

**FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY  
AND EQUITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE:  
A Comparative Study of the Experiences  
in the Philippines and Pakistan**

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**Introduction**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in governing one's country. Yet, almost fifty years after the UN Declaration, the International Conference on Women in 1995 brought to the world's attention that the majority of women hardly have the chance to participate in governance. In matters of social development, the key goal of governance, women's needs and interests, likewise hardly matter.

**The Political Environment**

During the 1995 Third International Women's Conference in Beijing, China, participants described the realities women faced in most countries: (1) They are underrepresented at most governance levels. Only ten percent of the members of the legislative bodies and even a much lower percentage of executive posts are held by women; (2) They continue to be underrepre-

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sented as candidates in public office; (3) Traditional working patterns of many political parties bar women from participating in public life; (4) Discriminatory attitudes and practices, family and childcare responsibilities and the high cost of electoral campaign, discourage women from seeking public office; (5) Socialization and negative stereotyping of women and men, especially reinforced by mass media, perpetuate the tendency for political decision making to remain the men's domain; (6) Unequal power relations and division of labor in the home limit women's potential to find the time and develop the skills required for participation in decision-making in wider public forums.

These issues continue to persist even if women have (a) demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organizations and in public office when given the chance; (b) articulated their interests and concerns and placed women's issues on the national, regional and international agenda; (c) refined political priorities, placed new items in the political agenda that reflect and address women's gender-specific concerns, values and experiences, especially among women in politics; and (d) provided new perspectives on mainstream political issues (Beijing Platform for Action, 1995).

But because of increasing awareness of these realities in local areas and advocacy at various government levels, many countries have recognized that gender equality is a prerequisite to overall human development and that women contribute sizable but often invisible (non-recognized and valued) resources and social capital to society. The world has realized that unless the women take part and benefit in development, no development programs will ever succeed. As they say, unless development is engendered it will be endangered.

Some governments have instituted policies and programs on gender equality and equity in relation to political affairs such

as governance as well as the economy, family relations, and those that pertain to social customs and cultural traditions. To what extent and how these are implemented are rich areas for research and examination.

### **Concept and Objectives of the Study**

This paper shall compare the policies on gender equality and equity in the Philippines and Pakistan and how these are transforming local governance and the different social and political actors in the two countries. In particular, it will present the Philippines' *Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy* and Pakistan's *Reservation for Local Seats Policy for Women*.

While the political, social and cultural contexts in the two Asian countries vary, both may be considered to be presently undergoing political transition towards decentralization. Both countries have reviewed their respective local government system and have enacted their respective new Local Government Laws in the last decade, the Philippines in 1991, and Pakistan in 2001. With the diffusion of political power and authority from the national government to local authorities, there has been an opening up of governance functions to other actors or stakeholders in the localities, among whom are women. It should be noted that in both countries the present leadership came into power through the extra constitutional route although using different means and initiated by different power players.

It is the objective of this study to identify gender equity and equality policies implemented that impact on local governments in the two countries and gain insights into the processes involved in the effort to engender local governments.

This paper mentions several terms that may be defined in several ways. For the purpose of clarity, these terms are used in this paper based on the following definitions: **Empowerment**

means developing the awareness and capabilities that result in increased participation, decision-making power, and access and control to resources and opportunities (NSCB, 2001).

**GAD budget policies** are legislative measures or executive directives that provide the legal framework for the integration in local development plans. In the Philippines, the policy earmarks a minimum of five percent budget by the LGUs for GAD programs, projects and activities (PPAs) (Bundler:11).

**Gender equality** refers to the condition where women and men enjoy the same status. Both have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights to contribute to national economic, social and cultural development and to benefit from the results (NSCB, 2001).

**Gender equity** is a related concept of distributive justice. It is attained when the disproportionate share of men and women are equalized to allow fair access to and control over resources, through processes that recognize and address fully gender specific needs arising from historical patterns of gender bias and biological differences (Torres, del Rosario and Pineda-Ofreneo, 1994).

**Governance** is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels (UNDP, 1997).

**Gender mainstreaming** refers to the process of integrating gender concerns in local governance agenda to achieve the goals for local development (Torres et al.: 1994).

**Engendering governance** is providing greater power to women in governance, i.e., election of women local chief executives, advocacy of women-oriented programs, advocacy at the grassroots level and initiatives in the LGU (Tapales, 2003).

## **International Policy Framework for Gender Equality and Equity**

The United Nations recognizes the fact that one of the most persistent inequity experienced at the global, national and local levels has been gender disparity. Thus, for three decades the women's movement lobbied to transform the inequities at various global fora. In the United Nations, gender equality became a buzzword.

