



Building Capacities on Gender Responsive Governance in South Asia

Main Campus, LBSNAA, Mussoorie

Uttarakhand, India

24 – 26 September, 2012

A Report

By Shipra Jha

Consultant

NGC – NIAR

CONTENTS	PAGES
1) Opening Session	2 - 4
2) Promoting Women's Political Leadership	5 - 12
3) Ending Violence Against Women	13 - 16
4) Women's Economic Empowerment	17- 20
5) Strengthening Anti Trafficking Initiatives	21 - 24
6) Planning & Budgeting for Gender Equality	25- 29
7) Group Work and Way forward	29-30
8) Valedictory Session	30- 31

Opening Session

The three day South Asia Conference on “ Building Capacities on Gender Responsive Governance in South Asia” began with Ms..Roli Singh, Executive Director, National Gender Centre, LBSNAA inviting Mr.Padamvir Singh, Director, LBSNAA to deliver the inaugural address.

The conference hosted by Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) under its partnership with UN Women will examine the factors that promote women’s leadership in India and South Asia, based on an assessment of the current situation, exchange good practices across countries to deal to address gender concerns and jointly develop future course of action to advance gender equality in the region by specifically focusing on women’s political leadership. In order to ensure that the momentum of discussion and cross learning on gender issues across the region is sustained, a process of considering the establishment of a Resource Centre in the region that will be the knowledge hub to develop capacities for a variety of stakeholders on gender sensitive governance in underway. This conference will be a step inviting the key stake holders to understand their expectations from the Resource Centre both with regard to content and the mode of its operation. This meeting would be a building block in establishment of the network and one of many dialogues for the Resource Centre.

Mr. Padamvir Singh began his address by quoting the famous poet Rabindra Nath Tagore who talked about inclusiveness in his poem “Where the mind is without fear” which was written 100 years ago but how even now the struggle to achieve it in practice is on and inclusiveness continues to remain a dream.

He spoke about how the preamble of the India Constitution spells out clearly the ideals of equality of status, equality of opportunity and liberty, social justice and fraternity. However, in reality there exists a big gap between words and deeds; between dreams and reality. The objective of this conference is to articulate concerns about reality and how to achieve the above ideals. It is an attempt to sit together to find out ways to transform thoughts across South Asia and how to transform these thoughts into actions to realize our dreams and attempt to bridge the gap between what is professed and what is actually done.

This is true in the field of gender issues & gender equality where there are still many challenges in the region and India. He was of the view that the problem is that unless these challenges are addressed to bring in equality of status and opportunity, human aspirations and needs of growth

of realizing what is best in all of us; will not be achieved. Now that goal of every individual realizing their best will not happen unless we have established equity and inclusivity.

He spoke about the rule of law in countries like India being a reason for concern and especially in the light of violence in society. There are laws for equity but in practice, there is an inability to live up to the spirit of the law. Violence between genders continues and is a matter of deep concern. He gave the example of the law of inheritance in India which entitles women to get an equal share as her brother but more often, then not despite the law being there does not get implemented. The law is clearly defined but men are able to dodge this law and keep the privileges for themselves. Even on the trivial count of sharing household chores by couples even among are colleagues is not there and there is an inability to bring that transformation in mindsets.

He highlighted issues of domestic violence which is a pertinent issue recurring in India and neighbouring countries. He was of the opinion that ultimately it is the issue of power and the question is that do the dominant groups want to share power. Those who have power refuse to give up and share power. Despite the concerns being voiced all the time, when it comes to sharing power – all of us are guilty of refusing to share power and believing in hierarchies and feudal systems which creates distortions in gender relations and other issues.

Despite this theme of equality being voiced for a long time; over 200 plus year but in practice equality is spoken about but not really lived. That is a big challenge and with the participants of this conference with experience of the region, can find out ways to be effective in doing the things that ought to be done.

Things which can be done in practice through governmental intervention - (i) how to change institutions (ii) how to make those institutions more responsive but more importantly, how to change the mindsets of people, more and more institutions, and enacting laws; the legislation becomes effective only when those who execute these legislations or ideas are themselves free of those prejudices that we carry ambition that we ought not to have so we need to develop all these indicators which we keep thing.

The agenda of the conference was set by Ms. Ann F. Stenhammer, Regional Programme Director, UN Women who underscored the importance of building capacities and networks in South Asia as half of its elected representatives at the local level are women. She stressed on the need for governments to include as well as address concerns of women. Also for women, it is important to break stereotypes and realize their rights. The objective of this conference is to discuss issues which impact women like MMR, IMR, trafficking, violence against women etc.

Session 1 - Promoting Women's Political Leadership

This session was chaired by Mr. Shaigan Shareef Malik, Secretary, Human Rights, Government of Pakistan.

Before the country presentations, Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur made a presentation to give the overview of the situation in South Asia as far as Promoting Women's Political Leadership is concerned.¹ She distinguished political leadership from political participation which is not just leadership but implies women as voters, as campaigners and has a broader connotation. Whereas leadership means people who are responsible for decision making, those who determine policies and are critical to gender responsive governance. In this light, some of the key points she raised are –

- ❖ There is CEDAW which all our countries have ratified but there is a gap between theory and practice and that is why important to focus on this whole issue of women's political leadership which is an important indicator of development linked with equity. Whether one considers the Gender Inequality Index of the UNDP in which one of the parameters there is women in political leadership. Faced criticism as included women only at national level so ought to have an indicator which includes not only national but also includes the sub-national governments - district level, sub-district level & village level.
- ❖ Now the very fact that there are constitutions that guarantee equal rights and even now when there are new constitutions being framed like in Nepal, it has put us immediately on an equal plane with many other western countries where the struggles for equality took a long time. In most countries universal adult suffrage has been obtained a whole process (for most countries -England and Switzerland). But despite the constitution and much legislation, there is a gap because unless one gets into decision making, how does one affect the results and outcomes. And that is where it has been found lacking and it has required some amount of state and will intervention so that the numbers grow up in terms of women in governance.
- ❖ Gave an overall picture of the South Asian countries (2010 data) both at the national as well as the sub-national level. The interesting points about the data were -

