

Representation of women in Jammu and Kashmir Bureaucracy: A Sociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The status of women is not homogenous throughout the social and economic fabric of Jammu & Kashmir; there exists wide range diversity on the status and role of women, but generally it has been observed in Jammu & Kashmir those women's rights to inheritance, education, employment, and political rights, are considerably lower compared to that of men. The social construction in Jammu & Kashmir is predominantly patriarchal. Consequently, women are seen to succumb to subordination. Additionally women are provided with limited opportunities to create choices that allow them to change the realities of their lives. Public sphere activities in Jammu & Kashmir are predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors. Administration is one of the most important instruments available to the Government to achieve the goals of the nation. Kashmir bureaucratic organization is not a gender neutral; the women in the organization are not a professional neutral but are sexualized by their gender. They are not rewarded for their competence or expertise, but are stereotyped and allowed to have limited access to excel in the bureaucracy. They are excluded from the power equation. This sort of discrimination not only ensures that women do not have powerful, successful career like their male counterparts, but also de-motivates and disillusions the women about future success in their career. *In this context the present paper entitled women's representation in bureaucracy: A sociological Analysis will try to analyze the various impediments that continue to hinder women in moving up the bureaucratic ladder in Jammu and Kashmir Administration.*

Keywords: Women, Jammu & Kashmir, bureaucracy, administration, disparity, patriarchy

History has ineffectively witnessed women's suffering in the form of discrimination, coercion, subjugation, exploitation, deprivation, degradation, aggression and humiliation. Generally in patriarchic societies; females are regarded as the inferior of the species. Because of this, women are denied access to both privileged and utilitarian role open only to males. Such roles as administration and leadership roles in

societal affairs including religion and governance are exclusively belong to males. However the question of women has evinced a lot of attention as reflected in the national policies, plans, programmes and schemes resulting in advancement of women in all fields. Besides, special committees and commissions on women have been set up from time to time resulting in policy changes and setting up of institutional structures for implementing programmes and schemes. However, vulnerable section of women still remain tight wounded through the vicious circles of family expectations, gender role ideology, gender role discrimination, psycho-social stereotypes and stigma. Women from different socio-economic strata face a great deal of disparity in their life scenarios. There are also significant double strands in women's specific status across region, caste and class, communities and religions. Women who are most affected end up having fewest work options and are left to go for traditionally female "pink-collar" jobs, such as clerical or support services that are characterized by low salaries, few or no benefits, and little space for advancement (Blau & Hendricks, 1979).

In contemporary times, it has become established truth that keeping half the population away from the effective public participation or the criticality of false/imaginary feminine divide of private and to masculine public image of competent, would be detrimental to the progress and development of the country and world at large. Indices like GEM and studies carried out by UNDP exposes the reality on the ground level. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a measure of inequalities between men's and women's opportunities and participation in a given country. It combines and assesses inequalities in three areas: political as well as economic participation and decision making, and power over financial resources. The UNDP report further elucidated different areas of interventions needed for women empowerment and systematically promoting women ability to contribute to decision making forum. This process would help in shaping the allocation of economic and financial resources and opportunities which in turn would further lead to gender parity.

Gender disparity in the administrative centres remains a striking issue today; women continue to earn less than men, driven in part by occupational segregation and by general perceptions about socially constructed gender norms. As long as we go on perceiving the enterprise of administration as genderless, women will continue to face their present Hobson's choice, which is to either to adopt a masculine administrative identity or accept marginalization in the bureaucratic hierarchy. (Strivers, 2002). The majority of women are in lower level positions. It is rare to find women in higher and mid-level positions and in professional and administrative occupations. Despite constitutional guarantees and other governmental initiatives to remove gender discrimination from the civil services, women continue to weather against a variety of odds to attain career success. Significant additions have been made in terms of gender equality in the last few decades. However, the reductionist approach adopted through different studies still considers the determinations not enough to appropriate the gender inequality discourse. Disparity in wage shares, due to some of the conditioned reasons (Buchanan, 2014).