The signing of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* in 1979 paved the way for many changes in the traditional role of men and women in the family and society. Article 7 calls for States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country. Notable, too, is its call for the protection of women from violence. In the 1995 UNDP Human Development Report, 139 countries, including the Philippines, have signed and ratified the Convention. Pakistan has not signed it (UNDP, 1995). However, in the latest documents of the Ministry of Women and Development (MOWD), reference has been made to the ratification of the CEDAW by Pakistan but with reservations on some provisions.

Three international conferences on women have challenged governments to consider women's particular needs and interests and grant them the opportunity to genuinely participate in the development process. At the First International Women's Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1975, the participants identified the three urgent and important themes for the world's women, namely: peace, equality and development. A follow up meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission set the rate of at least 30 percent positions at decision-making levels by 1995.

In Nairobi, Kenya, the 1985 Second International Women's Conference came up with the *Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (FLSAW) enjoining governments to promote gender equity and gender responsiveness by instituting policies and mechanisms to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated in their respective country development plans, programs and projects. Also known as *gender mainstreaming*, this process aims to *ensure* that gender issues are recognized on a longer term basis; *obtain* equality between men and women in the economic, political and social life through equity; and *determine* the implications of government policies and programs on men and women. The FLSAW not only recognizes the role of women in development but also proposes a more people-oriented development model that is participatory and sustainable.

The 1995 *Beijing Platform for Action* (BPA) identified twelve key areas affecting women as the focus of policy and program reforms to achieve the goals for peace, equality and development in the next decade including human rights, education, economic empowerment, armed conflict, violence against women and the girl child.

Most importantly, it enunciates a comprehensive set of strategic objectives and actions. It is no longer assumed that the responsibility for instituting reforms lie on the state alone. Civil society and the private sector also have their share of ensuring that objectives set are achieved. Strategic Objective G.1 urges each group to "Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making." Among others, the *governments* are asked to:

- Establish the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies, public administrative entities, the judiciary, and specific targets and implementing measures to increase

women's participation and achieve equal representation of women and men in all government and public administration posts;

- Review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems;
- Encourage the involvement of indigenous women at all decision-making levels;
- Recognize the shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men's increased participation in public life.

For *political parties*, the BPA sets their responsibility to:

- Examine party structures and procedures to remove all barriers which directly or indirectly discriminate against women's participation;
- Develop initiatives to allow women to participate fully in all internal policy-making structures and appointive and electoral nominating processes; and
- Incorporate gender issues in their political agenda, ensuring women's participation in leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men, among others.

The *private sector, unions, academe, NGOs* are to:

- Build critical mass of women leaders, executive, managers in strategic decision-making positions;
- Review criteria for recruitment and appointment to advisory and decision-making bodies and promotion to senior position to ensure that such criteria are relevant and do not discriminate against women;

- Develop communications strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of men and women in society, in the family;
- Restructure recruitment and career-development programs to ensure that all women, especially young women, have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership training including on the job training; and
- Develop career advancement programs for women of all ages that include career planning, tracking, mentoring, coaching, training and retraining.

On the other hand, *women NGOs, trade unions, social partners, producers and industrial and professional organizations* are urged to:

- Build and strengthen solidarity among women through information, education and sensitization activities; and
- Advocate at all levels to enable women to influence political, economic and social decisions, processes and systems, and work towards seeking accountability from elected representatives or their commitment to gender concerns.

The BPA Strategic Objective G.2 is to “Increase women’s capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.” With this objective, *governments, trade unions, NGOs, the private sector, political parties, employers’ organization, subregional and regional bodies, international organizations and educational institutions* are encouraged to:

- Provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls, particularly those with special needs to encourage them to take decision-making positions;



- Create a system of mentoring for inexperienced women and offer training in leadership and decision-making, public speaking and self-assertion and political campaigning; and
- Develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership areas.

In June 2001, women local government executive and legislative officials all over the region gathered for the Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councilors in Phitsanulok, Thailand to assess the situation of women now involved in local governance. The *Phitsanulok Declaration* produced at the meeting identified the challenges faced by women in politics; formulated local, national, regional and global strategies and actions to address or eradicate them; and renewed the participants' commitment to implement and abide by earlier mandates for gender equality and equity. The conference followed the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) regional conference on 50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right! held in Manila three months earlier, in March 2001. The meeting came up with the document entitled Call to Action for Full and Equal Participation and Representation of Women in Politics.