¹ Detailed presentation in the USB stick given to the participants

- i) Sub national level is higher than national level in terms of women's representation everywhere. This says a lot who makes the legislation about the sub-national level. It is at the national level so if it is at a different level, there is no problem about deciding what it should be 33% or switching but when you have to cut your own pie up, there is more resistance.
 - ii) The countries with the highest representation in this national / constituent assemblies. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh they all have quotas for sometimes at the national level, it has not happened automatically. Similarly, at the sub-national level, so lots of quotas have been incorporated. Also in many countries, voluntary quotas within political party representation which has boosted the representation of women.
 - iii) 4 countries have near world average of 20% have quotas.
 - iv) South Asia is the region which had Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Haseena, there is acceptance at that level the lineage of those leaders have to be taken into account and though they may have blossomed as leaders in their own right, but their periods in power have not necessarily have been known for gender responsive governance or more opportunities for women did not open up. So it is important to have critical mass of women and not just one woman.
- ❖ Quotas are very important but they operate differently at different levels. It is important to understand what do the quotas represent
 - ❖ Political process in all the countries has been a learning curve and one definite achievement is that there is more acceptability of women in public life so work needs to be done in order to make participation of women more effective

Mr.Karma Galay, Chief Program Officer, Department of Local Governance, Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan in his presentation gave the participants an insight into the status of women’s political leadership in Bhutan. Being very young democracy with a low representation of women in politics, they have taken several steps to promote women’s political leadership and participation. Bhutan has commissioned many research studies which are guiding different policy interventions in this direction. There are many interventions underway – trainings, capacity building, awareness programmes and networking at the South Asia level to link up. ²

The next presentation was by Ms.Loretta Vaz, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. She shared the experience from India which conducted the largest experiment of grassroots democracy in the world through the 73rd amendment to the Constitution in 1993. As a result of which one million women have been elected at all levels in local self government institutions. This amendment made mandatory 1/3 rd of reservation both in the seats and offices of chairpersons for women. As a result, today there are 36% Elected Women Representatives (EWR) which is higher than the mandated 33% indicating a desire on part of women to be active participants of development.³

Ms. Vaz then showed an Audio/Visual clip in which the women EWRs in India in their own words shared their experiences, challenges and constraints. She then requested Ms. Nirmala Buch, civil society representative from India to highlight the issue of capacity building needs of the women EWRs and give a perspective from the field.

Ms.Nirmala Buch of Mahila Chetna Manch shared with the participants the experience of capacity building what is the need and what have been the experiences. One of the important constraints when the reservation come, everyone things that women are “proxies”, this has stuck in the mind of people and we need to change this women are namesake members, people who did not understand that what were the dynamics & where women were. Lot of it was unwarranted unfortunately, even now everybody things that there are proxies, this image still continue. This challenge has to be faced by capacity building.

There is a need for enabling environment, laws have to be changed successful advocacy against certain laws in 5 states (4 governments have changed that law –the two child norm) experience of the initiatives that we have taken basically of three types.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

- (i) For knowledge and skills for women
- (ii) How to manage the politics and political management. People forget that women are entering political institutions for the first time.
- (iii) Have allies, how to manage politics, how to take people along, how to see the changing situation. How to have collective assertion for women, to have a both sides are able to articulate have allies / network. How not to have a “no confidence motion”.

She also shared that since women are often not the decision makers so work needs be done to change mindsets. Stereotypes do not permit woman to work that is the challenge of capacity building so capacity building had to be gender sensitive.

Discussion

- ❖ The role of women in urban areas has been negligent so far; their political participation in urban governance has increase especially in light of increasing migration of the rural poor to urban areas in search of livelihood opportunities. Building their capacities in urban areas.
- ❖ How do we inform our young boys and girls about leadership; need to begin very early at school and college level itself
- ❖ Budgetary planning at panchayat levels is critical; at the moment too much concentration on construction work and not on human development which is till now considered as a soft issue – education, health, nutrition etc. Human development should become a core issue
- ❖ There needs to be proper data and not just anecdotal material
- ❖ So far no mapping of resources which is very important eg what is the access to facilities
- ❖ Also many financially neutral issues are there where the capacities of women can be built like laws, can participate in different processes to become good role models,
- ❖ Media- electoral analysis not on women ; what is their level of participation; share of votes etc. Media can play a very important role
- ❖ Regarding how has the mind set of men changed of the families of the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in India; The experience shared from the Indian contingent was that there has been change in the mindset of the families of the EWRs and their families but the change

- ❖ The environment in political institutions which is very difficult for women to deal with
- ❖ One participant raised the issue of that all the countries which made presentations have only highlighted the positives and not focused on the challenges and negative aspects. There is a big question of capacities and there is no qualitative participation of women in most of these bodies

Chairperson Mr. Shaighan Mallik, Secretary, Human Rights, Government of Pakistan in his closing remarks summed up the discussion with the observation that a lot of work needs to be done to promote women's political leadership especially in the public sector.

- Need to also take into consideration how is the family looking at the changes
- Capacities of women is often used as an excuse so training and skills are critical in promoting both participation and leadership of women
- Just like Legislative members' are given allowances to attend sessions, similarly EWRs should be given some pecuniary incentives to encourage them to attend meetings

Ms.Roli Singh gave a brief introduction and welcomed the guest of honour of the conference, Ms.Sheila Dixit, Honourable Chief Minister of Delhi.

Mr. Padamvir Singh also welcomed Ms.Sheila Dixit and highlighted her contribution in the development in Delhi under her leadership. He also mentioned the achievements of her government in introducing many schemes for women like *Stree shakti*, *stree kosh* etc. He reiterated some of the issues he had raised in his welcome address for the Chief Minister to throw some light on like the existence of the laws, and the constitutional provisions but the many problems in the implementation of the various laws related to women. Also rampant inequalities which still exist and how to bridge these in inequalities, he requested the honorable Chief Minister to throw some light on where we are to where we should be.

