



Women participation in NEPAL'S CIVIL SERVICE

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The situation of women's participation in the Civil Service

While researching/studying about the participation of Nepali women in the civil service, the focus of this report was predominantly on the current state of women's participation in the civil administration. This report also focuses on the problems faced by women on the basis of their gender and ways to ensure inclusive participation of women in the civil service.

As per the record which was last updated in May 2008, the Nepal Civil Service has a total of 79,642 employees. However, the total number of women employees is 8,755 only whereas that of men is 70,887 which means women make up a mere 11% of the total number compared to 89% of

their male counterparts. This indicates that only one out of every nine employees is a woman in Nepal's Civil Service and this reflects the minimum participation that women enjoy in state administrative policy.

This number further decreases as we move up to the decision making levels such as section officers and posts above that. There are 8,384 gazetted officers out of which women make up only 5%. More so, the embarrassing fact remains that Brinda Hada is the only woman enjoying the post of secretary compared to that of 43 men at that level. Prior to 2007, when Brinda was promoted, there was absolutely no participation of women in such high positions. Similarly, in 1st and 2nd level gazetted posts there are 9 and 66 women respectively, which make up 3% and 4%

female employees at those levels. This is a clear reflection of the minimum participation of women in this sector. Even though the number increases in the third gazetted level positions, it only makes up 6% of the total.

The total number of non-gazetted officers in the civil service, excluding those in the unclassified or 5th level, is 46,131 out of which, women constitute only 15% of the total number. Women's participation in the 3rd class posts of non-gazetted officers is just approximately one fourth or 26%. This is the level with the highest number of women's participation. Otherwise, women's participation is just 11% amongst the 1st and 2nd class of non-gazetted officers. Moreover, even among the lower unclassified employees, women's participation is limited to 6%.

* This report has been prepared by Rajkumar Baral on the basis of the research report prepared by researcher Sarala Sigdel for the Social Inclusion Research Fund.

List 1: Participation of Men and Women in the Civil Services

S.N.	Class	Male		Female		Total	
		Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
1	Gazetted	7953	94.86	431	5.14	8384	10.53
	Special Class	43	97.73	1	2.27	44	0.06
	First	276	96.84	9	3.16	285	0.36
	Second	1711	96.29	66	3.71	1777	2.23
	Third	5923	94.35	355	5.65	6278	7.88
2.	Non Gazetted	39362	85.33	6769	14.67	46131	57.92
	First	12423	89.37	1478	10.63	13901	17.45
	Second	17095	88.63	2192	11.37	19287	24.22
	Third	8591	73.88	3037	26.12	11628	14.60
	Fourth	1253	95.29	62	4.71	1315	1.65
3.	Unclassified / Fifth	23572	95.81	1555	6.19	25127	31.55
	Total	70887	89.01	8755	10.99	79642	100

When seen on the basis of the classification in the civil service, the highest level of women's participation is in the Health Services with 35% women's participation and the lowest in the Nepal Forestry Department with less than 2% women employees. In terms of geography, the highest participation of women, at 13%, is in the Central Development Region and the lowest participation, at 7%, is in the Far-Western Development Region. If we take into consideration the foreign sector then it has the least number of women's participation with just 2%. In terms of permanent residency, the maximum number of women civil service employees (12%) resides permanently in the Western Development Region while the minimum number (7%) resides in the Far-Western Development Region.

The research for this report on the applications for the civil service posts in the Financial Year (FY) of 01-02 revealed that women's participation in the Lok Sewa (Public Service) entrance exam was four to ten times less than that of their male counterparts. Similarly, with the exception of the FY 2001-

02, 2002-03, 2003-04, the number of women who passed the entrance and main exams for civil service has been minimal in comparison to men. For example, in the FY 2003-04, out of the total number of applicants for the various posts in the civil service one male applicant out of every 59 was considered able for the post, whereas, only one female applicant out of every 103 was considered for the post they had applied to. Similar discrepancies were also seen in the entrance exam for the FY 2005-06 and 2006-07. However, in the FY 2002-03, the ratio of women applicants was more than those of the other years. This increase was due to the increased demand for female health workers in the Health Services.

