groups where the actual decisions were taken, as it was a forbidden space for women.

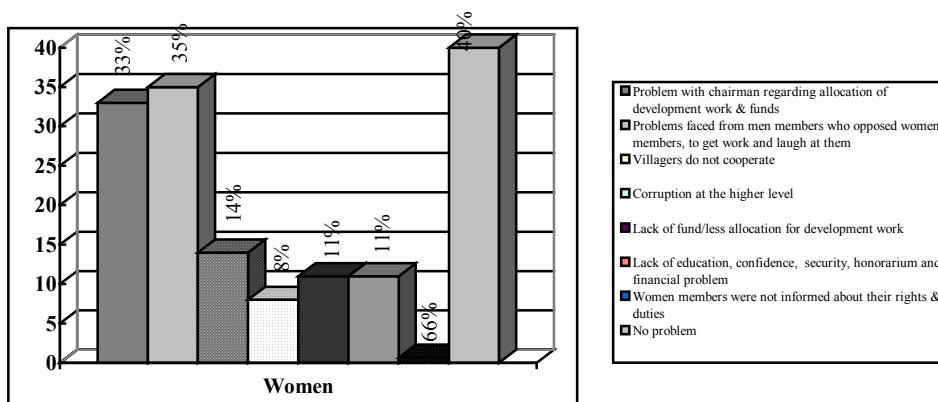
In Bangladesh, professionals opined that communication was the main problem that they faced. Women were unable to communicate with all the people of the three wards. Sometimes their men colleagues ignored them. Social and religious barriers, non-cooperation from husbands and small honorarium were among other problems. Chairman, politicians and others mentioned that communication with voters, family affairs, illiteracy, physical incapability, insecurity, disturbance by miscreants, etc. were faced by women members. Housewives observed that financial crisis was the main problem that women members faced as honorarium given to them were not enough. Moreover, their husbands did not cooperate with them.

Aparna Rani: Saga of Misfortune

Aparna Rani was a woman Union Parishad member of Moulvibazar. Her husband, who was a Primary School Teacher, encouraged Aparna to compete in the Union Parishad election. She was elected from the reserved seat. During the early stages of her time in the Union Parishad, Aparna did not face any problem but the situation changed later. She was more vocal than other women members and often argued with the chairman, which took a serious turn. The chairman did not approve of her active participation in the meetings and tried to teach her a lesson. A friendly male colleague used to help Aparna in performing different Union Parishad activities. The chairman spread rumours using Aparna's friendly relationship with her male colleague. This shattered Aparna's married life. She was almost ostracised in the society. Finally she had to leave the Union Parishad.

The problems of men as Union Parishad members were different from their women counterparts. Problems were encountered by 47 percent men Union Parishad members, which was 60 per cent in the case of women members. Majority of the women who faced problems mentioned that chairmen did not allocate development works for them and men members opposed females' involvement in development activities. Women members also mentioned problems of non-cooperation from local people, for example people did not give land for road construction work to women members. Other problems included corruption of higher authority and men colleagues, less allocation to female, less value given to women, lack of security, etc.

Figure 4.14 Problem Faced while Undertaking Union Parishad Work by Women in Bangladesh

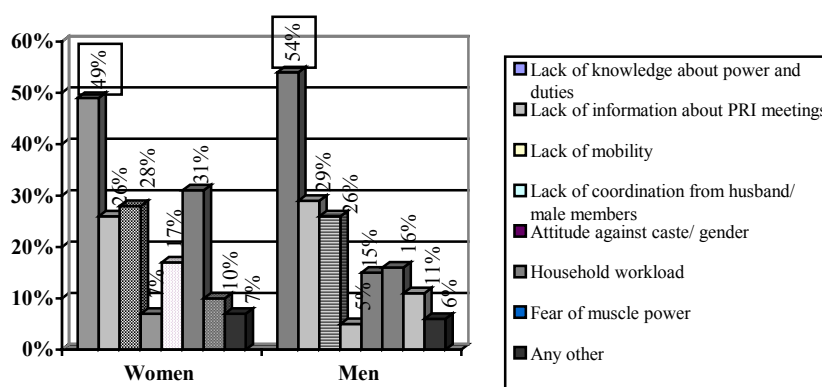


About 53 percent men did not face any problems at all in performing Union Parishad activities. Men who faced problems reported that they did not get cooperation from local people while land acquisition was necessary for road construction, as well as chairman's negative attitudes towards allocating work and money to members. Other problems faced by men members included political interference, irregular meetings held by the chairman, delay of receiving project money and so on.

The reasons faced by both men and women members while undertaking any development work in the Panchayat of India were numerous. But for women, household workload, the attitude toward the caste and gender were the most dominating factors. Nearly 49 percent

women representatives were ignorant of the power and duties specified to them, while 31 percent of the women representatives were not able to participate properly owing to the heavy workload at the house. Other obstacles faced by women were lack of information and mobility. While these were also handicaps of men representatives, they do not have the household to deal with. Apart from the impediments faced by them, some of the women and men felt that the decisions were usually taken and influenced by the rich and influential people.