Ms.Sheila Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi in her address expressed her happiness that such a topical and important exchange is happening at this conference. She said that gender has similar concerns in every part of the world and so many best practices in the Southern countries which need to be emulated by each other. Speaking about gender responsiveness in a city like Delhi, she described the many challenges of governing Delhi which in many ways represents India in terms of diversity and cross-pollination of cultures. Even in a modern city like Delhi, there is a lot of gender discrimination. She spoke about girls being eliminated in the womb by using modern technology and this being a matter of shame and also great concern as it has skewed the gender ratio of not only Delhi but also neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab where women are

being brought from Bihar and Bengal to provide brides for men. She then went on to describe the various schemes her government had in place to fight gender discrimination at every stage in the life of a women

- **Laadli Programme** - Since girls were not being send to school the Delhi government pledged Rupees 1 lakh after they finish standard 12th for families with less than INR 1 lakh per annum income.
- **Kishori Progroomme** – Under this scheme, sanitary napkins are distributed to cater to the needs of the personal hygiene of adolescent girls and fight cervical cancer; more than 10 lakh girl students in Delhi are benefitting from this scheme
- **Gender Resource Center** – A basic socio-economic educational programme for women for their skill building, vocational trainings and confidence building at the Gender Resource Centers (GRC) which are clubs for interaction in lower income group settlements in Delhi. The GRCs are helping women in building knowledge and awareness but also participate actively in their own development and that of their communities.
- **Old age pension** is helping the elderly especially elderly women live in dignity
- **Delhi Women’s Commission** has been set up and it has a programme called “Awaaz Uthao” which literally means raise your voice and is for women who are facing violence and abuse within their families.
- **Discount on stamp duty** if property is registered in the name of women so that women become owners of their houses.
- **Food security cards** in the name of the woman as head of the household and kerosene chulhas. Also have introduced the system of transferring cash into their bank accounts instead of food grains so that the women can buy whatever they need for their families. The minister spoke about other schemes that her government had in place like insurance, enforcement of equal wages at least in the organized sector and also the first technical university which is coming up in Delhi for women. She concluded her address by saying that her government is doing many things which seem small but the impact will be felt in a years. It is definitely helping a lot in confidence and awareness building of women. Also she was of the opinion that governments can give the impetus to society but lot of work has to be done by organizations and institutions to create awareness and build capacities to end the discrimination which women face.

Question and Answer Session

To the question that what are the challenges faced by the Chief Minister in implementing the various schemes, the honourable chief minister replied that the main issue was diversity in a city like Delhi which has various socio-economic levels in society and the government has to reach out to different groups and cater to differing needs. There is a continuous need to innovate and be vigilant as concepts and definitions also keep changing over time and governments need to respond to those.

To a query on what is the response of the government on the increasing number of rapes, murders and sexual violence in a city like Delhi both within and outside homes, the minister said that due to growing awareness of such cases, we feel that lots of such incidents are happening which is not always true. She spoke about the rule being imposed in Delhi compelling all employers to drop their employees home after 7 pm. Also deployment of women police personnel in all the thanas which her government has ensured to be more responsive to women facing violence.

To the question about the challenges she faced as a women politician both generally and within the political party, the Chief Minister said that politics unlike other competitive jobs is problematic so reservations are one way out. For example Delhi has reserved 50 % seats for women in the municipality to ensure that there is a crop of women who are elected.

However, she feels that gender is not a criteria as eventually as human beings we need to do our job. Women are proving themselves in many fields and therefore, to do a job well, it does not matter whether you are a man or a woman.

To the query about how do economists reconcile with all the reform schemes of her government she explained that most of her schemes are to make women self reliant so there is no opposition from them. Also she being the only woman finance minister in the country, she can confidently state that she is running her state like she would run her home and despite global recession, Delhi is growth rate is 25% which is very good.

Acknowledging the challenges in the implementation, she replied that even though the constitution guarantees equality of opportunity to everybody, tradition has put women on the back foot in a country which worships women as goddesses, women have to struggle but they are proving their capacities also.

She opined that it has been a great opportunity to serve a complicated city like Delhi which is not fully federal and has a service based economy. However, she credited her victories to the “Bhagidaari” scheme which is a partnership of the Delhi government with the civil society. Owing

to the continuous interaction of the government with the people, her government was elected three times.

The Regional Programme Director, UN Women, Ann Stenhamer concluded the session with a vote of thanks to the Chief Minister of Delhi, Director of LBSNAA and all distinguished participants.

Session II – Ending Violence against Women

This session was chaired by Dr. K. Ratna Prabha, Additional Secretary, Govt. of India (WCD), National Mission for Empowerment of Women, Government of India.

Sarojini Ganju Thakur began the session with a short overview presentation which highlighted some of the key issues which the South Asia region needs to consider in achieving the goal of ending violence against women. Violence against women is increasing and still widely prevalent despite many legislations and creation of institutions in many countries to prevent it. She also clearly pointed out that violence against women is a serious human rights violation and has enormous implications on the health and productivity of women. Despite some progress, there remain persistent gaps and a great deal of work needs to be done both by the state and society to change social norms which normalize violence against women. There has to be efforts made at many levels from a bottom up approach to change societal attitudes, education, information, awareness and sensitization to improving women's control over resources and earning abilities. She also gave examples of successful approaches and models from South Asia which have helped in reducing violence against women.⁴

The first presentation was by Ms. Aminath Shiranee Naeem, Senior Social Development Officer, Ministry of Gender, Family & Human Rights, Maldives. She began her presentation with some basic facts about Maldives and also the prevalence of violence against women in the island.