As a follow-up, the *Report of the High Level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, UNESCAP in October, 1999 recommended that all measures be adopted to ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed to end discrimination; undertake monitoring and accounting in partnership with the private sector, trade unions and civil society to determine whether women have access to leadership roles; organize mentoring programs for their full

participation in politics; and ensure their chances to participate and be represented in the electoral systems.

Given the above agreements and encouragements, governments can no longer ignore the raging tide for gender equality and equity and women's empowerment in many parts of the global community.

### **Policies for Gender Equality and Equity that Impact on Local Governance and Communities in Pakistan and the Philippines**

#### **A. Socio-Economic and Political Context of Pakistan**

Pakistan is situated between India on the east; Iran and Afghanistan on the west; and China in the north. It covers an area of almost 803,094 sq. kms. with an estimated population of 132 million in 1998, 64 percent of whom live in the rural areas and 36 percent are found in the cities (World Bank Report, 1999/2000). Ninety-seven percent of its people are Muslim who are distinguished into the Sunni (77%) and the Shi'a (23%) sects. The rest are Hindus, Christians and those belonging to other minor religions. English is the official lingua franca in government and the elite sections but Urdu is the official language. The country is divided into four main regions or provinces, namely Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province (NFWP), Punjab and Sindh.

Pakistan is basically an agricultural country producing wheat, cotton, rice, sugar cane, chickpeas, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables mostly for the local market. The local farmers also raise goats and sheep and poultry. Due to its dry climate with very low rainfall, skewed land distribution in favor of a few big landlords,

and low technology, agriculture has not reached its maximum potentials to provide for all of the country's food requirements. Fishing for shrimps, sardines, sharks and other fish are the main livelihoods in the coastal regions along the Arabian Sea. It has small deposits of petroleum, coal, iron ore, limestone and chromite. It exports textiles, clothing, cotton, rice, fish and shellfish, leather goods and carpets, trading mainly with the US, Germany, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. Like the Philippines, it imports petroleum products, machinery, transportation, iron and steel, electrical equipment, chemicals and food products (The Worldbook Encyclopedia, 1992).

Economically, Pakistan has low level of foreign investments, low industrial production and high level of unemployment. Like the Philippines, a major source of Pakistan's revenues are its overseas workers, who are mostly deployed at construction sites in Middle Eastern countries. This and widespread poverty cause many local factories to employ children. Budget deficit is high with a big chunk of state funds directed to the costly war with neighboring India, and of late in the neighboring Afghanistan, and in the ongoing war against so-called "global terrorism." Thus, Pakistanis are left with little infrastructure and inadequate social services as reflected in the country's low human development indicators. They also have to deal with millions of displaced tribal groups and war refugees along Pakistani-Afghan borders.

With a Gross National Product (GNP) of US\$63.2 B in 1998 it was ranked No. 44 for economic development; and a GNP per capita at US\$480/year, thereby getting the ranking at No. 138. It was categorized as among the low human development countries. Income distribution is highly uneven so that in terms of percentage of share of income or consumption, the highest 20 percent gets 41.2 percent with the highest 10 per-

cent getting 27.7 percent of the country's resources as compared to the lowest 20 percent of the population which has an income share of only 9.4 percent (World Bank, 1999/2000).

### **The Philippines**

The Philippines is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia about 100 kilometers from the coast of the Asian mainland, east of Vietnam and south of Taiwan. It is bounded by different bodies of water, namely the South China Sea to the west, the Philippines Sea to the east, the Luzon Strait to the north and the Sulu Sea and Celebes Sea to the south.

The country produces agricultural products like rice, abaca, coconut, sugar, fruits and vegetables, timber and minerals like gold, copper and chromite, some of them for export. Manufactured goods that have replaced agricultural crops for foreign trade include electrical and electronic equipment and parts, clothing, and telecommunications. However, it imports most of the raw materials for manufacturing such as machinery and equipment, petroleum and chemicals.

Government estimates show that 41 percent of the population are below the poverty line. Employment is high at 11 percent with about 30 percent underemployed. Rural folks have to live with lack of cash, low productivity on farms, inadequate transportation and infrastructure facilities, and lack of credit facilities. Many migrate to the cities where more than half of the population live in undeveloped public or private lands or on the sides of creeks, waste dumps and along rail tracks. Many houses are built from discarded metal and cardboards and have inadequate safe water and waste disposal facilities and ventilation (CIA World Factbook, 2003; NEDA Report in UNDP MDG, 2003).