Figure 4.15 Problems Faced While Undertaking Panchayet Work by Sex in India



One of the women Panchayat members, Smt. Mira of Saifai Gram Panchayat in Etawah district informed that:

- The women did not allow me to attend meetings
- I am not given an opportunity to speak at the meetings
- Women did not have any recognition in Saifai Gram Panchayat
- We did not have any rights except for the fact that we were members of the Panchayat.
- We did not get assistance from the Block

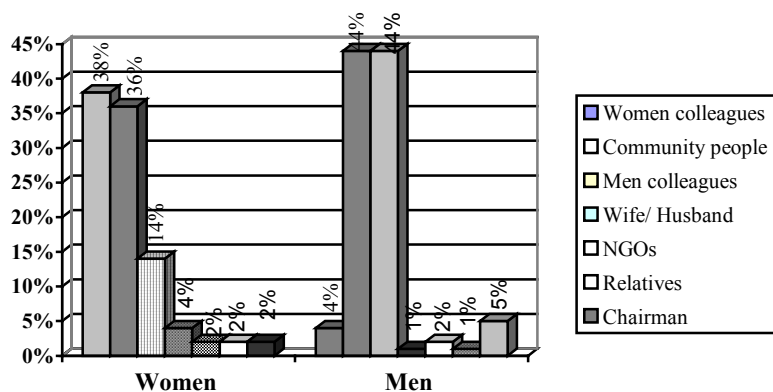
4.7 Cooperation Received at Local Level

Although women and men faced various types of problems both at the household level and in the community, still they could carry out their activities with the support and cooperation they received from other groups and people. Moreover, election promises can only be materialized

when there was cooperation from the community from where the members have been elected. Level of cooperation received by members also helps in understanding the success of carrying out the work successfully.

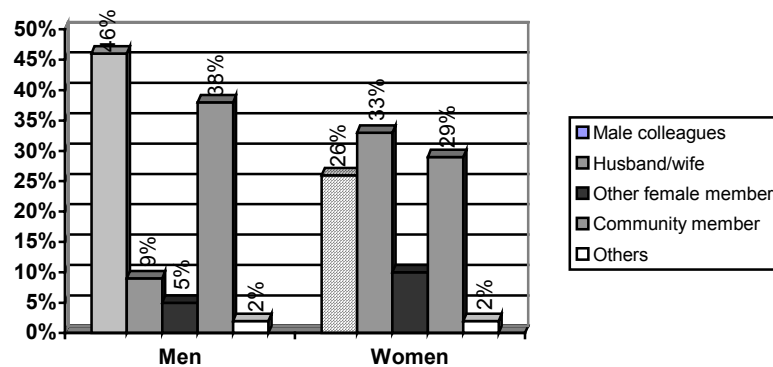
In Bangladesh, Union Parishad members received cooperation from colleagues, family members, relatives, members of the community, Union Parishad chairmen and NGOs to carry out their development activities. Local government representatives elected from the grassroots level received cooperation mostly from the community people, 36 percent women members and 44 percent men members. Regarding other sources of cooperation, there was different scenario by gender. Women members received the highest cooperation from their women colleagues (38 percent), compared to 14 percent from their men members. On the other hand, only 4 per cent men members reported to have such cooperation from their women colleagues. Regarding cooperation from the men colleagues, 14 percent women and 44 percent men reported in favor. On the other hand, only negligible 4 percent women members got support from their husbands. The same trend was true of men members, where men got more cooperation from men colleagues (44 percent) than from their wives who were hardly involved or consulted by their husbands. Support from the NGOs was also very low in the case of both among women and men members.

Figure 4.16 Cooperation Received from People/Groups by Sex in Bangladesh



There were not many proxies in the Panchayats, but on the other hand nearly 33 percent of women were helped by their husbands in the Panchayat work. Initially, most of these women were helped by their husbands and men colleagues, but once they understood the intricacies on the work front, they took charge. The community members cooperated with 29 percent of the women members and 38 percent of the men members. This would lead to better coordination and also speedy development through the group effort.

Figure 4.17 Cooperation Received from People/ Groups by Sex in India



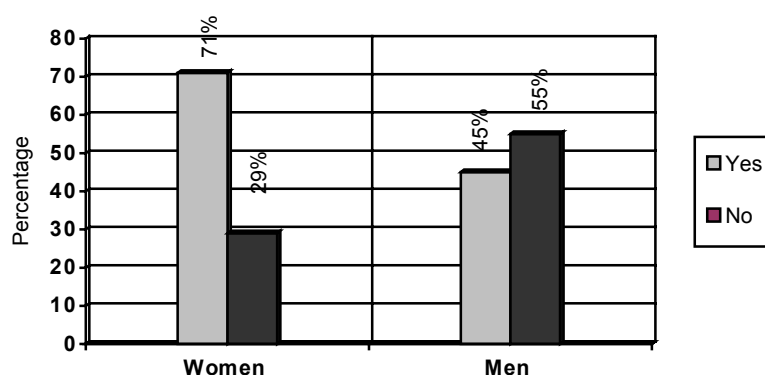
4.8 Capacity Building through Training Interventions

The need of training and awareness could bring women representatives in a better position not only in the participation level but also at the decision-making levels. The assistance given by the NGOs through the various training programs and general awareness programs is worth noting. The need for training of women does not mean that women were incapable of undertaking development at local level perceived by men politicians, but for qualitative input in development works taken up by the government, which did not reach those who actually needed it. Training

has been identified as an important tool to carry out development activities. Training is essential, especially for women because their participation in local government and in the public sphere is a new phenomenon

In Bangladesh, 71 percent women members received training from government and NGOs, compared to only 45 percent men members.