Some of the key points made were⁵ –

- ❖ Achievements – Establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Human Rights with more power and human rights function in May 2012; a shelter service for women and girl children who are victims of domestic violence is being operationalized, endorsement of the Domestic Violence Law on 23 April 2012, Draft Sexual Harassment Bill has been reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and is now sent to the Parliament, first draft of the Human Trafficking and People Smuggling Bill is ready
- ❖ More Women contested in the Parliamentary elections in 2009. There were 21 women among 455 candidates for the Parliamentary elections; 214 female candidates out of the total 2754 candidates who ran for the first ever Local Council's elections in the islands. Out of 942 seats, they won 58 seats; first Women Judge to High Court was appointed in 2011. There are now five female judges

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

- ❖ Challenges - Legislative Bill on Sexual Harassment and Human Trafficking , the provision to reconstitute the Island Women’s Development Committees under the Decentralization Act 2010 has been delayed and hence their role in the island development planning and advocating for the rights of women are lacking

The next presentation was by Mr.Sayed Omer Saboor, Director, EVAW Commission, Ministry of Interior, Afghanistan

The last presentation in this session was by Mr. Khushdil Khan Malik, Joint Secretary, Public Sector (Law), Ministry of Interior, Pakistan gave a detailed picture of the various forms and the prevalence of violence against women in Pakistan from 2008 to 2010 quoting a study by Aurat Foundation. He discussed the laws which are favourable to women and those which are discriminatory and need to be repealed. He went on to describe the numerous challenges in the implementation of positive legislations and repealing of the discriminatory legislations.⁶

Discussion

- ❖ Countries like Maldives lack capacity so they requested countries like India to support their work. They would like to learn from other countries in the region
- ❖ Numbers of legislations have been enacted by countries like India on dowry, domestic violence, etc and other South Asian countries are doing the same. However, there is no change at the ground level and violence against women is continuously increasing. The government feels it has done its bit after enacting laws. However, there is a need to look at how these laws are implemented. There is this pan-Asian mentality that women/our daughters need to get married and be married at any cost. This has to change because more and more women are committing suicides as retaliation against what is happening to them.
- ❖ There is a need to look at what kind of resources the governments in the different countries are allocating for ending violence against women. There are very few short stay homes, no legal aid is available and there is no awareness and sensitization on the laws that exist.
- ❖ There are also some positive things which are emerging. There is domestic violence all over the world not just in South Asia but here it is worst because of poverty and lack of mobility. Women find it very difficult to go to the police or seek justice for themselves so

⁶ ibid

there is a need to develop 'one stop crisis centers' like the one in Kerala, India which women can access very easily.

- ❖ Also there is a need to have more women in the judicial services and more lawyers. Some training has been in India by MWCD of adolescent girls as para- legal workers so that they can help people understand how to make use of the various laws.
- ❖ The gap between the various legislations and its use needs to be bridged. Lot of work needs to be done towards building awareness on the various legislations and their rights among the people and in this organizations like UN Women and Aurat Foundation can help.
- ❖ Work needs to be done to sensitise men and boys and also state functionaries like the police, judiciary etc.
- ❖ To change the mindset of the boys, there needs to be a change in the curriculum which will go a long way in sensitizing them. Eg from the campaign on environment in Maldives.
- ❖ There is a need for representation from the Human Resource Development Ministry
- ❖ Need to put a 'cost' to domestic violence and this exercise was going to happen in Bhutan. What are the costs incurred whenever you hit a woman to make people understand why it should stop.
- ❖ Need for community spaced to be activated to put a stop to domestic violence. The community takes responsibility for stopping domestic violence and does not say that it is a private matter. Eg like the "Bell Bajao" campaign.
- ❖ Need for listening spaces within the community which can be a zone where women are heard on a constant basis and get support. Not all women suffer cases of physical violence or want to go to the police. Models like the Gender Resource Center (Delhi government), the National Women's Empowerment Mission, Purna Shakti Model offer this kind of service to women and models like this can be emulated and scaled up.
- ❖ There are Women and Child Resource Centers in every district in Sri Lanka which is an umbrella body where all departments come together to address the problems of women.
- ❖ Victims of domestic violence subjected to cross-examination and this should stop. The onus of proving innocence should be on the accused like what happens in most countries in Europe. Some UN guidelines on juvenile justice can be used for women who are victims of domestic violence.
- ❖ There are guidelines from the Supreme Court in India regarding using only certain judges for rape trials who are sensitized through a training but they still remain unaware of what needs to be done in these trials.

- ❖ Recently Government of India has come out with guidelines where if a complaint is from a minor of sexual violence (below 18 years of age) the burden of proof is on the perpetrator.
- ❖ In a country like Bangladesh, domestic violence is rising along with women's economic and political participation. Five years back there was no law, but now there is a Domestic Violence Act, 2010 due to civil society organizations and government working together. Engaging men and boys is a big challenge in Bangladesh. Issues of power and conflict need to be resolved at the family level.
- ❖ There is a need to reflect on our attitude; how do we act towards each other. Till women and girls are looked at as property, violence against them will continue. Sex selective abortions are done not by poor people but by those who are educated so there is a need for reflection. Eg from family centers in Norway where you can come if violations occur within the family.
- ❖ Need to change evidence laws in the countries
- ❖ Mindsets need to be changed from very early; from school days itself

The chairperson of this session, Dr. K. Ratna Prabha, summarized the discussion and made some key observations -

- Work needs to be done at different levels
- Changing mindsets at an early age
- Change in syllabus/curricula
- Since most legislations are complicated, need to simplify it for people and spread awareness on its use
- Need to come out with concrete recommendations on the final day of this conference.

Day II

Session III - Promoting women's economic empowerment

This session was chaired by Dr. Aishath Rameela, Minister of State for Gender Family and Human Rights, Maldives who invited Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur to set the context of the session on women's economic empowerment.

Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur began her presentation by stating that women's economic empowerment is a huge subject but is often used loosely to include many things like skill building schemes, micro-finance and just about any other scheme. However, it is important to bear in mind that economic empowerment is a process through which women have enhanced access to the economic environment. It is also about fiscal policies, trade policies and the larger macro-economic environment. She then went on to discuss the variations in South Asian where on the one hand women have more control over resources in Bhutan and Sri Lanka on the one hand and very little in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. She then went on to discuss some of the strategies to bring in change like creating an enabling legal environment, access to credit for poor women, reducing the burden of care, enhancing the market access for women producers and social protection. She also stressed on the need to monitor progress through gender responsive budgeting, improving data collection and research to make women's work visible, proper implementation of schemes and regular exchange and sharing of information.⁷

The next presentation was from Mr. Ranjan Karmakar from the organization Step towards Development, Bangladesh. He highlighted in his presentation that women and the young generation are main change actors in Bangladesh. In addition to this –

- ❖ Women are now equal partner of our national development
- ❖ For ensuring the food security in Bangladesh, women workforce is the main contributor.
- ❖ Last 30 years NGO, government and private sector are working together for economic empowerment of women introducing micro credit and vocational training program, promoting SME, increasing area of employment that now there is a significant contribution of women in GDP
- ❖ Over the past 41 years since independence, real per capita income has increased by more than 130 percent, poverty rate cut by sixty percent.

⁷ ibid

- ❖ Women's participation in the labor force has increased significantly from 9.6% in 1986 to 29.2% in 2006
- ❖ Women's contribution in the GDP has grown to 61%

After which Mr. Karmakar discussed the many challenges to the process of women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh like social, religious, cultural barriers (e.g. negative attitude/structure/*environment*), 'Double burden' of work, unpaid domestic work, discriminations in formal & informal sectors (e.g. wages, maternity leave etc.), non-recognition as farmers, lack of property rights, lack of control over resources/earned money, discrimination, violence and sexual harassment in families and workplaces

He concluded his presentation by enumerating the different opportunities in the present scenario for women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh which is being propelled by the National Women's Advancement Policy 2011 and the Sixth Five Year Plan of the Government of Bangladesh.⁸

This was followed by a presentation from India by Mr. T.Vijay Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development (DRD), Government of India. Mr. Vijay Kumar focused his presentation on women's economic empowerment through the SHG model being implemented in India. Mr. Vijay Kumar shared through his presentation the evolution of the SHG model through the outstanding work done by many non-governmental organizations in India in the 1980's to the last decade of the UNDP Poverty Alleviation Programme and the launch of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (⁹NRLM) in 2011 by the Government of India with the aim of reaching 70 million poor families in rural India and helping them come out of poverty. He then discussed the main features of the NRLM which mainly is social mobilization and institution building, financial inclusion, portfolio of sustainable livelihoods, social development with the vision of providing each poor family an annual income of at least Rs 50,000 to move out of abject poverty.

He went on to present the challenges which were there like poverty which multi-dimensional and economic empowerment necessary but not sufficient condition, lack of faith in the capacities of poor women, promoters not willing to let go – impacting on self-reliance of women's institutions, financial institutions, reluctance to lend to poor among others.¹⁰

⁸ ibid

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

The last presentation of this session was made by Ms. Ashoka Alawatte, Additional Secretary Ministry of Child Development and Women Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, who began by discussing the status of women in Sri Lanka who are in a better position than many of their South Asian counterparts due to health care and educational opportunities. Women constitute nearly 51% of Sri Lanka's population and have been actively engaged in economic activities both in formal and informal sector. However, women still face difficulties in gaining equal access to remunerative employment and upward occupational mobility. Ms. Alawatte then discussed the progress and gaps and also how they are planning the development process in a women friendly way. One notable feature in Sri Lanka is that female unemployment rate has dropped more rapidly than that of males although it still continues to be double than that of males. This is mainly due to inequitable gender division of labour market and the narrow range of skills women have acquired, low skills occupations. On the demand side of the labour market, gender segregation by occupation still represents a major labour market rigidity and source of labour market inequalities.

Ms. Alawatte then enumerated the key interventions of the Sri Lankan Government which is the Mahinda Chinthana Policy or the Development Policy Framework of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Samurdhi Programme which is the major poverty alleviation program of the country.¹¹

After this presentation, the chairperson Dr. Aishath Rameela opened the floor for discussions

- ❖ The issue of sexual harassment at work place and the need to provide a gender sensitive environment putting the onus on the employer; this legislation also covers domestic workers
- ❖ There is a lot of economic empowerment work but not enough as not much impact in the field
- ❖ Need to address the following issues –
 - access to land rights
 - financial inclusion
 - labour laws
- ❖ Not enough programmes are there an even if they exist, they help them earn only a pittance
- ❖ Sustainability of many of the schemes for economic empowerment is big challenge

11. Ibid

- ❖ Social support systems are very weak so women are forced to become second rate workers
- ❖ Institutional support is lacking and there is a need for a strong skill building programme and formal education if not available
- ❖ Need to face the fact that rural poor will need to live in the urban areas so urban programmes need to be developed
- ❖ Need to discuss what we need to do and not what we have achieved because that is a drop in the ocean when you look at the huge issues regarding gender and poverty
- ❖ Protection for migrant workers is important
- ❖ Need to look at property rights and inheritance laws in the countries, even when women have equal rights, they sign off what is due to them
- ❖ Maximum women are homemakers who work their entire life and get nothing so need to look at matrimonial property which many countries are acknowledging
- ❖ In Maldives, pre-nuptial agreements have been introduced which are not very popular
- ❖ Question was asked from the Bangladesh participant that how did they arrive at 76% export earning coming from women, it was clarified that this was calculated according to the income originating not accruing
- ❖ Some of these economic empowerment programmes did well when they were kept away from government functionaries and there is a lot of distrust between the ruler and the ruled
- ❖ Democracy is an important precondition for these programmes to work.
- ❖ Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has taken up the issue of “unpaid” work in the household; now efforts on to recognize their work in not only family but also nation.
- ❖ How are patriarchal norm being challenged by these programme? Unless men are involved there is a lot of resistance.
- ❖ Linkage with market is important and access to credit
- ❖ State has a role to protect the markets
- ❖ Need to look at achievements but important to have gender impact analysis of our programme.

After the discussion, the Chairperson Dr.Rameela summarized the discussion and emphasized the following points -

- Women work under unhealthy unsustainable environment so need to improve their working conditions and also their work is unrecognised

- People not aware of most government programmes and also they do not have enough coverage and accessibility is limited.

