

Challenges of Institutionalising Gender within Public Organisation: A Study on Selected Government Organisations of Bangladesh

Muhammad Anisur Rahman *

Md. Shafiquel Haque **

Abstract: Institutionalising gender refers to the inclusion of the gender aspects or the perspectives integrated as a dynamic social relation regularly and continuously repeated being sanctioned and maintained by social norms. Before formulation of a policy institutionalisation is a prerequisite for implementation of that. Prior to that a clear understanding of the organisational culture and the broad community culture is even more important. This study attempts to determine the present status of women employees engaged in nontraditional/technical job major constraints encountered by them and suggest measures for employment of women in nontraditional job. Study selects four government organisations purposively such as Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence and Directorate of Government Transport. Study also selects 84 employees (32 females and 52 males) from these four organisations purposively as respondents and collects data from them through administering two different sets of pre-tested questionnaires. Chief Executive of Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence and Directorate of Government Transport and representatives of PDB and BDR also give interview for the study. Study portrays several measures to elevate the number of women employees in nontraditional job. These are amendment of the existing recruitment rules of the organisations, bringing about attitudinal changes both in men and women through social mobilisation, rendering relevant training and education to women, automation of the organisation and exemption of women from working beyond office hours.

* Professor, Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.

** Senior Research Officer, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Savar Dhaka.

Authors are very grateful to Ms Ishrat Chowdhury, Mr. Md. Zohurul Islam, Mr. Md. Abul Basher, Mr. Anisur Rahman Khan and Mr. AFM Amir Hussain for their immense support for collecting data for the study.

Introduction

Organisations are important arenas of human development. Irrespective of their characters, 'organisations are fundamental features of our societies, and very important ways of mobilizing social energy' (Rao and Stuart, 1997:10). 'Organisations are the context of, and decisive for, our paid working life and for our well-being, and it is therefore of great importance how they function, which logic (goals and means) dominates, which actors and groups set the agenda and how the relations between people are formed' (Alvesson and Billing, 1997:5). For feminists 'organisations are not rational, neutral bodies, but living and breathing microcosms of the societies that house them and the people who inhabit them. The organisations that rule our world are informed by cultural values and patriarchal norms that are anti-women and exclusionary' (Rao and Kelleher, 2000).

Institutionalisation refers to 'the process whereby social practices become sufficiently regular and continuous to be described as institutions', that is 'social practices that are regularly and continuously repeated, are sanctioned and maintained by social norms, and have a major significance in the social structure (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 1988:12 quoted in Levy 1996). Moreover, 'the institutionalisation of a gender perspective implies the integration of a dynamic social relation which has at its heart the question of power' (Levy, 1996:1).

The UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) is the starting point in which many member states of the UN in the developing countries established some form of national machinery for the advancement of women. Since the Decade over 140 countries have formed official national machineries in the form of women's bureaus, women's ministries or women's desks within a ministry (Beall, 1998). In Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs was established in 1978 in which Women's Directorate, Jatiya Mahila Shanstha (National Women's Association) and Shishu Academy (Children's Academy) are the implementing agencies (GoB, 2000a:25). In addition to this women's NGOs have also been established or shifted their focus from general poverty alleviation

to women's advancement. Simultaneously international development agencies have also put their efforts to establish women's desks within their organisations (Staudt and Jaquette, 1988; Staudt, 1991).

However, by the end of the Decade, integrating women into development named as 'Women in Development' or WID failed to achieve the expected goal and it was recognised that 'at best development interventions had ignored women and at worst, had actually harmed them' (Beall, 1998). 'One of the most disturbing features of this 'women's sector' is that it is a weak sector. It is characterised by a lack of any real political influence, and is therefore under-funded and under-staffed, both in numbers and qualifications. A key factor underlying these characteristics is the conceptualisation of both the problems and strategies of this sector in terms of women, not gender' (Levy, 1992:135 quoted in Beall, 1998).

Since the UN Decade, organisations started to recognize the need to institutionalise gender fair policies and practices in their own structures and agenda. In 1995, Bangladesh government reorganised

National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) and in 1997, The National Policy for Women's Advancement was adopted. The GoB also approved the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Advancement of Women: Implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action in 1998. Institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP are as follows (GoB, 2000_a: 11):

- National Council for Women's Development (NCWD)
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee for MWCA
- The Women's Development Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
- MWCA and its implementing agencies: the Directorate for Women's Affairs (DWA) and the Jatiya Mahila Sanstha (JMS)
- The WID Focal Points mechanism
- District and Thana level WID Coordination Committee