Figure 4.18 Training Received by Union Parishad Members



Training received by women members from government organizations were mainly on health, sanitation and family planning. Women Union Parishad members also received training on fisheries, poultry, dairy farm and horticulture activities, child rights and early marriage.

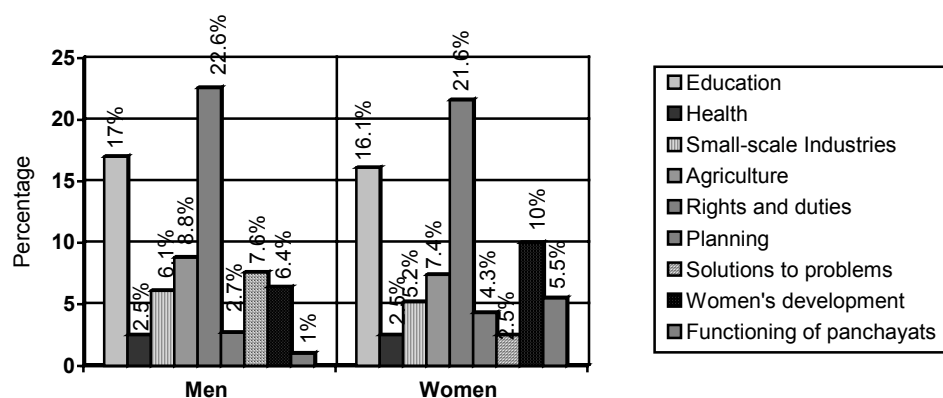
Table 4.1 Training Received by Women Union Parishad Members

Areas of training	Sources of Training
Health/Sanitation/ Family planning	Upazila health and family planing complex (GO)/ BRAC
Union Parishad activities	Khan Foundation
Fisheries/poultry/dairy farm/horticulture	Proshika/Upazila Agriculture Office (GoB).
Women's development/activities/rights/ Empowerment/ prevention of violence	NGOs namely Khan Foundation/ Proshika/ BRAC/ CARE

Education/adult education	BRAC/ UNO
Child rights/early marriage	Upazila health and family planning complex (GoB)
Rural/infrastructure development	CARE

In India, the scenario of training was minimal. However, the Panchayat representatives had identified some major areas in which they need training. Most of them emphasized planning procedures, as developmental issues could be dealt successfully only when the planning agenda was taken up with full conviction. The next priority was education, as owing to lack of training, people do suffer in taking quick and emphatic decisions.

Figure 4.19 Training Requirements by Sex in India



4.10 Concluding Remarks

The governments of India and Bangladesh provided a major opportunity to include provisions to ensure greater participation by women in local government and greater responsiveness of local government authorities to women's interests and needs. In India, reservation for women in the Panchayat level had basically given women a say in the grassroots political system. On the other hand, the emerging women's leadership, there evolved the Sarpanch-Pati where women may occupy the post but the men may command via proxy rule.

Women's political participation in the local bodies included mainly women as voters, as candidates, as elected members taking part in decision-making, planning and implementation.

In India, the problems faced by women during the election and while implementing development works in the Panchayats were mostly caste/class factors, while in Bangladesh, it was the religious fundamentalist and the purdah restriction.

The women representatives were designated as change agents for rural development, but unfortunately they did not have enough knowledge or training on development and organizational issues to provide a support system for rural women.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The essence of good governance lies, on one hand, the inclusion of local level planning in the national government and on the other hand, the success of a local government depends on peoples' participation. It is the grassroots level people who could contribute significantly to the governance of their communities. However, unequal participation of women and men in the government planning works as a barrier to ensure good governance in both Bangladesh and India. After three decades of research focused on gender equality, it is clear that there is a crucial need for a gender-specific development paradigm into all areas of policy making and planning so that women's needs can be met and their participation ensured. Decentralization has been identified as one of the important prerequisite to ensure gender balance into development process.

The present study was an attempt to review the participation of women at grassroots level democracy in Bangladesh and India. The study examined the role of government of Bangladesh and India to ensure gender balance at local level policy planning. In Bangladesh women's participation at local level politics has been recently ensured through the constitutional reform, while in India it had been for sometimes. It has been found in both the countries that although a large number of women were elected as local representatives, obstacles related to women's gender identity refrained them to play their roles effectively. It was evident that lack of effective and timely planning, lack of political background, absence of proper socio-economic and political environment, lack of appropriate organizational framework, lack of skill and training placed women behind to prove their competencies compared to their men counterparts. It had

been identified that women have limited scope to exercise political rights, lack of control over resources and limited choice in decision-making. However, women had been trying to overcome the barriers through their active participation in the local level policy-making.

Attempts had also been taken to sensitize communities as well as local and national leaders and policy makers to the need for gender balance in the political process. Efforts are going on to make politics democratic, participatory, accountable and transparent so as to ensure a just, humane and equitable society. The urgency for political empowerment of women has therefore increased manifold. There is a need to enable women members to be more effective members of local government bodies. Two aspects of effectiveness need to be considered: effectiveness in participating in overall operations and effectiveness in stimulating attention to women's development issues.