On the basis of the data published by Public Service Commission and analysing the number of applicants from the year 2001-02 to 2006-07, the total number of applicants for the first exam of the FY 2001-02 was 12,812 out of which 88% were men and only 12% women. However, out of this number only 18% of the male and 7% of the female applicants passed. In the following years the number of female applicants and

the number of women who passed the exams is extremely small in comparison to that of men. Although the number of women who passed the first exam in the FY 2005-06 was greater than that of men, the number of male applicants in the same year was still far greater than the number of women applicants.

Hence, it is clear that in order to increase the participation of women in the civil service, there needs to be an increase in the number of women applicants in the entrance exams. In addition, factual and policy changes are also necessary in order to change the ratio between the numbers of men and women who pass the exams.

Problems of women in the civil services sector

During the research for this report it was found that the major problems faced by women in this service is that their decisions are not much heeded and they are often withheld from development opportunities. Women are granted limited access to resources and men still maintain an attitude of superiority even in offices. Additional problems include the inability of women to work late hours despite having the capability to carry out the work because of the lack of any modes of transportation, inability to openly put forward their views concerning their rights due to the large presence of men and even if they are able to put their views forward they are usually in the minority and their suggestions are rejected.

It has also been found that several male bosses or senior officers have expectations of physical relationships from their female subordinates and should these expectations not be met the women have to deal with negative attitudes. Some women employees have even suffered sexual harassment and sexual violence at the workplace. Another

problem faced by women employees is their sense of insecurity when they are the only woman amongst several men during field work because of which they are unable to spend the night away from home or work late hours.

During this study, it was discovered that women in this field have to not only face professional but also personal problems. Several women had had domestic problems and arguments when they had to work extra hours or late. Several women were unable to devote the family time required for their personal life due to the office work. Especially when their children fell sick women had to take leave or leave work early, which caused the male bosses to have a negative impression of them. Due to the dual load of professional and domestic responsibilities, women often suffer from physical and mental fatigue which hampers the capacity development of women.

Suggestions for inclusion of women

After the historical People's Movement of 2005, the re-established House drafted a women's rights related bill on May 30, 2006 in order to end the biased laws that were hampering women's development, making a provision to obtain citizenship under the mother's name and to guarantee at least 33% women's participation for proportional representation of women in every department of the state. Due to this reservation, the representation of women in every organ of the state has increased to some extent. According to the second amendment of the Civil Service Act 1992, 45% of the posts that are filled through open competition are to be treated as 100% out of which 33% is reserved for women. However this 33% amounts to only 14% of the total seats for civil service. This is very inadequate and unequal.

The foremost conclusion drawn from this study is that in order to ensure women's development the primary necessity is to ensure that women have access to quality education.

Based on the facts gathered during this study the following steps are necessary to make the civil service inclusive and gender friendly:

- In order to ensure proportional representation of women in the civil service while drafting the new constitution, the current reservation system needs to be altered to be more proportional. A clear provision should be made in the constitution to ensure that women, who constitute half of the population, should have 50% representation in all organs of the state.
Legal provisions should be made in the new constitution to prioritise women's education and to provide free education to women up to university level.
- The gender bias that exists in the distribution of domestic work should be removed. Constitutional provisions and laws should be made that state that men should equally bear domestic responsibilities and work that so far is limited to women alone.
- End the chauvinistic attitude that believes that only men are capable.
- The state should provide for special training programmes to ensure that the women who enter the civil service on the basis of reservations are equally competent.
- New policies and laws should be drafted to ensure that women employees like their male counterparts get equal opportunities in all aspects.
- The state should provide trainings for male employees in order to make them

understand women's problems and obligations like giving birth to and bringing up children.

- A Women's Centre should be set up within the civil services in order to discuss and help solve their problems.
- The patriarchal mindset amongst all within the civil services and the entire state structure must be changed.
- The following programmes must be undertaken to increase women's participation in the exams for the Public Services Commission:
 - ◆ Provisions should be made to make the Public Services exam free of cost.
 - ◆ Provisions should be made to disseminate information about the Public Services exams through the local media.
 - ◆ Provisions should be made so that exams for Public Services can be taken at the district level.
 - ◆ The exams for Public Services should be held at a time that does not coincide with festivals and the peak time for farming.
 - ◆ The exams for Public Services should be scheduled in a manner that does not coincide with the university exams.
 - ◆ The exams for Public Services should be implemented on the basis of a yearly exam schedule.
 - ◆ Training, coaching and orientation classes related to the exam preparations should be conducted up to the district levels.
 - ◆ Special preparation centres should be set up for women. ■