Despite the existence of the National Policy for Women's Advancement and significant numbers of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP, none of these public organisations has a policy for institutionalising gender within these organisations. Because, it is important to understand that institutionalising gender within organizations face many-fold and multi-layered challenges in which one can consider culture as the most critical, the most central, and the most difficult challenge to address and overcome. Here culture (organizational culture), according to Macdonald, Springer & Dubel (1998), refers to the conventions and unwritten rules of the organisation, its norms of cooperation and conflict, its channels for exerting influence. It can also be described as a collective mindset or 'software of the mind'. It is also important to understand that the 'women' or 'gender' issue is not an outcome of our own realization. Although government has taken many initiatives for 'women' or 'gender' development, the results are very insignificant. Because the steps are not taken by sharp analysis of the issue rather as an important sector for gaining foreign aids. 'Women's issues suddenly came to represent a new resource through which a range of individuals and groups could gain access to funds and/or social and political recognition' (White, 1992:15).

Similar scenario is also true for women's NGOs working in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, a significant number of NGOs, for example CARE-Bangladesh, BRAC, Bangladesh Rural Reconstruction Association (BARRA), Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), CARITAS and Mass-line Media Centre (MMC), have formulated gender policy (Gender Trainers Core Group-TCG, 1998), but considering implementation of gender policy still remain as a 'lip service'. Because, before UN Decade, NGOs did not consider 'women/gender' as an issue. "NGOs for which gender has not previously been considered an issue find in 'women's issues' a means to expand their programmes and gain access to new sources of funding" (White, 1992:15).

Rationale of the Study

Institutionalisation is a prerequisite for successful implementation of any policy. Despite the existence of the National Policy for Women's Advancement and significant numbers of institutional

mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP, none of these public organisations has a policy for institutionalising gender within these organisations.

Many organizations have responded to the call resulting from the UN Decade for Women to implement gender-fair policies but there remains much to be accomplished. And, although policies are implemented, there has to exist a standing desire (Macdonald, Springer & Dubel, 1998) to change on the part of staff members and the organisation at large. Cultural challenges present the most difficult obstacles to a successful gender mainstreaming approach. It is a sensitive, complex and arduous process to question culturally dictated norms about the roles of men and women. Nonetheless, understanding both the organizational culture and the broader community culture through this process is critical in order to transform gender roles through effective policy.

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the study are to determine the present status of women employees, major constraints, suggest measures for employment of women to help them formulating a policy for institutionalising gender within public organisations of Bangladesh. For satisfying the purpose an intense study was made to know the job nature of some selected organisations attitude of male members towards the female regarding quota system, about policy adoption on sexual harassment of women.

Methods of the Study

For the convenience of the study following four government sector organisations have been selected purposively namely Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD); and Directorate of Government Transport (DGT).

Sources of Data: Necessary data for the study have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected from questionnaire survey and observation. Secondary sources of data include books, journals, periodicals, annual reports and other related documents.

Respondents: Both the male and female employees working at the Head Offices of the concerned organisations have been considered as respondents for this study. Respondents have been interviewed through administering two pre-tested questionnaires. Members of highest decision-making bodies of the organisations have also been interviewed.

Selection of Respondents and Sample Size: Respondents have been selected from almost all levels of the organisations. Sample size of the respondents has been determined purposively. Table-1 shows the number of respondents of four selected organisations:

Table-1: Respondents, their class and organisations

Class distribution of the respondents	Name of the organisations								Total No of respondents		
	PDB		BDR		FSCD		DGT				
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total
Class I	5	8	1	7	0	0	0	3	6	18	24
Class II	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	1	5	6
Class III	3	7	2	0	7	7	10	9	22	23	45
Class IV	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	1	3	6	9
Total	8	15	6	10	7	12	11	15	32	52	84

Expected Benefit from the Study

From this study we have identified few significant barriers to women's employment in the selected organisations that are related to women's advancement. Institutionalising gender within these organisations requires overcoming these barriers. We expect that authorities of these organisations may consider findings of this study. We also expect that findings of the study may be used as training material in the relevant training modules/courses.

Limitations of the study

The study has considered only four public sector organisations relevant to technical as well as non-traditional nature of job especially for women in Bangladesh. Thus this study should not be considered as representative for all public sector organisations relevant to non-traditional job for women. However, this study

could be used as the beginning of understanding the challenges of institutionalising gender within the government organisations.

Women's Work and Institutions: Brief Overview

“The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.”

“Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public.”

—*Bangladesh Constitution, Article 28: (1).*

Why is it that only when women want to bring about changes for their own benefit does culture and custom become sacred and unchangeable?