That being the case, the foremost task is to reach out to women to make them politically aware and conscious. This task requires to be taken up on a mass and intensified scale. Coordination and cooperation of both government and NGOs are necessary to achieve this goal. Political parties have a significant role to play as well. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the effort becomes even more difficult when precautions have to be taken to make governance more streamlined, empowering and development oriented while at the same time ensuring that the plurality of the multilayered cultural complexes enmeshed and intertwined with centuries of constructive accretion are not disturbed in any simplistic and radical manner.

5.2 Recommendations

Suggestions and recommendations are under three heads, viz., the role of government, role of political parties and role of NGOs and civil societies.

5.2.1 Role of Government

Election rules and regulations to be restructured: Both in India and Bangladesh, election rules should be restructured in the light of facilitating women's participation in the electoral processes, i.e. right to choose their representatives, freedom to express their views and opinions, freely allowed to cast their precious vote, strict ban on use of violence in elections, limits on expenditure and its strict implementation.

Representation of women members at the local level committees: Both in India and Bangladesh, at the local level, planning and decision-making committees should comprise at least 50 percent women. Social programs should be introduced to encourage women's effective participation in such activities.

Fair representation of minorities: The Bangladesh government should also let the minorities like Hindus and Christians be represented in the decision-making process, which could be facilitated by the help of reservation or through fair entry basis.

Information and training to women members of local bodies: The government along with the NGOs imparting training should provide information and training to women members of local bodies to increase their knowledge of local government, responsibilities and functions. This could be through information manuals, mobile training program and through audio-visual mediums. Women should be given various opportunities for leadership training and education in order to encourage them to take up political and leadership position in all fields. Supportive services should be provided to allow women to participate in local bodies.

Exchange of information and experience: Through the Local Government machinery, program or project should be developed that would allow for meetings for the exchange of information and experience on the ways in which women members can pursue issues of women's equality and development as members of local government.

The effectiveness of all Union Parishad and Panchayat members must be increased in promoting women's development. Training materials and courses for members of local government bodies should be revised to include components on women's equality and development. This should include components on changing attitudes to women's participation in decision-making bodies as well as components on assessing programs and projects to ensure that women benefit.

Literacy in legal rights and politics: In all formal and non-formal schools, proper training and exposure to the legal and political rights of women should be given to bring about attitudinal changes among both men and women.

Improvement of motivational programs: To create greater awareness among women about their low status in society and the need to improve it, motivational programs for expanding opportunities for education, health care and employment should be launched.

Participation of women in all activities: To ensure participation of women in development and social activities equal importance should be given to their opinions. To ensure an active participation of women in all activities of Union Parishad and Panchayat, government should monitor that women representatives are given their due respect to undertake and participate equal partners with men in development works at the local level.

Implementation of all kinds of activities: To ensure suitable training on proper implementation of all kinds of development activities and for the proper advancement of grassroots level poor community.

5.2.2 Role of Political Parties

Need for democratization from within: If women are to come even without reservation, as was not approved by some sections of the women's groups and the academia, the foremost responsibility should be that of the political parties who should recognize the capability and success of women and give party tickets to those who are interested to stand for the said post.

Party manifestoes and constitutions should include gender equity as one of their goals and have a plan of action for its achievement.

The present system of reserved seats is a necessary evil that may continue until greater representation of women is achieved. However, political parties in Bangladesh should work together to amend the system of nomination to direct election of women to the reserved seats for the Parliament as well.

Conscientisation to women's issues: To raise the political consciousness of the people and to sensitize them about women's issues, political parties should organize workshops, dialogues, discussions and mass meetings. Political parties should also sensitize party leaders and party workers about women's issues by organizing discussion sessions.

Maintain linkages with voters: Political parties should encourage their women candidates to maintain a continuous linkage with the voters, with special emphasis on women voters, so that they are not misled by the male members of their families.

Fair elections at all levels: Political parties should work towards free and fair elections so that women candidates can contest. Awareness programs for the voters should be undertaken so that they can cast their vote in favor of eligible candidates.

Stand against factionalism: Political parties should take a positive stand against factionalism, fundamentalism and misinterpretation of religious beliefs, which stands in the way of women's political participation. In order to develop political awareness and consciousness, women should be involved in social, economic and political activities.

Implementation of legal reforms and UN Conventions: Political parties should ensure the implementation of legal reforms and UN Conventions relating to women.

To change the policy of political parties: Women belonging to all political parties have to take

organized steps to change the discriminatory policy and approach political parties in the matter of financial support to women candidates in elections. Political parties should provide financial allocations for the campaign expenditure of women candidates.

5.2.3 Role of NGOs and Civil Society

NGO Agenda: Political empowerment of women should be incorporated in the NGO agenda. They should consciously make an effort to emphasize the issues of gender equity and women's empowerment in its right perspective. Both men and women leaders at the grassroots and national levels must be sensitized to women's issues, and form pressure and advocacy groups for the realization of gender equity.

Women should be made aware of their potential political power and their contribution to the political process as voters.