The country had a Gross National Product (GNP) of US\$78.9 B in 1998 and ranked at No. 41 for economic development. With a GNP per capita at US\$1050/year, it stood at No.77 for overall Human Development, and was categorized as among the medium human development countries. Besides a young and rapidly increasing population, a big social problem is the unequal distribution of income. More iniquitous than Pakistan, the World Bank figures show that while Filipinos in the first upper 20 percent of the population control 49.6 percent of the total income, the lower 60 percent only gets 29.4 percent with a middle income group that holds 21.1 percent. It is no wonder that 30 percent of children under five years of age are malnourished (World Bank, 1999/2000). This only Christian majority country in Asia witnesses sprawling overcrowded slum communities surrounding exclusive enclaves of wealthy families fenced off by high walls.

## **B. Political and Government System Pakistan**

After the Indian subcontinent won independence from British rule in 1947, Pakistan was created from the northwestern and northeastern parts of India where Muslims composed the majority of the population. It became known as West and East Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah became the first head of government. Military leaders controlled the government and development was uneven between West and East Pakistan. After a brief civil war, East Pakistan declared itself an independent nation and called itself Bangladesh. The present day Islamic Republic of Pakistan adopted a new Constitution in 1973 providing for a parliamentary form of government with the President as head of state and a prime minister as Chief Executive (CIA World Factbook, Pakistan).

The late 1970s to the early 90s were turbulent years for Pakistani politics mostly ruled under martial law with brief civilian government in between under the brief leadership of a woman Prime Minister, Benazir Ali Bhutto, the daughter of the country's first prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. During the 1990 elections, the Islamic Democratic Alliance, a coalition of political parties, won the majority of seats in parliament. Nawaz Shareef of the Pakistan Moslem League, the chief party of the coalition, became prime minister.

On October 12, 1999, Army Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup that ousted the former civilian head of government, suspended the constitution, proclaimed himself the nation's Chief Executive and appointed an eight-member National Security Council as Pakistan's foremost governing body. The Supreme Court confirmed the October 1999 coup in May 2000 and granted Musharraf executive and legislative authority for three years from the coup date. He named himself president in June 2001 replacing Mohammad Rafiq Tarar. In a hotly contested referendum in April 2002, Musharraf's term as president was extended by more than five years.

Under the constitution amended under President Musharraf's term, the President is elected by Parliament for a five-year term with the next election scheduled to be held in November 2007. The Prime Minister, who is head of government, is chosen by the National Assembly for a four-year term. Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali holds the position today and will face the next election scheduled in November, 2006.

Pakistan has a multi-party system of elections but political alliances can shift frequently. Out of 31 registered parties that vied for the national legislative seats, 14 were able to garner seats in the last national election for the National Assembly posts (October 2002) and Senate seats (February 2003). Other power-

ful/influential sectors in Pakistani society today are the military, the ulema (clergy), landowners, industrialists, and small merchants' groups.

The National Government is composed of the executive branch headed by the Prime Minister, who appoints the members of the Cabinet. The legislative branch is a bicameral parliament consisting of the National Assembly and a Senate. Members of the National Assembly are directly elected by the people for a four-year term. Out of its present 342 seats, sixty seats are allocated for women while ten seats are designated for non-Muslim minorities. At present, 100 senators sit at the Senate. They are elected by their respective provincial assemblies and serve for a four-year term. The judiciary is composed of the supreme Court with justices appointed by the President and the lower courts administered under the Federal Islam or Shari'a court (CIA World Factbook, Pakistan).

## **Philippines**

Following a peaceful "people power" uprising in 1986, former President Ferdinand Marcos was succeeded by the first woman president Corazon C. Aquino for a six-year term. In 1998, Joseph Estrada was voted president but was declared by the Supreme Court unable to rule in January 2001, as a result of mass resignations from his government presumably precipitated by an impeachment trial and popular movement to pressure him to resign from his post. Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was sworn in as the constitutional successor to serve for the unexpired term. Senator Teofisto Guingona was sworn in as Vice-President.

The Philippines has a presidential form of government. The President, who is both chief of state and head of government, the Vice-president, and the Cabinet, and heads of national of-

fices make up the executive branch. All line agencies and local government units, the armed forces and other public offices are under the President's charge. The Cabinet members head their respective departments and are appointed by the President.

The legislative branch is the bicameral Congress which consists of the Senate, (24 seats, with 24 seats elected by popular vote to serve for a six-year term; and the House of Representatives (226 seats with regular members elected by popular vote to serve three years terms, and party-list members). The Supreme Court and the lower courts make up the judiciary branch of government. The justices are appointed by the president upon the recommendation of the Judicial Bar Council.