— *Nadia Toubia, Sudanese women's activist at the International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1993.*

The scenario of women's position, her material-ideological relationship with men and the society, for example, gender issue, is capable of explaining the essence of a society. It can shed light on every issue that affects human lives. That includes institutional set up, regulations, priorities, as well as ideological thrust, officially declared and practically followed. It covers gender relations in dynamic perspective of the society, both private and public and exposes the common standing of women in front of patriarchal assertion of the state, institutions and society at large.

From paribar to workplace

Conditions of women, for example, her rights, power, achievements and deprivation are related to its socio-economic formation and corresponding dominant ideological construct, which is patriarchal in different ways. The ideological hegemony, that characterised our society, justifies women's subordination in the family as well as in the society, in workplaces too. This hegemony defines role and restricts mobility of women, sets her image, limits her area of work, power and powerlessness, her

purpose of life and her 'private' and 'public'. When women internalise the hegemonic values as their own, they accept, to a large extent, the assertion of patriarchal rules and behaviour as 'natural' and 'obvious'. Since independence, Bangladesh experienced several changes in socio-economic milieu, but little changes have come to the forefront in relation to the dominant ideological construct regarding image and periphery of women.

In the dominant social value women are considered as inferior in intellect, nevertheless, dangerously able to create hazard in family, workplaces and society. So, the whole society including paribar with a strong support from legal-social framework and cultural construct, consider it very important to make women on the one hand submissive, and on the other hand attractive for men; on the one hand efficient in household services and non-ambitious on the other. She is considered as incapable of becoming a person, a human being but is accused for any problem or humiliation she usually faces. She along with others, both male and female, look at herself as 'second sex', unable to do many things and destined to do certain jobs. Her dresses, childhood games, leisure items, training, career, nurturing body and mind, sexual behaviour all are scrutinized in that mirror (Muhammad, 2004).

Different faces of Patriarchy

Patriarchy may have different faces. Pre-capitalist patriarchy can be characterized as a set of values and systems that consider women as a subordinate whose mobility must be limited within household and family life. According to this view, household activities, marriage, giving services to husband and family, child bearing and rearing should be the central and single focus of a woman. On the contrary, capitalist patriarchy does not confine women fully in household activities. It brings woman under the fold of capital and labour market, keeping the central point of pre-capitalist views that woman is inferior and subordinate to man, in fact. The mixture of both patriarchal set of values, capitalist and pre-capitalist ones, exist in Bangladesh which demand both labour for capital and household activities from women, demand both the 'ideal image' and qualification to get jobs as well. In the present

mixed scenario, women become doubly burdened and psychological pressure becomes immense. Conflicts both within and with the others become more acute.

Women at Work: Late realization

The general perception about women's emancipation centres on her economic independence and voice in policy making. Integrating women into mainstream economic activities, i.e., to open space for her education, formal employment and creating her direct links to the market have been considered as very important steps in this regard. Before 1975, UN's International Year for Women, there was a general silence as well as ignorance amongst policy makers in most of the countries about the relevance of women issue in development. It is estimated that prior to that year, less than 1 per cent of standard textbooks on development referred specially to women (Ware, 1981). Since 1975, women issue started getting attention at official level in many countries around the world including Bangladesh primarily not because of realization from within but because of emerging ideas at global level. Women in Development (WID) approach that emerged since the UN year can be called as the 'first wave of official feminism' within the international development agencies 'sought to make women visible' as a category in development research and policy (Kabeer, 1995).

Women have been engaged in productive activities in Bangladesh for long. That is mostly in agriculture, cost saving and income generating works at household level besides bearing and rearing children and reproduction of labour. These works have not been recognized as economic work. That is reflected in data on labour force until 1989. Labour Force Survey of 1985 showed total female labour force in Bangladesh as 3.2 million but in the next survey female labour force was counted to 21 million. This massive jump of numbers from counting female labour should not be taken as sudden heavy rise of female labour in the market. It happened due to the revision of definition of female labour (BBS, 1990-91 and 1995-96). This revision took place according to the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA). GDP of Bangladesh (in

current price) has also increased by about 30 per cent due to revised GDP estimates based on System of National Accounts (SNA) of the United Nations. Nevertheless, it can be said that since early 80s women started becoming visible in non-farm activities, manufacturing, service and public institutions. According to the government statistics, only 8 percent women now work against wage, 40 per cent of whom are daily wage labourer (GoB, 2000_b).