Women have problem of powerlessness, and this powerlessness reinforces the subordinate role of the women. While organizations like bureaucracy were being defined as sex-neutral machines, masculine principles were dominating their authority structures (Kanter, 1977: 46). By the bureaucracy, we mean the civil service arm of the executive branch of government, rather than the entire public sector

arena. The civil service is quintessential because it is the main organization for the development and implementation of government's policies. As noted by Long (1952: 810), "the bureaucracy is in policy, and major policy, to stay; in fact, barring the unlikely development of strong majority party legislative leadership, the bureaucracy is likely, day in and day out, to be our main source of policy initiative." Consequently, the bureaucracy exerts enormous influence on how a society is governed. Women and the bureaucracy appears on the surface to be a gender neutral organization with equal opportunity policies, but the bureaucracy as a system and its access to power and authority remains restricted to men. The system is gendered as male. Although the formal implementation of gender equality is assumed, recruitment in the services remain on the principle of merit, but once inducted in to the service, there are on introspection widespread differences on the perception and workings of the male and female bureaucrats. The career trajectory of male and female bureaucrats remains distinct and separate. Furthermore the Weberian ideal type Bureaucracy is in essence a masculine entity which dissatisfied the women who are underrepresented and labels as 'Tokens'. Non-rational factors influence decisions and perceptions, and the informal structures within the bureaucracy thrives women who do not have power or authority. Although the Civil Services exam remains equally open to men and women, and the bureaucracy appears on the surface to be a gender neutral organization with equal opportunity policies, the bureaucracy as a system and its access to power and authority remains restricted to men. The system is gender-normed as male. Although the formal implementation of gender equality is assumed, recruitment in the services remain on the principle of merit, but once inducted in to the service, there are on introspection widespread differences on the perception and workings of the male and female bureaucrats. The career trajectory of male and female bureaucrats remains distinct and separate.

Gender and Bureaucracy

Gender neutrality in the bureaucracy comes from the 'The feminist case against bureaucracy'. Ferguson (1984) utilizes Foucault's work to make her case against bureaucracy. Foucault perceives the institutions of modern administered life as tyrannical and views the bureaucracy as a totalitarian system, finding women less embedded in the linguistic and institutional structures of the bureaucratic society and consequently, less indoctrinated into its practices. Ferguson argues that a Weberian bureaucracy is therefore by definition a masculine one. The main point of her feminization of bureaucracy argument is that the political consequences of male dominance, ensures that women learn the role of the subordinate, and this role can become self-perpetuating. According to Gary and Barbara Yunker, Valian states that gender stereotyping stems from entrenched cultural beliefs that have been inculcated in men and women since their birth. Therefore, in the workplace, men are celebrated for their accomplishments in work, while women's work is given little credit. Because of gender stereotyping, "masculine" qualities, such as leadership and assertiveness, are powerful tools men can use to be promoted. On the other hand, "feminine" qualities are detrimental to women's success in the working place. Thus, according to the male viewpoint, women are not as dedicated as men in their jobs, because they are diverted by their family responsibilities. Literature shows that "public organizations with larger proportions of women and/or minorities in decision-making roles are more likely to produce outcomes compatible with the

interests of women and/or minorities than similar organizations with fewer women and/or minorities". The United Nations had concluded that there is no society where women enjoy same opportunities as men, but women often experience a 'glass-ceiling'. Glass ceiling effects can permeate an entire corporation, creating a macho culture that is hostile to the advancement of women. This culture is so pernicious that experts now refer to a phenomenon known as "glass walls" that prevent women from advancing beyond middle management: "the vast majority of women are not able to even 'peep' through the glass ceiling and instead are excluded by 'glass walls,' because they are channelled, tracked and trapped in staff jobs that do not lead to the executive suite or provide visibility to decision makers" (Castro and Furchtgott-Roth, 1997).

Kingsley mentions that "In a democracy competence alone is not enough. The public service also has to be representative if the state is to liberate rather than enslave". Scholars have been vigorously arguing for gender equality in public administration. Developmentalists advance a similar theme. They contend that development, apart from economic growth, connotes "equity, social justice, and the effective exercise of basic human rights".

Research Methodology

The universe of study consists of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative units. The study is based on women's representation in bureaucracy. The data for study was collected from secondary sources of data will be used respectively. Secondary source of data should be obtained from Books, Journals, Research Papers, government Records, and other relevant unpublished archival material available on this subject. There will be certain types of information that will be obtained through direct observation because observation helps in the recording of behaviour at the time of its spontaneous occurrence. It is also not uncommon that there are events in the life of the people about which people want to maintain secrecy and which they are not willing to discuss with others.

Objectives

- To identify the overall representation of women in the administration structure of J&K.
- To analyse the extent up to which women have overcome subordinate rankings in the hierarchy of the administration
- To study the impediments that specifically hinders the mobility of women bureaucrats and produces a gendered structure.
- To examine the patriarchal nature of Jammu & Kashmir state administration.
- To study why women have limited access in state bureaucracy.