Networking: To facilitate the inclusion of women's issues in the political and public agenda, networking between the women's organizations and women politicians, in particular, is necessary. Curriculum and media should be adequately utilized so as to change patriarchal social values and encourage women towards leadership roles and activities.

Organize Pressure Groups: To support women candidates and mobilize funds for increasing women's participation in politics, NGOs should organize support groups and raise the political consensus of women through seminars, workshops, orientation training, mass media, etc. To lobby for increasing women's participation in politics, pressure groups should be formed within and outside the Parliament.

Participation in political parties: To increase the number of women in the rank and file at all levels of political parties, grassroots women's organizations should mobilize women at all levels. They should also highlight the potentials of women and their competence as candidates.

Knowledge about the functions of Panchayats and Union Parishads: Most of the women

members had lower levels of education. Their training may be conducted by the relevant training institutes or by the respective district authority with the financial support of the government or assistance from the donor agencies/development partners. A training or instructional handbook on women's power, rights, functions and management of the Union Parishad should be provided to them after being elected as women members of the Union Parishad.

To participate in the local bodies meeting: In order to ensure proper participation in the local bodies, the government may undertake the membership of women members in the different committees, specially the committees dealing with family planning and women's development. A mechanism should be developed to ensure regular attendance of the women members at the meetings.

Selection procedures of party's candidates: Rural women do not have a clear appreciation and adequate awareness of the issues faced by the women because of the respective environment. Women members, whatever may be their selection procedure, are recognized as leaders at the grassroots level by the government and by the local community. They should, therefore, be given adequate training and exposure to the issues, which stand in the way of the integration of women with the socio-economic life of society.

References

Beijing Platform for Action and Declaration, Beijing, China, United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995

Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972

Kaushik, Susheela Panchayati Raj in Action: *Challenges to Women's Role*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi, 1998.

Khan, Zarina Rahman, "Political Participation of Women: The Problematics. In Towards Gender Equity Poverty, Rights and Participation," report of the Regional Workshop, CIRDAP 7 The British Council, July Dhaka, 1998

Mahbubul Huq Human Development Centre, (2000), "*Human Development in South Asia: The Gender Question*", Pakistan: Oxford University Press

Rahman, Syedur (2000) "Governance and Local Government System" in *Governance South Asian Perspective* edited by Hasnat Abdul Hye.

Siddiqui, Kamal *Local Government in Bangladesh*, NILG, Dhaka, 1994

Shamim, Ishrat "Women in Local Governance: Bangladesh Perspective" *Paper Presented at the Workshop on Participation of Women in Local Government: Problems and Prospects*, Organized by: Centre for Development Studies and Action and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi, 1999

Sharma, B. D. *Defy 50 Years of Anti-Panchayati Raj*, Sahyog Pustak Kuteer, New Delhi, 1998.

The Local Government Union Parishad Amendment Act, 1997

The Daily Janakantha, Dhaka, 15 December, 1997

The Local Government, Upazila Parishad Act, 1998

The Hindu, May 20, 2000

The Deccan Herald, October 22, 2000

The Deccan Herald, January 1, 1997

UNDP, *Report on Human Development in Bangladesh, Empowerment of Women*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, (1994)

United Nations Development for Development Support and Management Services, Local Government in Bangladesh: An Agenda for Governance, New York, 1996.

BANGLADESH

References:

Alam, Bilquis (1983), "Women in Local Government: Profiles of Six Chairmen of *Union Parishads*," The Journal of Local Government, NILG, Vol.16, No.1, January-June.

Alam, Bilquis (1981), *Women Members of Union Parishad, A Few Statistics*, NILG, Dhaka.

Alamgir, Mohiuddin Khan (1988) *Development Strategies for Bangladesh*. Dana Prokashoni, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ali, AMM Shawkat 2001. "Local Government (1971-2000)" Paper Presented at the Seminar of Asiatic Society, February 2001, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Ali, Shaikh Maqsood et al., (1983) *Decentralization and People's Participation in Bangladesh*, National Institute of Public Administration, Dhaka, Bangladesh

CIRDAP and The British Council (1998), *Towards Gender Equity: Poverty, Rights and Participation*, Report of the Regional Workshop 15-18 February 1998, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Chowdhury, Najma et al. (1994a). "Redefining Politics: Patterns of Women's Political Engagement from a Global Perspective". In Nelson, B. and Chowdhury N. ed. *Women and Politics Worldwide*. Yale University Press, London.

Chowdhury, Najma. 1994b. *Women in Politics. A Journal of Women for Women*, Vol. I, Dhaka.

Guhathakurata, Meghna. 1994, *The Women's Agenda and the Role of Political Parties*.

Hye, Hasnat Abdul (2000), "Good Governance: A Social Contract for the New Millennium" in *Governance South Asian Perspective* edited by Hasnat Abdul Hye, UPL, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Hussain, Shirin (1993). "Women Representatives of the Union Level as Change Agent of Development: Potentials and Constraints' Paper presented at the Workshop on Training Needs Assessment and Methodology for Rural Women, in Rural Development in Rural Development Academy, Bogra, September 1993, International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions.

Karl Marilee (1995), *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision-Making*, Zed Books Limited, London, 108-109.