External influence: Internal Steps

UN year of women and the subsequent decade of women have made a substantial impact on the development thinking and institutional building in a country like Bangladesh. It happened mostly through the changes in project priorities and changed conditionalities endorsing importance to focus women by the different international funding agencies. International agencies themselves experienced significant changes in attitude and project building regarding women since 1975. It went further after Beijing global conference in 1995. For example, incorporating a gender perspective into all policies and programmes became a mandate of the Beijing Platform for Action for different development institutions.

Establishment of various departments, cells, committees, directories and ministries, also formulating policies to bring women in the forefront started taking place in various countries including Bangladesh. Even after that picture does not appear encouraging at macro level. Women's participation in top-level positions in the executive branch of government is still low around the world. In the United States, it reaches 29 per cent, in Canada, Colombia, Mexico and the Dominican Republic around 20 per cent, and in the remaining countries 16 per cent or less (Gutierrez, 2003; 187).

Women's presence in Public Institutions

Bangladesh, being at the bottom, has many organisations where it goes much below than the global minimum level. In National Social Welfare Council only 2 members are women among 27 members executive committee (GoB, 2000_b: 8).

There is no women member in the Agriculture Research Institute, or in higher management level, although there are few at lower level. Amongst block supervisors only 5 per cent are women. Very recently gender issue is included in training programme (ibid; 41).

Among senior officials in education ministry only 19 per cent are women; there is only 1 as additional secretary and 1 as deputy secretary. In primary and mass level education there is not a single women officer. Out of 28 big current projects only 2 project directors are women (ibid; 57).

The directorate of Forestry, out of 173 only 13 is with women (ibid; 69). Out of 12700 officials and staff in the ministry of Fisheries and Livestock only 265 are women (ibid; 81).

Women are virtually non-existent in the ministry of home. The last appointment of women in Police department took place in 1990. Only 42 women are working as sub-inspectors. The highest position women so far reached is Superintendent of Police (SP). Women in general suffer from the lack of women personnel in the ministry. Only initiatives in this regard were recent experimental establishments of 4 women investigation cells (ibid; 109).

In different corporations and organs of the ministry of industry among 4814 officers only less than 200 or 4 per cent are women. Amongst 22 thousand 9 hundred 38 staff only 725 or 6 percent are women. (ibid; 125)

Women participation is not better in the ministry of labour and manpower. Out of 2481 nearly 7 per cent or less than 2 hundred are women. (ibid; 153)

Ministry of Law and Justice is not an exception. Women, although could enter the lower court still far from the upper posts. There are only 2 women in 82 district and दौरা judge, 13 107 additional district and दौरা judges. (ibid; 173)

Policy and Action

If women are not considered as persons who are active, creative and responsible but looked at as inferior being necessary for

reproduction of human species and for a source of pleasure for the men, things will not change by creating documents or projects. Constitutional rights can play little before real social power matrix and ideological construct, patriarchal implicit and explicit.

Public institutions are the links between the State and the people. They enforce and apply 'rules and regulations that help implement policies, create inter-institutional exchange and complementarity and develop communication and negotiation mechanism with different social groups' (Gutierrez, 2003; 185). Institutions should not be considered as neutral actors; just entrusted with designing and implementing top managerial decisions or acting 'according to established procedures'. They also reflect and reproduce the values, norms and biases of the societies in which they are immersed... The resistance and mechanisms that distort or de-legitimate the gender agenda have been underestimated (ibid). That explains very low performance in institutionalizing women labour even after multiplying projects on women and increasing funds from international agencies in Bangladesh. Recently attention began to emerge to the resistance of actors involved 'and their hidden agenda based on patriarchal opposition' (Longwe 1997, 149).

The countries where women participation is higher at various levels in institutions including policy level are those where awareness of integrating women at different levels grew from within. The government, bureaucracy and people at large cannot change overnight regarding its attitude towards gender relations and women's work just because of the projects carried with international funds. It may happen that policies and rhetoric resulted from the projects coming from outside exist parallel with male biased practices, silent and active in the field.

Our records of Public Institutions regarding gender balance show the resistance from within to end imbalance in addition to policy weaknesses. If we would like to see a society free from gender discrimination and sexual harassment there is no way but to go for larger mobilization to confront and end to all sorts of inequalities and discrimination. It needs no mention that, the roots of social power are organically linked with gender discrimination. In the

short run it is feasible to seek conscious efforts in every public institution to have policies and actions against gender discrimination, gender biased appointments, career building and sexual harassment.