Session III – Strengthening Anti-trafficking initiatives

This session was chaired by Mr. W.J.L.U. Wijayaweera, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Government of Sri Lanka. Mr. Wijayaweera invited Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur to set the context before the country presentations.

Ms. Sarojini Thakur defined human trafficking and reiterated the fact that there is a lot of discourse on commercial sex exploitation as part of trafficking. Usually girls are lured by the promise of a better life and end up in brothels mostly trafficked by men.

However, there are many other reasons for trafficking like forced marriages. Even though migration is supposed to be voluntary, there is a link between migration and trafficking. There is a lot of thinking on the rigidities of laws and norms around migration which often results in trafficking. It is difficult to give estimates as sources are not very accurate and trafficking is a clandestine activity. Also different laws are present in different countries to prevent trafficking and also similar interventions like awareness, rescue, shelter homes and other schemes.

Lot of non-governmental organizations play an intrinsic role in anti-trafficking initiatives like trainings, capacity building, running shelter homes etc.

Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur concluded her presentation by putting forward her view that there are many regional protocols but more needs in the area of regional collaboration and similar to strategies around ending violence against women, an integrated multi-stakeholder approach is required both in country and regionally.

The chairperson Mr. Wijayaweera introduced the next speaker, Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, Under Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare, Government of Nepal. He began his presentation by giving a brief background of human trafficking in Nepal. He proceeded to then build an understanding on the dimensions and magnitude of the problem in Nepal as a huge problem. He then discussed the key interventions by the government of Nepal to combat trafficking in terms of prevention, protection and prosecution. The government of Nepal is formulating policies, intervening both at institutional and organizational level and has developed many programmatic interventions. Dr. Rupakhetee then went on to give details about these interventions and also an update on the status of these interventions. He also shared some best

practices and concluded his presentation by sharing the progress made, the challenges that still exist and some suggestions for the future in the fight against human trafficking.

The next presentation was by Ms. B. Bhamathi, Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Rural Development from Government of India. Ms. Bhamathi made a detailed presentation giving valuable insights into India's fight against human trafficking. She highlighted not only the achievements but also emphasized that a lot of it is in fact work in progress. Also she said it was important to note that it is not just one ministry which is spearheading the fight against trafficking but it is multi-ministry and multi-agency approach with Ministry of Home closely working with the Ministry of Women and Child and also the state governments closely working together in India.

Ms. Bhamathi discussed in details what are the National Policies and Plans in place to fight human trafficking and also that a holistic Plan of Action for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings with Special Focus on Women and Children is being finalized to address all forms of trafficking and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Labour, National Commission for Women and National Human Rights Commission are collaborating in this effort.

She shared that a high level Central Advisory Committee to combat trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation has been established in India and its members include relevant ministries/departments, state governments, law enforcement agencies, international organizations and reputed non-governmental organizations.

After discussing the legal framework and the constitutional provisions to fight trafficking, Ms. Bhamathi described in details the work of the government of India for prevention, protection and prosecution. Ms. Bhamathi shared in her presentation the work of the different ministries and also the numbers of advisories issued by the Ministry of Home which have been issued to combat trafficking. She discussed in details the initiatives of the Ministry of Women and Child to rehabilitate the victims of trafficking and also their work on prevention like setting up a think-tank on public private partnership to tackle this issue.

Ms. Bhamathi then discussed the various International conventions and other SAARC level initiatives to combat trafficking. She also spoke about many cross-border initiatives like the task force formed by India and Bangladesh and the constitution of the regional task force by the member states of SAARC. She then concluded her presentation by describing some of the impact of all this work on the ground like according priority of trafficking as a crime by the law

enforcement agencies, more Inter-State Coordination and focus on trafficking as an organized crime, sensitized police; better coordination between different departments and agencies and better reporting and more rescues.

The chairperson Mr. Wijayaweera gave a brief introduction of the last speaker of the session Ms. Mafruha Sultana, Additional Director General (Joint Secretary), Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET), Government of Bangladesh. Ms. Mafruha Sultan's presentation was entitled "Safe Migration and Anti-trafficking" which began by giving the migration scenario in Bangladesh and then the trafficking situation there. She then described the reasons for human trafficking like increased no. of unskilled workforce like poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, unemployment, gender discrimination, domestic violence etc.

Ms. Sultana then shared the laws, policies and the National Plan of Action 2012-2014 to combat trafficking. She spoke about Bangladesh Overseas Employment in 2006 to ensure the prospect of regular migration of long term and short term for both men and women from all over the Bangladesh at a rational cost. She discussed the digitization of migration management, safe migration of women workers and the regulation of recruitment agencies which Bangladesh has adopted.

Ms. Sultana went on to discuss in detail the initiatives of the Bangladesh government for combating human trafficking like prevention, detection, investigation and rehabilitation which is all spearheaded by the Ministry of Home Affairs along with other relevant ministries.

Ms. Sultana then gave an update of their work and discussed the various challenges of safe migration and safe trafficking like limited achievement in awareness building, peoples mind set and exploitation, public policy/ legal constraints, limitations in policy implementation among others. She concluded her presentation by making some suggestion for the way forward.

Discussion

- ❖ How does the state government respond in India therefore the Central Government?