Khan, Zarina Rahman. 1998. "*Political Participation of Women: The Problematics*. In *Towards Gender Equity Poverty, Rights and Participation*," report of the Regional Workshop, CIRDAP 7 The British Council, July 1998, Dhaka.

Khan, M. M. 1995. *Women in Public Administration and Management: Bangladesh*

Mahbubul Huq Human Development Centre, 2000, "Human Development in South Asia: The Gender Question", Pakistan: Oxford University Press

Nasreen, Mahbuba (1999), "NGO and Local Government Reforms in Bangladesh", Concept Paper Developed for the Second Workshop of European Commission NGO Dialogues Project, March 1999, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Nasreen, Mahbuba (2001), "Interface on Decentralization and Local Government for Promoting Participation of People in The Development", paper presented at the Democracy Festival, Organized by Democracy Watch, March, 2001.

Pal, Mahi, 1999. 'Participation of Women in Panchayats-An Assessment and the Tasks Ahead.

Qadir S.R. (1978), "**Selected Characteristics of Women Representatives: As stated by Chairmen of Union Parishads**," *Local Government quarterly*, pp.11-29.

Qadir S.R. and Islam, M (1987), *Women Representatives at the Union Level as Change Agent of Development*, Women for Women, Dhaka.

Qadir S. Rowshan (1993), “**Participation of Women in Politics and Administration**” -- The Journal of National Institute of Local Government, Vol.22, No.2, July-December 1993, Dhaka, pp.15-44.

Qadir S. Rowshan (1998), “The Role and Activities of Elected Union Parishad Members Representatives in the Local Government System” (Bangla Version), presented at the National Conference on Local Government and Women Members: Union Parishad, organized by Women for Women.

Rahman, Syedur (2000) “**Governance and Local Government System**” in *Governance South Asian Perspective* edited by Hasnat Abdul Hye.

Salahuddin, Khaleda (1995) “Women’s Political Participation: Bangladesh” in *Women in Politics And Bureaucracy*, edited by Jahanara Huq et.al.

Siddiqui, Kamal (1994), *Local Government in Bangladesh*, NILG, Dhaka.

Tinker Hugh (1976), *Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma, India*.

UNDP (1994), *Report on Human Development in Bangladesh, Empowerment of Women*, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Crook, R. and Manor, J. (1994). Enhancing Participation as Institutional Performance:

Democratic Decentralization in South Asia and West Africa, London, ODA.

GOB, 1997. *Report on Strengthening Local Government*, Local Government Commission, Dhaka.

GOB, 1995, Bangladesh Country Paper

GOB, 1993, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Local Government Division, New Local Government System in Bangladesh.

UNDP, 1994. *Report on Human Development in Bangladesh. Empowerment of Women*, Dhaka.

United Nations, 1996. Platform for Action

Experience, In *Empowerment of Women, A Journal of Women for Women*. Vol. 11, Dhaka.

Edited by Chowdhury, N. et al. ed. *Women and Politics*, Women for Women, Dhaka.

Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

The Local Government. Union Parishad Amendment Act 1997

The Local Government. (Gram Parishad) Act 1997

The Local Government. (Union Parishad) Act 1998

The Daily Janakantha 1997. November 30,

The Daily Janakantha, 1997. December 2,

The Daily Janakantha, 1997. December 15

The Daily Janakantha, 1997. December 30

The Daily Janakantha, 1997. January 7

The Daily Janakantha, 1997. January 27

The Daily Sangbad, 1997. December 31

The Daily Ittefaq, 1997. December 30

The Daily Ittefaq, 1998. January 27

The Daily Ittefaq, 1998. March 3

The Daily Star, 1997. December 6

News Network, The Bangladesh Observer Magazine, 1999. July 9.

INDIA

Bibliography

Books/ Booklets/ Leaflets

Gramya Vikas Vibhag Ka Nagrik Adhikar Patra, Gramya Vikas Vibhag, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, 2000. (in Hindi)

Kshitij, Zilla Panchayat, Baitul Pub., 2000. (in Hindi)

National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes : A Handbook, New Delhi, 2000.

Panchayati Raj, Gramin Vikas Mantralaya, Government of India, New Delhi, 1993. (Leaflet in Hindi)

Prajanan Avam Bal Swasthya Aur Apka Netritva : Pradhanon Ke Liye Pustika, Dindayal Upadhyay Rajya Gramya Vikas Sansthan, Lucknow, 1999. (Leaflet in Hindi)

Rashtriya Samajik Sahayata Karyakram, Gram Vikas Mantralaya, Government of India, New Delhi, 1995. (Leaflet in Hindi)

Satta Ka Vikendrikaran Arthat Satta Janta Ke Hath Aur Sarkar Janta Ke Dwar, Information and Broadcasting Division, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, 1999. (in Hindi)

The State of Panchayats: A Participatory Perspective — A Summary, PRIA, New Delhi, 2001.

Transforming Rural India: Programmes for Change, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

Vikas Path Par Uttar Pradesh, Prem Printing Press, Lucknow, Jan. 2001. (in Hindi)

Women's Political Empowerment, Search Bulletin, Vol. XIII, Issue No. 4, Oct-Dec, 1998.

Kaushik, Susheela *Panchayati Raj in Action : Challenges to Women's Role*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi, 1998.