Introduction to Study Organisations

Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB): Power Development Board (PDB), established in May 1972, is primarily responsible for delivering electricity at reasonable and affordable prices to all citizens, for ensuring improved and satisfactory services through gaining self-sufficiency. The Chairman, its chief executive, chairs the seven-member Board. Representation of women lags behind the existing quota (10%) preserved for women employment in class I, II, III, and IV positions. In the highest decision making body, the representation of women is nil. However, 10 per cent women represent the evaluation committee. There is only one woman in high executive level against 85 male executives, 69 women against 800 in mid level. Among 81 overseas training opportunities only six were availed by women employees. Physical facilities like toilet, prayer room, transport, residential and maternity leave excepting day care centre are enjoyed more or less by women employees. The detail break up of budget does not provide the gender picture of the allocation. Attitude of the male employees towards the female employees is positive and overall working environment is congenial for women.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR): Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the frontier protection forces, shoulders the responsibility of protecting the border, preventing smuggling and operation controlling of the army. A Director General (DG) heads BDR. In all classes of employees of this organisation, the representation of women lags behind the expected level. Vacancy announcements do not allow any scope to be employed in uniformed positions. Women represent only the civil positions such as midwife, staff nurse, OT Assistant, FWV, Sweeper, Ayah and Cook of this organisation. Moreover, they are not always allowed to apply for the positions like Imam, Religion teachers, Pharmacist, Office Assistant cum Typist, Librarian, Tailors, Boot-maker, Gardener, Nurses, Carpenter and Cook. The

working environment of this organisation is congenial. The budget allocation does not reflect the gender picture.

Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (BFSCD):

Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence works to set up fire stations in all upazillas to modernize, upgrade fire fighting capability, organize awareness building programs, equip the organization with modern and sophisticated tools and associate local government bodies with fire service and civil defence. The Director General who is assisted by Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and Deputy Assistant Directors heads the department. Representation of women employees in class I position of this organisation is nil and in class II position it is only one per cent. Vacancy announcement for positions like Stenotypist, Office Assistant cum-typist, Office Assistant, and sweeper do not encourage women with due priority to apply. The budget allocation does not indicate the gender picture. Concerning gender, the Directorate provides separate toilet and prayer rooms excepting daycare facilities to its women employees. Men's attitude towards women employees are positive and overall working environment at Head Quarter of the organisation is good and friendly.

Directorate of Government Transport (DGT): The DGT provides transport to Ministries, Divisions, Directorates, constitutional bodies and Commissioners etceteras. It further keeps up and maintains government transport including vessels, and allots vehicles, vessels and other marine craft to different zillas. It also arranges vehicles and vessels on requisition from outside the transport pool, operate petrol pumps, take the charge of all vehicles, control all matters and ensure proper care and routine maintenance of all government transports. A transport commissioner heads the organisation. Director, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Inspectors, Accounts Officers and Administrative Officer assist him. Representation of women employees in class I and II positions is nil while in III and IV positions it is less than one per cent. The organisation does not provide separate toilet and prayer-room facilities to its women employees. There is no daycare centre in this Directorate. Although Men's attitude towards women employees is positive,

working environment therein does not seem to be congenial for women in respect to essential facilities provided.

Major Findings

Study selects four government organisations purposively such as Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence and Directorate of Government Transport. Study also selects 84 employees (32 females and 52 males) from these four organisations purposively as respondents and collects data from them through administering two different sets of pre-tested questionnaires. Chief Executive of Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence and Directorate of Government Transport and representatives of PDB and BDR also give interview for the study. Main functions of all the four study organisations are technical and risky in nature. Materialisation of the functions demands both physically and mentally strong persons. Employees are required to work in a very adverse and risky situation throughout day and night.

Vacancy announcements of these organisations do not directly encourage women to apply. Vacancy announcements of PDB for positions like Switchboard Attendant and Technical-A grade different seek application only from male citizens of the country. For uniformed service in BDR, vacancy announcements do not allow women to apply. Moreover, women are not always allowed to apply for the positions like Imam/Religion Teachers, Pharmacist (Compounder), Office Assistant-Cum-Typist, Laboratory Technician, Librarian, Sanitary Assistant, Tailors, Boot-makers, Gardener, MLSS, Carpenter, Cook and Sweeper. Furthermore, in Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence vacancy announcements for positions like Steno-typist, Office Assistant-Cum-Typist, Office Assistant and Sweeper do not encourage women with due priority to apply. However, although vacancy announcements of the Directorate of Government Transport seeks application from citizen of both sexes of the country, they do not encourage women with due priority.

Study reveals that representation of women in gazetted and non-gazetted posts of all the four study organisations lags behind the existing quota for women employment. Again, no women represents the highest decision-making bodies of these organisations. Concerning the National Policy for Advancement of Women, all-out efforts should be given to increase the women representation up to 30 per cent in all levels of decision-making bodies of government organisations. However, study does not see any effective efforts from the organisations concerned in this regard. Study observes further, annual budget break-up of the organisations do not show the gender picture.