Research Question

It is rare to find women in higher level administrative occupations, Majority of women are in the hierarchy

of Jammu and Kashmir administration are in lower level positions because of structural impediments that preventing women from reaching the top, they are stereotyped and have a glass ceiling, beyond which they cannot rise. Also the Public arena in Jammu & Kashmir is predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors

Status of women in Kashmir

The society of Jammu and Kashmir is diverse and multicultural in nature. Its socio-economic setup and political developments have also been defined and shaped by varying indigenous and exogenous factors and forces such as conflict, political instability, civil unrest and natural disasters. Culturally, it is a predominantly patriarchal society, despite that fact that the woman's place is somehow respected. But the prevailing cultural environment significantly affects both the role of women and management as a whole. Without this, it will be difficult to explain it to those who have little or no knowledge of the barriers women face in the public sphere. This cultural environment has included what has been described in the literature as a "glass ceiling" for women. Although state governments from time to time have attempted to alter the woman's place in public life, their efforts have not yielded much fruit because of the persistence of the cultural environment. The cultural environment projects the male over the female; and this projection affects the decision on who is to be educated in the family, especially among those with meagre resources. From this perspective, women were and, in some cases, are still considered inferior to men, and were and are encouraged to take charge of the home while the men attend school. Thus, although women's right to work was fully recognized in traditional society through customary laws, this right was limited to domestic chores, which limitation continued to undermine their ability to gain formal sector employment (Manuh, 1994). Most women in the state of Jammu and Kashmir face myriad gender-related problems and, as a consequence, are uniquely placed to bear the brunt of gender imbalances. In this cultural environment they are effectively under the control or authority of men (initially their fathers or other male members of their family, and their husbands) for much of their lives, although they may gain in status and influence with age. Women's decision making role in Kashmir is thus constrained in both private and public spheres. Where women do exercise political power in the traditional arrangement, however, it is largely in parallel structures or by influencing male authorities (Oppong et al., 1975; Perrow, 1977).

What we have today in Kashmir is a society where cultural patterns and traditions continue to favour and promote male dominance, creating a masculine society and a significant power distance, which continues to affect women in both public and private .the reality of the existence of gender inequalities is a fundamental dynamic in the overall hierarchical structures of relationships that characterize all the political, economic and social processes.

Women and Beacracy in J&K: A Background Analysis

The status of women is not homogenous throughout the social and economic fabric of Jammu & Kashmir; there exists wide range diversity on the status and role of women, but generally it has been

observed in Jammu & Kashmir those women's rights to inheritance, education, employment, and political rights, are considerably lower compared to that of men. The social construction in Jammu & Kashmir is predominantly patriarchal. Consequently, the sense of worth of women, determined by their own perceptions and those of others, is lower compared to of a man's sense of self-worth. Women are seen to succumb to subordination, which is dictated by the forces of patriarchy across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Additionally women are provided with limited opportunities to create choices that allow them to change the realities of their lives. Public sphere activities in Jammu & Kashmir are predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors. Women are not tried in the considered/responsible field positions like the Deputy Commissioner, secretary interior, secretary of establishment, secretary of commerce and chief secretary are rarely offered to them. They inevitably get stereotyped and get posted to relatively unimportant positions like women's welfare, co-operatives etc.

Administration is one of the most important instruments available to the Government to achieve the goals of the nation. In the present study, the term administration refers to public administration that includes the management of affairs of Government at all levels- national, state and local. In Jammu and Kashmir, Government services are divided into All India Services, Kashmir Administrative Services and State Services. In the present research, the study is on women administrators of All India Services - Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Kashmir Administrative Services (KAS). Kashmir bureaucratic organization is not a gender neutral; the women in the organization are not a professional neutral but are sexualized by their gender. They are not rewarded for their competence or expertise, but are stereotyped and allowed to have limited access to excel in the bureaucracy. They have a glass ceiling, beyond which they cannot rise. Women are excluded from the power equation. This sort of discrimination not only ensures that women do not have powerful, successful career like their male counterparts, but also de-motivates and disillusiones the women about future success in their career. There is a gender disparity in the administrative set up of Jammu And Kashmir State. Even though the number of women getting into the services increased over the years, then stereotype ideas of considering women as inferior to men is not changed. So, creating equal opportunities for men and women will not result automatically in gender equity as they have different degrees of embodiment due to gender role ideology.