Kaushik, Susheela *Women and Panchayati Raj*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi, 1993.

Manikyamba, P. *Women in Panchayati Raj Structures*, Gian Pub., New Delhi, 1989.

Nath, Kamla; Chauhan, Abha and Mishra, Smriti *Women and Grassroots Politics : Assertion of the Politically Powerless*, Centre for Social Research, New Delhi, 1996.

Seth, Mira *Women and Development: The Indian Experience*, Sage Pub., New Delhi, 2001.

Sharma, B.D. *Defy 50 Years of Anti-Panchayat Raj*, Sahyog Pustak Kuteer, New Delhi, 1998.

Singh, Bhupinder and Mahanti, Neeti (ed.), *Role of Democratic Decentralisation (Panchayati Raj) in TSP Areas*, Inter-India Pub., New Delhi, 1999.

Articles

Chopra, Radhika; Dasgupta, Chaitali and Janeja, Mandeep K. *Understanding Masculinity*, EPW, May 6, 2000, pp.1607-09.

- Gandhi, Ramachandra** *Two Cheers for Tolerance*, Seminar, Nov. 1995, vol. 435, pp.43-51.
- Mathew, George** *Panchayats at Work: What Does it Mean for the Oppressed?*, Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), New Delhi.
- McDougall, Lori**, *Gender Gap in Literacy in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, May 6, 2000, pp.1649-58.
- Minocha, A.C.** *District Government in Madhya Pradesh*, Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), July 3, 1999, pp. 1754-55.
- Mohanty, Bidyut** *Women and Panchayati Raj : Some Issues*, ISS, CWDS Library.
- Narayanan, K.R.** *Address to the Nation by the President of India Shri. K.R. Narayanan on the Eve of Republic Day- 2001*.
- Narayanan, Usha** *Women in Panchayats: The Path Ahead*, Mainstream, Nov. 16, 1996, pp. 11-12.
- Sarkar, Tanika** *Pragmatics of the Hindu Right*, EPW, July 31, 1999, pp. 2159-67.
- Vishwanathan, Renuka** *Human Development Report for Madhya Pradesh*, EPW, May 29, 1999, pp. 1314-15.
- Kishwar, Madhu** *Resolving Conflicts*, Seminar, Vol. 435, Nov. 1995, pp.35-39.
- Lele, Medha Kotwal** *Local Government: Conflict of Interests and Issues of Legitimisation*, EPW, Dec. 22, 2001, pp. 4702-04.
- Jha, Raghavendra** *Economic Reforms: A Decadal Stocktaking*, EPW, Dec. 22, 2001, p. 4704.
- Saberwal, Satish** *Political Parties and Social Values*, Seminar, Vol. 456, Aug. 1997, pp. 26-31.
- Blomkvist, Hans** *Caste and Democracy*, Seminar, Vol. 456, Aug. 1997, pp. 21-25.
- Acharya, Ashok** *Civil Society and Liberal Norms*, Seminar, Vol. 456, Aug. 1997, pp. 17-20.
- Jain, L.C.** *Strengthening the Foundations*, Seminar, Vol. 451, Mar. 1997, pp. 27-30.
- Tandon, Rajesh** *Grassroots Democracy*, Seminar, Vol. 451, Mar. 1997, pp. 37-40.
- Yadav, Yogendra** *The Idea of Democracy*, Seminar, Vol. 461, Jan. 1998, pp. 57-61.
- Pal, Mahi** *Transforming Panchayats*, EPW, Dec. 9, 2000, pp. 4379-4382.
- Pal, Mahi** *Eighty-Seventh Amendment Bill*, EPW, May 26, 2001, pp. 1780-1783.
- Vajpayee, A.B.** *We Shall Triumph Over Terrorism*, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Dec. 2001.
- Karat, Brinda** *In Defence of Reservation*, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 2000.
- Garver, Newton** *What Violence Is*, The Nation, June 24, 1968, pp. 817-822.
- Chidambaram, P.** *Poverty of Ideas*, India Today, Jan. 21, 2002, p. 55.
- Singh, Digvijay** *Something About Hunger*, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Oct. 10, 2001.
- Bavenick, Marten** *Caste Panchayats and the Regulation of Fisheries Along Tamil Nadu's Coromandal Coast*, EPW, Mar. 31, 2001, pp. 1088-1089.
- Fan, Shenggen; Hazell, Peter and Thorat, S.K.** *Impact of Public Expenditure on Poverty in Rural India*, EPW, Sept. 3, 2000, pp. 3581-88.

Pal, Mahi *Panchayats in Fifth Schedule Areas*, EPW, May 6, 2000, pp.1602-1606.

Ghatak, Maitreesh; Ghatak, Maitreya *Recent Reforms in the Panchayat Systems in West Bengal: Towards Greater Participatory Governance?*, EPW, Jan. 5, 2002, pp. 45-58.

Shah, Anwar *Decentralisation, Fiscal Federalism and Twelfth Five Year Plan*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Jan. 28, 2002.

Narayanan, K.R. *Empowerment of Women Crucial for Social Development*, www.outlookindia.com/fullprint.asp (Jan. 26, 2002)

Ramesh, Jairam *Future of Uttar Pradesh: Need for a New Political Mindset*, EPW, July 31, 1999, pp. 2127-2130.