Out of total 32 female respondents six represents class-I position while out of 52 male respondents 18 represent the same class. Representation of males and females in class-II positions are five and one respectively. It is also revealed that 22 female respondents belong to class-III position and corresponding figure for male is 23. In class-IV position male and female representation are six and three respectively. Regarding age distribution of the respondents, the study observes that age group 30-39 years and 40-49 years comprise 32 respondents each. In respect of academic attainment, study further shows that maximum 40 respondents have graduation and post-graduation degrees from the universities. So far marital status is concerned, most of the respondents are married irrespective of their sexes. Out of 84 respondents, 60 have the service length of 10 years and above.

Majority of the female respondents are indulged in clerical nature of job while male respondents are engaged in diversified nature of jobs like administrative, planning, maintenance and mechanical along with clerical.

Study discloses that in all the four organisations common features that characterise the recruitment of fewer women employees are technical job nature, unfavourable culture of this country, existing government rules and regulations, stereotyped attitudes of the authorities to recruit women, unfavourable working environment, lack of requisite technical skills in the relevant fields and also the lack of interest in women in pursuing technical and vocational education.

Study portrays several measures to elevate the number of women employees in these organisations. These are amendment of the existing recruitment rules of the organisations, bringing about attitudinal changes both in men and women through social mobilisation, rendering relevant training and education to women, automation of the organisation and exemption of women from working beyond office hours.

Study reports that respondents of both sexes work together without any feeling of discomfort. Since the number of women in class-I position is insignificant, to a considerable number of respondents their voice in decision making process is listen to in most cases.

It is evident from the study that female respondents working under male supervisors do not face any problem. Similarly, the male respondents working under the supervision of females do not receive any problem. However, the male respondents show the domineering tendency to serve with male supervisors. They mention prompt decision-making capacity, natural competence and technical ability of male supervisors combined with their friendliness and acceptability are some reasons for feeling more comfortable to work under them.

Most of the male respondents see the existence of efficiency gap between men and women employees. On the contrary, female respondents nullify the statement above. Study further reveals divergence of opinions of males on this issue. They claim that household responsibilities, security reasons, inattentiveness, lack of innovation, stereotyped job nature along with biological factors make women less efficient in their work.

The general trend of the respondents' view about their attitudes towards their counterparts is cooperative rather than commanding. Study reveals that despite the nonexistence of any record of sexual harassment of women by their male colleagues in the four selected organisations, noticeably, majority of the respondents supports to adopt a policy by their organisations against sexual harassment of women. They consider this policy to ensure women's security in work place, bring respect for women, create fear among perverted

persons, ensure organisational discipline, encourage women to work and also to build awareness against sexual harassment of women.

Respondents who do not consider adopting a policy against sexual harassment of women find the existing laws and rules to be sufficient and reckon that policy is not required as no sexual harassment occurs in their organisations. Almost all female respondents mention that they do not face any problem to enjoy leave in addition to maternity. Study finds that most of the female respondents favored giving priority to women while recruiting employees in their organizations. On the contrary, greater segment of male respondents is against giving priority to women. Respondents consider rendering priority to women's employment to ensure equal rights of women in employment, help their economic independence, to uplift them from their disadvantageous position, utilize the potentials of educated women and advancement of women.

Respondents opposing women's priority in employment, the existing quota system, merit based recruitment, equal treatment of both men and women and technical job nature of the organisations to be considered.

Study reveals that most of the female respondents and majority of the male respondents supports the existing quota system for women's employment. The most important ground on which the respondents support the quota system is to create employment opportunity for women since they are in disadvantageous position. They also consider quota system for women's economic independence, proper utilisation of women's academic achievement, ensuring their rights through collective bargaining and for their empowerment.

Respondents' disapproval of quota system rests on the consideration of merit based recruitment. They do not support quota system also because women themselves claim equal rights and quota disrespect women's dignity, competition in employment would build confidence among women. Moreover, they are against quota system because a huge number of men are unemployed and

they think that it discriminates men from women and contradicts constitutional provision of equal rights for both sexes.

Study reveals that most of the respondents are not at all aware of the National Policy for Advancement of Women. Most of the respondents believe that their organisation should have a gender policy. Respondents consider a gender policy to ensure equal participation of women in work place, create and maintain healthy working environment, improve security for women in future, recognise them, help women in solving their problems and help recruitment of women in class-I position.