Administrative structure of state

The overall state bureaucracy of J&K consists of a total of 580 male and female officers, from the rural as well as urban areas of the state of Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of the country too. These officers belong to three different bureaucratic levels i.e. senior, middle and junior, with the corresponding income categories and experience spans. Most of the bureaucrats in J&K belong to the rural areas; have settled down in the urban areas, long back. The actual ratio of urban bureaucrats to rural bureaucrats in J&K bureaucracy is 1: 4. In Jammu and Kashmir women have made slow progress toward expanding their numbers in the higher reaches of state administration, although they are not yet proportionately represented in top-level positions in state. In Jammu and Kashmir administrative structure, Out of

total number of 26 Ministers of State of Jammu and Kashmir only two are women. Thus showing the grim picture of women's participation in political representation. Similarly, out of 107 listed IAS officers in J&K only 9 are females. Out of 393 listed KAS officers in J&K only 45 are females. Out of 19 members of Service Selection Board 2 are females. Out of 24 Vigilance Commissioners only one is lady although she has been nominated twice. We have 22 Deputy Commissioners and 2 divisional commissioners in the state and at present we have three females supervising a district. 32 STs in Kashmir Administrative Services and only 5 are women. 39 SCs in Kashmir Administrative Services and only 2 are women. Out of the total 28 Chief Secretaries of J&K till date, nobody is female. In State Accountability Commission, State Human Rights Commission, State Information Commission, none is a female. Out of 8 administrative Secretaries of J&K nobody ever is female. In District Srinagar again we have had 35 Deputy Commissioners till date and nobody is a female. Till date we have had 25 Divisional Commissioners in Jammu and only one has been female. At present there are 9 members of Public Service Commission and none is a women. No Vice Chancellor, no registrar of any University of Jammu and Kashmir has ever been a Woman.

Statistics from the General Administration Department (GAD) of Jammu and Kashmir shows that there are more number of men in senior scale positions (management level) as that of women, despite the fact that there are more women than men at the lower levels of the service. It clearly shows that women are more underrepresented as one moves up the ladder of responsibility in the bureaucracy to the managerial and executive ranks, and overrepresented in the lower echelons. It is also evident from these above quoted figures the upper echelons of the bureaucracy continue to be dominated by males. No woman has ever occupied the position of the top most bureaucratic head of general administration department of state J&K. Many social and cultural factors account for the exclusion or marginalization of women from managerial positions. Key among these are the culturally traditional domestic roles assigned to them, whereby they are made responsible for the home, which affects their rights from childhood, through upbringing and socialization. Right from the start, then, fewer girls than boys have access to education, and are more likely to drop out of school; they are not supported to continue to higher levels of education that would enable them to compete for managerial positions because they are socialized to take care of the home. This affects the number of females who attain higher education and the opportunity to enter the public service

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In Jammu and Kashmir state administration, women continue to gravitate to the lower levels of the public sphere despite the apparent opportunity for women to enter the most senior roles in public life, a mass breakthrough of what is frequently termed the 'glass ceiling', that is access to the most senior jobs of all, making policy and managing the civil service, seems elusive as ever for women." women are provided with limited opportunities to create choices that allow them to change the realities of their lives. Public sphere activities in Jammu & Kashmir are predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors. Women are not tried in the considered/responsible field positions like the Deputy Commissioner, secretary interior, secretary of establishment, secretary

of commerce and chief secretary are rarely offered to them. They inevitably get stereotyped and get posted to relatively unimportant positions like women's welfare, co-operatives etc. What we have today in Kashmir is a society where cultural patterns and traditions continue to favour and promote male dominance, creating a masculine society and a significant power distance, which continues to affect women in both public and private. The reality of the existence of gender inequalities is a fundamental dynamic in the overall hierarchical structures of relationships that characterize all the political, economic and social processes. Kashmir bureaucratic organization is not a gender neutral; the women in the organization are not a professional neutral but are sexualized by their gender. They are not rewarded for their competence or expertise, but are stereotyped and allowed to have limited access to excel in the bureaucracy. They have a glass ceiling, beyond which they cannot rise. Women are excluded from the power equation. This sort of discrimination not only ensures that women do not have powerful, successful career like their male counterparts, but also de-motivates and disillusiones the women about future success in their career. There is a gender disparity in the administrative set up of Jammu And Kashmir State. Even though the number of women getting into the services increased over the years, then stereotype ideas of considering women as inferior to men is not changed. So, creating equal opportunities for men and women will not result automatically in gender equity as they have different degrees of embodiment due to gender role ideology. The breakthrough for women of J&K to the upper levels of the beacuracy thus continues to be a mirage

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