- ❖ Prevention is a critical aspect and poverty has to be tackled. Pockets of poverty like the tribal areas has to be addressed: Economic empowerment is closely linked with the issue of trafficking. Preventions and advocacy becomes very important.
- ❖ Co-ops milk federation in Karnataka (Nandini) sensitizes the women on laws to sensitive women; SHGs can be used.
- ❖ Child Sexual Offences Act - Laws which put the onus on the perpetrator would help in prevention.
- ❖ Skill improvement has to be done in shelter homes that once they are out and they are just above poverty is not enough. Need to ensure that they do not slip back into the same cycle.
- ❖ Victimization continues after rescue – society does not accept victims easily
- ❖ Advisory to send the rescued first to homes then to their home countries
- ❖ IGNOU and MHA in India have introduced a 6 months certificate course made mandatory for all the officers and units of anti trafficking
- ❖ Advocacy with the judiciary to pass orders which are in the interest of the child
- ❖ In Sri Lanka migration is voluntary and of skilled workers so skill training is important so that they are gainfully employed and not exploited.
- ❖ Nepal wanted to know how to move on the SAARC platform to make things effective
- ❖ Children are languishing in India as home verification pending with Nepal, Bangladesh,
- ❖ Review needs to be done of the placement agencies
- ❖ Systematic training and awareness of all branches is important especially public prosecutors, advocates, judiciary, police and non-governmental organizations
- ❖ Awareness of all concerned is important and trafficking should not be seen as only as sexual trafficking but also organ trade and other forms.
- ❖ This Regional Workshop should take forward the UNCTOC (United Nations) and bring all law enforcement and rehab agencies on a regional platform for training and capacity building.
- ❖ Cross border issues have to be appreciated by all the provider agencies not as competing agencies
- ❖ Video conferencing mode has to be implemented – less harassment to victims, victim witness protection should happen
- ❖ Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and the SAARC convention have to be implemented and any changes in the SOP can be brought in due course.
- ❖ Need for more bilateral agreements rather than multi-lateral

- ❖ Bring survivors together and put them into public hearing mode to influence thinking of the policy makers – SAARC or UN can facilitate this.
- ❖ Humanitarian initiatives on the ground: through NGO – should be involved in a big way – especially in repatriation process.
- ❖ In India the Ministry of Women and Child needs to have more shelter homes on the borders and ensure that repatriation should be through respective agencies on both sides.

The chair person Mr. Wijayaweera then proceeded to give closing comments to summarise the session's discussion as follows - .

- Preventive measures are critical and trafficking should be addressed as an economic empowerment issue.
- Overall and systematic training of people who address trafficking police, judiciary, non-governmental organizations etc
- Not only sex-work but there are many other aspects to human trafficking which need to be looked at

Session IV – Planning and Budgeting for Gender Equality

This session was chaired by Ms. Sayeda Mojgan Mostafavi, Deputy Ministry of Women's Affairs, Government of Afghanistan who invited Ms.Sarojini Ganju Thakur to set the context of the session.

Ms.Sarojini Ganju Thakur reiterated the fact that all the participating countries understood the importance of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and how critical it is to allocate resources to back our commitments. In order to bring everyone on the same platform, she explained that GRB is not about a separate budget but it is about how government programmes, policies and budgetary allocations should respond to the different needs to men and women. She said that this session is not just about gender budgeting but also about planning; what should the thrust be of planning which is about defining the long term vision of development. GRB can be started at the top or from below. Some of the tools are policy appraisal; analyzing how much you are spending on men and women and for which gender disaggregated data is required. Some of the other tools are time use surveys, spatial mapping etc. It is important to note that different countries are using different methodologies within South Asia itself.

However GRB consists of four important steps –

- 1) The 'Start up' phase which consists of sensitizing the ministries
- 2) Environment building
- 3) Action
- 4) Institutionalisation

Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur shared that most countries were in the first and second stage of gender budgeting and had made remarkable progress. For example, in India itself there are 56 ministries with Gender Budgeting Cells. However there are many challenges in the area of gender budgeting namely lack of capacities of government officials, impact in terms of change in allocation, lack of disaggregated data and the fact that lot of gender budgeting has not been a very sustainable process. She concluded her presentation with a quote, " If you want to see where a country is headed, look at its budget and how it allocates its resources to women."

The first presentation in this session was by Ms. Fakhra Tazaeen Abbasi, Joint Secretary Finance Division, Government of Pakistan, who shared with the participants the experience of GRB from Pakistan which has been engaged in several public finance reforms since the early 2000s. and the (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) PRSP documents were the first ones to outline a strategy for GRB as an initiative. Also Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) and Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP), all highlighted the importance of GRB as a potential source of achieving gender mainstreaming. Then she shared that the Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative' (GRBI) Project (2005-2007) was initiated to promote policy and resource allocation with a gender perspective and the GRBI on its successful completion has merged into a bigger umbrella project titled 'Strengthening PRS Monitoring Project (SPRSM).

Ms. Abbasi also enumerated the tools and the key interventions under the GRB in Pakistan. She discussed the new program launched by the government, Benazir income support (BISP) to protect the poor and vulnerable segment of the society from growing hike in prices particularly in food prices. The timeline of the program is 2008-09 to 2012-13.

She further discussed the initiatives of the government in the sectors of education and health.

She shared some of the challenges of GRB in Pakistan like lack of government officials skills to prepare submissions in amended Budget Call Circular and GBS and MTBF project has completed its life cycle in 2011 and closure of the project at this stage is a great set-back for performance budgeting. Ms.Abbasi concluded her presentation with the way forward -

- Focused and specific trainings for Government officials and stakeholders on engendering planning and budgeting process.
- Regular Trainings and mentoring for relevant govt. officials.
- Continuous engagement through various actions.
- Development of specific resource material for NGO's pro-active engagement in devising gender sensitive policies.

The next presentation was by Mr. Tariq ul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. Mr. Islam began by discussing the present context of Bangladesh and discussing the key interventions to reduce the gender gap which are

- Gender Responsive Budgeting
- Gender Responsive Planning

Mr. Islam then shared the process of GRB being followed in his country which is t under the Medium Term Budgetary Framework. In this process the government. prepares a work plan where the revenue target and estimates of expenditure for the 1st year and projected revenue and estimates for the outer 4 years are planned. **Also** 14 (fourteen) Standards/Criteria is used for assessing impact of strategic objectives of MTBF Ministry on Women's Advancement and in 2012-13 fiscal year while the National Budget was placed at National Parliament for approval as supplementary documents, report on Gender Budget for 25 ministries/divisions was also placed.

He also discussed the process of engendering the planning process and the progress made till now. However, lot of ground needs to be covered and there are many challenges.