To the respondents, the reasons behind not considering a gender policy are as follows: focus on the existing rules are sufficient, as equal rights is mentioned in the Constitution, as women enjoy equal benefit in service.

Respondents suggest providing female employees of their organisations with different types of extra facilities like are daycare centres, prayer rooms, separate toilets, rest rooms, transport for commuting, canteen, security measures.

A few male respondents suggest several measures for maintaining healthy working environment of their organisations. These are logistic support, training facilities, and cleanliness. They also suggest that women should maintain purdah, they should be disciplined and conservative. Besides these, listening to women, solving their problems, ensuring women friendly environment along with the equal rights are necessary to maintain healthy working environment.

A few female respondents also recommend some measures for maintaining healthy working environment of their organisations. These are attitudinal change of men, smoking free office premise, compulsion of technical training for all employees and installation of modern equipment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Institutionalising gender within an organisation requires equal participation of both women and men in all spheres of that organisation. It further implies providing equal opportunities to both men and women to be employed in that organisation irrespective of the job nature of the organisation. Institutionalisation is a prerequisite for successful implementation of any policy. This study has not covered all aspects of institutionalising gender within the organisations. More research could be conducted on the issues of institutionalising gender within the ministries and other government organisations. However, this study suggests the following measures that may be considered by the authorities concerned:

Advocacy programme for bringing about attitudinal change:

Countrywide advocacy programme can be strengthened for bringing about attitudinal changes both in men and women for women employment in particular. Since our culture does not encourage women to participate in technical and non-traditional nature of jobs, advocacy programmes would help to bring attitudinal changes of the individual's, of the family and the society as well.

Encourage women to apply for the jobs: In technical and non-traditional services of varied nature, vacancy announcements discourage women since they are thought to be incompetent for accomplishing their assigned duties. Nonetheless, had women been given the access to those jobs, doubtlessly it can be said that they could have performed almost in the same manner the men do. What is necessary is to encourage and inspire them to accept those jobs.

Address the practical gender needs (PGNs) of women: With a view to institutionalising gender within the organisations fulfilling the practical gender needs of women demands utmost attention. Important practical gender needs of women within the study organisations are transport for commuting, daycare centres, restrooms and separate toilet facilities. To fulfill the practical needs the will and determination of the authorities is very much

important. Authorities may talk to the women employees and let them identify their needs. Thus, authorities can find the ways to address those needs.

Provision of Flextime for Women Employees: The relevant authorities of the organisations may think of making a provision of flextime for women employees regarding work after office hours to balance their official and household chores. Since women employees have got to look after the domestic works too, the authorities may consider the case earnestly.

Formulation of a policy for sexual harassment against women:

Formulation of a policy for sexual harassment against women would come to a good use for ensuring disciplined and secured environment in the organisations. The authorities should form a committee to formulate a policy expedient for monitoring the sexual against women. Beside the existing government initiatives against abuse and molestation of women, a separate well-planned functional policy would be of greater use to bring all the abusers of women under the organisational policy and it would ensure women's security to a greater extent.

Involving women in decision-making process: The concerned authorities should deeply think about the representation of women in any decision-making activity. While taking a decision they should also think that the decision taken would not be in any way disturbing for the peaceful coexistence of women employees in the organisations.

Engendering budget of the organisation: Engendering budget is a challenge for institutionalising gender within any organisation, Engendered budget not only shows detail break-up of annual budget, it pictures amount of allocation provided for addressing gender issues in the organisation. Thus, authorities of the organisations should think of addressing gender issues while preparing their annual budget.

Building awareness about the NP and NAP for Women's Advancement: The government as well as the organisations

themselves can take the initiatives to aware the employees of both sexes about the National Policy for Advancement of Women (NP) and the National Action Plan for Women's Advancement (NAP). For the purpose, they can arrange seminars, workshops and symposiums with the employees and build awareness about gender issues.

Amendment of existing rules and regulations of the organisations: Existing recruitment rules and regulations do not render women the preference in getting jobs. Rather most of the positions of technical and non-traditional nature are reserved only for men. Had the women been recruited in those posts, they could have performed almost in the same manner the men do. The government should come forward to issuing a circular ordering that no post should be reserved for men. This initiative would help to bring gender parity in employment.

Rendering technical and vocational training and education to women: Our women lag much behind of men in technical and vocational training and education. Without these training and education they cannot compete for technical jobs. Thus, special priority should be given to the issue of rendering technical and vocational training and education to our women. And for the purpose, the government can take steps to attract women to technical and vocational training and education.

Automation of the organisations: Automation of the organisations paves the way for achieving gender parity therein. Physical strength of an employee does not matter much where everything is done with the help of modern equipment and technology. Thus, half of our entire population could be utilised properly with the introduction of automation process.