The country has a multi-party system for national and local elections except for the barangay, the lowest tier of government. In addition to eight major political parties, more than one hundred party lists have registered during the last national and local elections in 2001. Elections for all national and local government posts are done through direct secret balloting scheme. The national government structures of Pakistan and the Philippines are found in Fig. 1.

### **C. The Local Government System and Decentralized Pakistan**

Local governments were governed by the Local Government Law of 1979 until 2001, when the nation promulgated a new Local Government Ordinance. This paved the way for the devolution of powers to the local governments and the abolition of old divisional offices administered directly under the provincial assemblies.

The new Ordinance installed a local government system that is expected to devolve powers to local government units (LGUs), reorient administrative system to allow public participation in



decision-making, enable the pro-active elements of society to participate in community work and development related activities, make local governments accountable to their respective constituents with newly introduced mechanisms for checks and balances; and narrow down wide disparities (i.e.. rural vs urban development, men and women, Muslim majority vis-a-vis minority communities).

The Ministry of Local Governments adopted five approaches to achieve devolution of political power. These are: (1) Formulating a Vision, Mission and Goals framework at all the three tiers of leadership; (2) Decentralization to make district executive departments more autonomous; (3) Distribution of resources to the districts by empowering them to determine taxation levels giving them fiscal authority; (4) Diffusion of power and authority to LGUs and involve civil society in development work; and (5) Deconcentration of management functions through institution of meritocracy, and performance based appraisal system, and incentives schemes (<http://www.nrb.gov.pk>).

## **Tiers of Local Government**

### **The Union Level**

At the lowest local government level is the Union Administration, both in the rural and urban areas. It consists of the Union Nazim (head), Naib Union Nazim (deputy head), and three Union Secretaries and other support staff. Figure 2 presents the local government structure at the Union level.

### **The Tehsil and Town Levels**

The middle tier, Tehsil, has the Tehsil Municipal Administration headed by the Tehsil Nazim. The Tehsil Administration takes charge of the administrative and financial management of

the offices and sub-offices of the Local Government and Rural Development; Public Health; Engineering, Housing and Physical Planning Departments. In City Districts, it also administers the Urban Local Councils. The organizational structure of a Tehsil Municipal Administration is shown in Figure 3.

The 2001 Ordinance provides for the establishment of City District Governments to respond to the specific needs of Pakistani mega cities and the largely urban districts of Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Sukkur, Quetta, Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur. The metropolitan district of Islamabad is governed by a separate metropolitan structure known as the Capital Territory of Islamabad.