This was followed by a movie from Afghanistan on their National Action Plan for Women which were introduced by Ms. Shafiqha Ekhlas, Civil Society Member from Afghanistan produced by the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The concluding presentation of this session was by Ms. Sandamali Kumarawadu, Development Assistant, Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Government of Sri Lanka.

Ms. Kumarawadu after discussing what is gender budgeting and why gender budgeting is needed, shared the seven tools of gender budgeting. She then moved on to sharing the experience from Sri Lanka on GRB.

The Sri Lankan government is started with GRB in 1997 with the Commonwealth countries pilot project in 1997 and it focused on the portfolios of health, education, public sector employment, agriculture, industry and social services. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNIFEM 2002 identified gender as a priority area. Ms. Kumarawadu concluded her short presentation requesting all the participating countries to promote gender budgeting in their countries as it is very critical to achieving gender equality in the region.

After the Sri Lankan experience sharing, Mr. Sayed Omer Saboor, Director, ERAW Commission, Ministry of Interior, Afghanistan shared about the work of the gender unit in the Ministry of Interior.

After this the Chairperson Ms. Sayeda Mojgan Mostafavi, Deputy Ministry of Women's Affairs opened the floor for discussions.

- ❖ Does GRB also include taking into account the “care economy”? The answer to this is that GRB has to look at segregated data of all the ministries, on how much each ministry has part of gender budgeting but accounting for the “care” economy has to be part of the GDP
- ❖ Important to reduce the burden on women
- ❖ Important to sensitise government officials and finance persons to start GRB in countries like Bhutan
- ❖ For example in India Ministry of Finance prepares the GBS but the Ministry of Women and Child plays a facilitating role and is the nodal ministry to ensure that every ministry should have Gender Budgeting Cells; every ministry to go through every scheme to see how they benefit woman
- ❖ Traditionally education and health sectors are looked at but also need to look at non-traditional ministries like power, transport etc
- ❖ Maldives in the initial stages of GRB from 2010; presented the cabinet with case studies; trainings with different departments last year were held and some tools have been developed
- ❖ .Need to prepare indicators/a gender check list department wise to be included in the expenditure finance committee
- ❖ Need to emphasize on the “ results framework document” and see how this can be gendered, otherwise planning might not be directly related to budgeting and budgeting some time may not have a direct relationship to the outcome indicators

Session V – Group Work

This session was followed by the participants being divided into six groups based on the themes of the conference to come out with some key recommendation for the Mussoorie Declaration. Five groups worked on the Conference themes and the chair of the groups will remain the same as the sessions but the groups were mixed up.

Outcome – Defining a way forward for the theme in question

Points to be covered

- Define with rationale 4/5 priority areas for action and focus for future activity in country / within region
- What can be the potential areas for regional collaboration between , government, CSO's/ multilateral organisations
- Report Back

Group no.6 had to focus on training and capacity and the discussion should mention the following:

- What is the nature of gender training that the institute which the participants belong to involved with?
- In view of the proposal for the establishment of a virtual resource centre, as an apex training institute how is the relationship between a country training institute and the regional centre, in terms of the nature of roles and responsibilities envisaged ? .
- What is the nature of functions that such a regional entity should fulfil?
- To define 4/5 action points regarding this for the Mussoorie Declaration

Session VI – The presentation of group work and the way forward

The morning began with presentations and discussions on the group work.

All the six groups reported back to the group and suggested action points according to the themes of the conference. After each presentation there was a discussion and any point that the group felt was left out was included. After this, the action points of the groups were incorporated in the draft Mussoorie Declaration.

Session VII – Valedictory

The valedictory session began with Ms. Roli Singh thanking all the participants from all the countries for their active participation. She also thanked the co-ordination team at the National Gender Centre and all her colleagues at the LBSNAA for their support. She made a special mention of all the support staff and the team which had handled the logistics of the conference.

Ms. Singh then presented the Director of the LBSNAA with the draft Mussoorie Declaration and requested his guidance for the same. Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur and Mr. Surak Kumar then proceeded to read out the draft declaration to the audience and the Director, Mr. Padamvir Singh.

Mr. Padamvir Singh, Director, LBSNAA in his closing address thanked all the participants for making the effort of travelling long distances to be here at Mussoorie. He said that apart from the subject matter which was deliberated upon, it is a cause of celebration that everybody could be together and have a good time. Also in such a short time, all the participants from diverse backgrounds were able to agree on so many things and come out with such a comprehensive declaration was very commendable. To achieve consensus among so many people is a great achievement and a reason to celebrate.

Mr. Singh stated that now that such a comprehensive declaration is there, it is important to think of how to take this forward and how to make things happen. He felt that it would help to form a Steering Committee with persons from this group identified who would watch the whole process unfold. He emphasised the need to formalise an institutional mechanism to monitor progress, set milestones and decide on the future road map. It was important to take concrete steps to take the agenda of this declaration forward which is so full of good intentions.

Ms. Roli Singh and Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur of the National Gender Centre offered to take the initiative to facilitate a discussion to finalise the declaration and the initial leg work required to make things move.

The Director also seconded this and offered that the National Gender Centre can become an initial secretariat and take the responsibility for the co-ordination and documentation of this process to ensure continuity of the good work which happened at the Mussoorie Conference.

He suggested that UN Women could help in this supporting this process.

Mr. Suraj Kumar of UN Women expressed willingness on facilitating the role of the LBSNAA to act as a catalyst based on the initial feedback by the participants and also if there is a specific meeting in the near future to have a consultation to discuss an action plan. He shared that the Pakistan Human Rights Secretary, Mr. Shaighan Sharif Mallik had expressed an interest in having a follow up consultation to the Mussoorie conference.

The Director, Mr. Padamvir Singh went on to add that there is a lot in the Mussoorie Declaration and now the important challenge is to make it happen. The main task in future will be to work to change attitudes, that is and has been a perennial endeavour. He concluded by thanking all the participants and lauded the role of the National Gender Centre and UN Women for organising such a fruitful conference.

Mr. Suraj Kumar gave a vote of thanks at the end of this session and drew the conference to a close.