Render priority to women's employment in the organisations: Institutionalising gender within the organisations requires rendering priority to women's employment that would help to ensure equal rights of women in employment, help their economic independence, uplift them from their disadvantageous position, utilise the potentials of educated women and accelerate the process of advancement of women.

Administrative empowerment of women: To comply with the recommendation of the UN Economic and Social Council for ensuring equal and full participation of women in all levels of decision-making bodies including policy-making positions of the government, National Policy for Advancement of Women suggests for all-out efforts to recruit women in at least 30 per cent of total posts. Thus, authorities of the study organisations should take necessary steps to implement policy measures in conformity to the National Policy for Advancement of Women.

Formulation of a functional gender policy: Institutionalising gender within the organisations requires a functional gender policy. This policy would help to ensure equal participation of women in work place, create and maintain healthy working environment, improve security for women in future, recognise them, help them in solving their problems and recruitment in all levels.

References

- Abercrombie, N, Hill, S and Turner, B (1998) Dictionary of sociology. London: Penguin.
- Alam, M. M. (2004) "Annual Report of Directorate al Activities". Agni Pratiraksha, Special Issue. Dhaka: Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence.
- Alvesson, Mats and Billing, Yvonne Due (1997) Understanding gender and organisations. London: Sage.
- BBS (1995) Report on Labour Force Survey, 1990-91, March.
- BBS (1996) Report on Labour Force Survey in Bangladesh, 1995-96, December.
- BDR (2004) Smranika: Rifles Punarmiloni 2004 (in Bangla).
- BDR (2003) Leaflet-Rifles Week-2003 Parade.
- Beall, Jo (1988) 'Trickle down or rising tide? Lessons on mainstreaming gender policy from Colombia and South Africa'. Social Policy and Administration, Vol.32, No.5, pp.061-080.
- Chowdhury, M. S. (2003) "An Introduction to Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence". Agni Pratiraksha, Special Issue. Dhaka: Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence.
- Gender Trainers Core Group (1998) Gender and Development: A special issue on policy, strategy and experience in Bangladesh. Dhaka: TCG.
- GoB (2004_a) Annual Budget 2004-05, Bangladesh Power Development Board (in Bangla). Dhaka: Ministry of Finance.
- GoB (2004_b) Annual Budget 2004-05, Ministry of Home Affairs (in Bangla). Dhaka: Ministry of Finance.
- GoB (2004_c) Annual Budget 2004-05, Ministry of Establishment (in Bangla). Dhaka: Ministry of Finance.

GoB (2000_a) Review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action: special session of the UN General Assembly Meeting women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century. Bangladesh country paper. Dhaka: M/O Women and Children Affairs.

GoB (2000_b) National Action Plan for Advancement of Women (in Bangla). Dhaka: M/O Women and Children Affairs.

GoB (1989) Report of the Committee for Central Transport Pool (in Bangla).

Government of Bengal (1923) The Eastern Frontier Rifles (Bengal Battalion) Regulations 1922. Calcutta: Bengal Government Press.

Gutierrez, Martha (2003) Macro-Economics: Making Gender Matter. London: Zed Books.

Kabeer, Naila (1995) Reversed Realities. Dhaka: UPL.

Levy, C (1996) The process of institutionalising gender in policy and planning: the 'web' of institutionalisation. DPU Working Paper No.78.

Longwe, S H (1997) 'The evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot'. Development in Practice, 7(2), May.

Muhammad, Anu (2004) Nari Purush O Somaj, 2nd edition. Dhaka: Sraban,

Rao, Aruna and Stuart, Rieky (1997) 'Rethinking organisations: a feminist perspective'. Gender and Development, Vol. 5, No. 1.pp.10-16

Rao, Aruna and Kelleher, David (2000) 'Leadership for social transformation: some ideas and questions on institutions and feminist leadership'. Gender and Development, Vol. 8, No. 3.pp.74-79

Staudt, K. and Jaquette, J. (1988) 'Women's programs, bureaucratic resistance and feminist organisations', in E. Boneparth and E. Stoper (eds.), Women, Power and Policy. London: Pergamon Press.

Staudt, K. (1991) Managing development: state, society and international contexts. London: Sage.

White, C. Sarah (1992) Arguing with the crocodile: gender and class in Bangladesh. Dhaka: UPL.

Ware, Helen (1981) Women, Demography and Development. Canberra: Development Studies Centre.

Ware, 1981; Helen Ware: Women, Demography and Development. Development Studies Centre, Canberra.