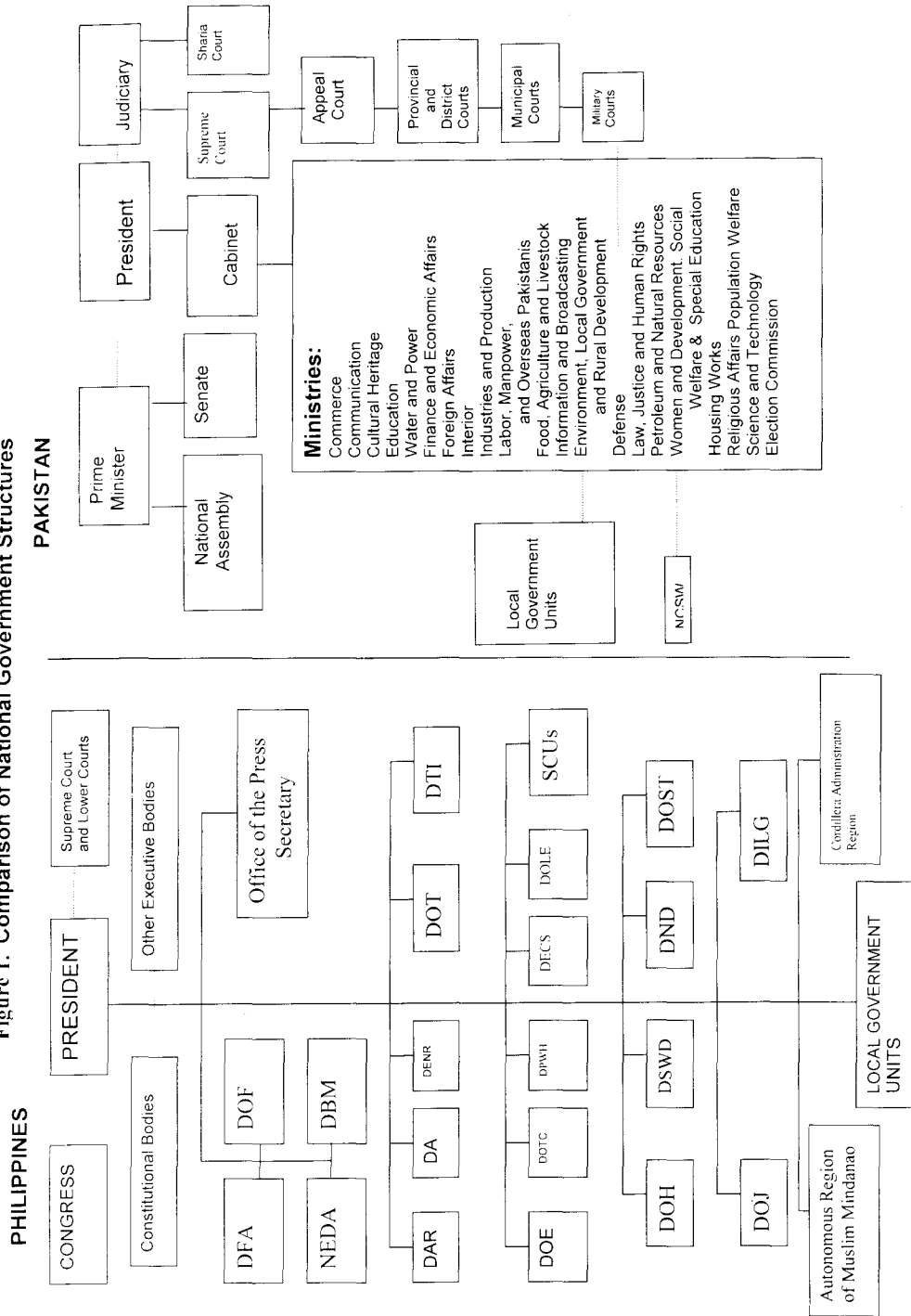
While spatial planning and municipal services are the exclusive function of the Tehsil Municipal Administration, in the non-highly urban districts and City Districts, city-wide planning and macro-municipal management is centralized in the City District Government (CDG), in addition to all the common district functions. The CDG also has three tiers: the City District Government (CDG), the Town Municipal Administration (TMA) and the Union Administration (UA).

As provided in the Ordinance, the principle of subsidiarity is applied in determining which planning and municipal services/functions are assigned to the CDG and which ones are assigned to TMA to ensure the smooth transition process and non-disruption of services.

### **The District or Zila level**

On top of the District government is the Zila Nazim, elected by the Electoral College that takes charge of the District Administration made up of district offices and the sub-offices of decentralized functions at the Tehsil (municipal) level. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 1. Comparison of National Government Structures



**Figure 2. Union Administration**  
**Pakistan's lowest tier of local government**  
(all officials are directly elected)