Shrivastava, Ginny *Major Issues of Good Governance in India and at the Regional Level*, Astha, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Ambareesh, *Powerless Panchayat Chiefs Irked at Gram Sabha*, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, March 31, 2001.

Behar, Amitabh *Gram Swaraj: Experiment in Direct Democracy*, EPW, March 10, 2001, pp. 823-825.

Laxmi, Rama *Women's Interests and Welfare State*, EPW, March 10, 2001, pp. 826.

Manor, James *Madhya Pradesh: Experiments with Direct Democracy*, EPW, March 3, 2001, pp. 715-716.

Pattanaik, Soumyajit *Dissolution of Panchayats Before Five Years Unconstitutional*, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, March 28, 2001.

Mukherji, Nirmal *Decentralisation Below the State Level: Need for a New System for Governance*, EPW, Mar.4, 1989, pp. 467-472.

Pai, Sudha *Social Capital: Panchayats and Grassroots Democracy: Politics of Dalit Assertion in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, Feb. 24, 2001, pp. 645-654.

News journals/ newsletters/ newspapers/ news magazines/ news bulletins

Panchayati Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 85, Jan. 2001, New Delhi.

Humanscape, Foundation for Humanisation, Mumbai, Nov. 2001.

Gender Just Laws (Bulletin), No.4, New Delhi, Dec. 1998.

Gaon Ki Mer, Vol. 14, Allahabad, Oct 1-15, 2000. (Hindi)

Samvadini, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Sept., 2001, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. (Hindi)

GTI News Pick—News on Women, Centre for Social Research, New Delhi, Apr.-Jun., 1998.

Adithi Shrinkhala, Vol.1, No.5, Patna, Aug.,1998. (Hindi)

Mainstream, Vol. XXXIX No.45, New Delhi, Oct. 27, 2001.

Sarathi, Vol.1, Mar.-Apr., 2000, Bhopal. (Hindi)

Sandesh, Vol. 2, Prem Printing Press, Lucknow, Mar.-Apr.-May, 2001, (Hindi)

Vikas, Vol.5, May-Sept., 2001, Indore. (Hindi)

Hashiye Par, Vol. 2, April, 2001, Indore (Hindi)
Social Welfare, Vol. 47, No. 11, Feb., 2001, New Delhi.
Vikas, Vol.4, Jan.-Apr., 2001, Indore. (Hindi)
The Times of India, New Delhi.
The Hindustan Times, New Delhi,
The Hindu, New Delhi.
The Pioneer, New Delhi.
The Indian Express, New Delhi.
Dainik Jagran, New Delhi, Kanpur.
Rashtriya Sahara, New Delhi, Lucknow.
Amar Ujala, Agra, Lucknow.
India Today, New Delhi.
Outlook, New Delhi.
Frontline, New Delhi.
Seminar, New Delhi.
Economic and Political Weekly, New Delhi.
Liberal Times, New Delhi.
Yojna, New Delhi.
Kurukshetra, New Delhi.

Reports/ Studies

Strengthening Local Self-Governance in India: Finances of Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh, PRIA, New Delhi, July, 2000.

Gramin Vikas Ki Nai Dishaen, Gramin Vikas Mantralaya, Bharat Sarkar, Oct. 1999, New Delhi, 1996.

The Constitution's Seventy-Third Amendment Act 1992 on the Panchayats, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

Mohanty, Bidyut Panchayats, Women and Health: Direction Towards a New Health Policy, ISS, New Delhi, 1996.

Santha, E.K. Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj : A Status Report, Sponsored by National Commission for Women, Centre for Women and Development Studies, New Delhi.

Women Leadership in Panchayats in Gram Panchayats : Issues and Concerns, PRIA and NCRSO, New Delhi.

Decentralisation and Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh : A Study, Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, Lucknow.

Women in Decision Making at Grassroots, Centre for Social Research, New Delhi, 2001.

Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj in India, National Commission for Women, New Delhi, 2001.

Breaking the Barriers: Mobilisation of Rural Women in Uttar Pradesh, Centre for Social Research, New Delhi, 1994.

Women Leaders in Panchayati Raj, All India Women's Education Fund Association, New Delhi, Oct. 3-5, 1996.

Acts/ Gazettes/ Manuals

Gram Pradhanon Ke Pate Ki Suchi, Panchayati Raj Vibhag, Varanasi, 1995. (Hindi)

Human Development Report, Madhya Pradesh, 1998

Kshetra Panchayat Pramukh, Jyesta Uppramukh, Kanishta Pramukh Avam Sadasyon ki Suchi: Janpad Varanasi, Varanasi, 1995. (Hindi)

MP Panchayat Raj Avam Gram Swaraj Adhinyam, 1993, Rajkamal Publications, Indore, 2001

UP Kshetra Panchayat and Zila Panchayat Adhinyam, 1961 Allahabad.

Zilla Aur Janpad Panchayat Ke Sadasyon Ka Prashikshan, UNICEF, Bhopal.

District Gazette, Chhatarpur.

District Gazette, Etawah.

District Gazette, Indore.

District Gazette, Varanasi.

ROBIN SULLY
Director
International Development