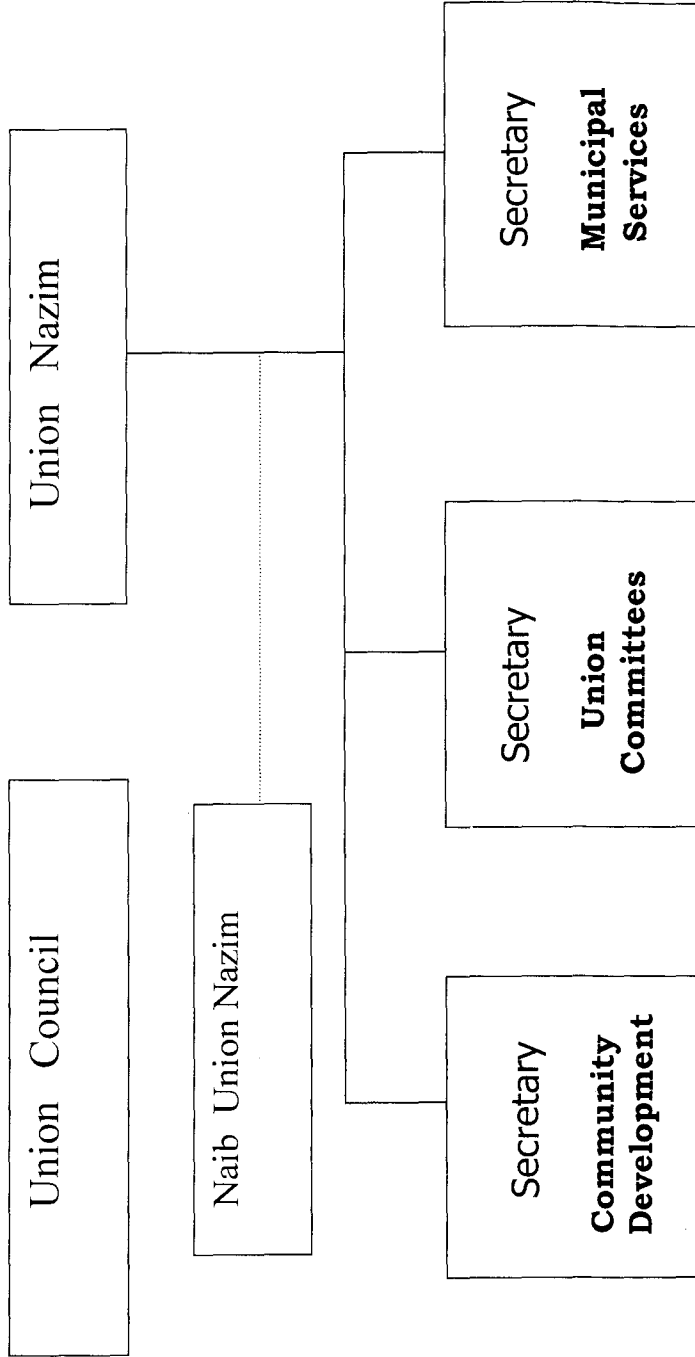


Figure 3. Tehsil Municipal Administration Organization

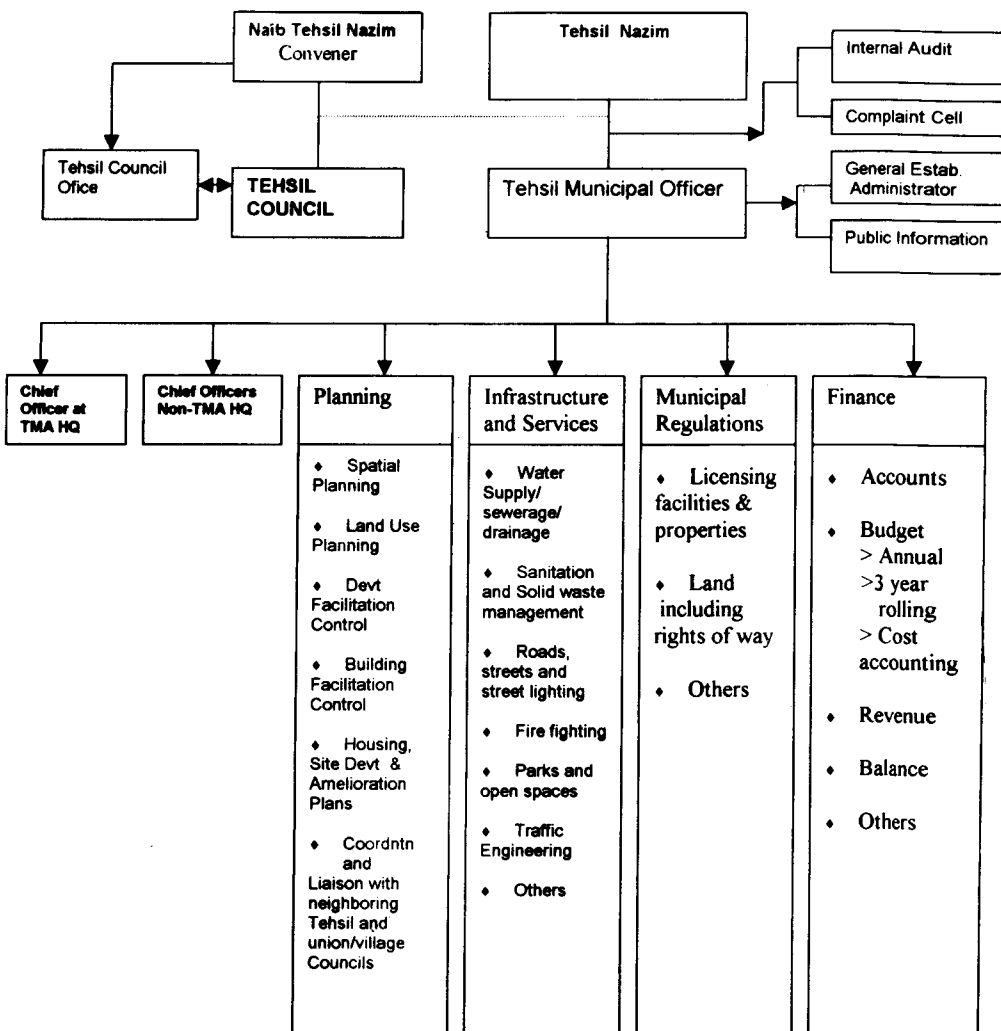
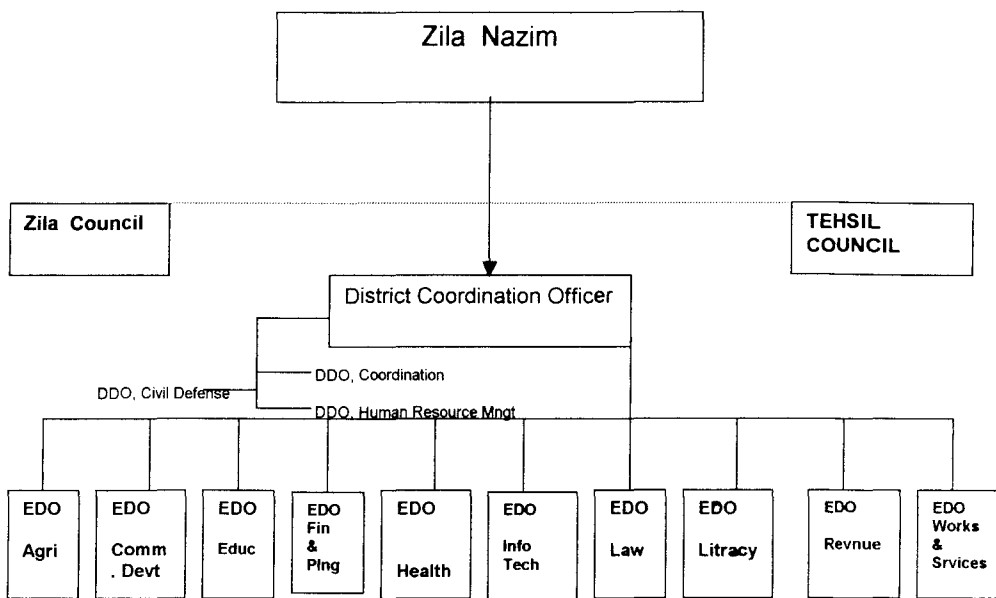


Figure 4. Tehsil Municipal Administration Organization



Legend:

- EDO – Executive District Officer
- DO – District Officer
- DDO – Deputy District Officer

The policy making body at this level is the Zila Council composed of all the Union Nazims of Union Councils across the district and members from reserved seats for women, peasants, workers and minorities in the district. The number of the Councils vary in size according to the number of Union Councils in the District. The Council members are elected by an Electoral College, whose election is explained further in the succeeding section. Table 1 shows the numbers of the various levels of local government units in Pakistan's four provinces.

Table 1. No. of District, Tehsil and Towns and Unions

PROVINCE	No. of Districts	No. of Tehsils	No. of Towns	Total No. Tehsil/Town	No. of Unions
Punjab	34	116	6	122	3453
Sindh	16	86	18	104	1094
NWFP	24	34	4	38	957
Balochistan	22	71	2	73	518
(Islamabad Capital Territory or ICT)	1				
TOTAL	97	307	30	337	6022

### Financial Powers of Local Governments

Although LGUs now have greater autonomy and handle more tasks and responsibilities, decentralization is limited to the delegation of administrative and financial functions. While LGUs are now empowered to levy taxes, collect fees, or impose fines from sources under their jurisdiction specified in the Ordinance (shown in Table 2), they are not allowed to incur any debt to finance their expenditures. No import/export tax or tax on movements of goods can pass through the District administration. The fiscal transfers from the national government to the local units are based on a fixed formula and closely supervised by the Provincial Finance Awards bodies.

Table 2. Taxes and Non Tax Sources of Revenues of Local Governments Under their administration

Zila Council	Tehsil and Town Council	Union Council
Fees collected related to education	Local tax on services	Licensing of professions and vocation
Fees collected in relation to health services	Tax on the transfer of immovable property	Sale of animals in cattle markets
Licensing fees on vehicles other than motor vehicles	Property tax on annual rental value of buildings and lands	Market fees
Fees for specific services by district government	Advertisements and billboards	Certification of births, marriage and death
Local charges on lands assessed to land revenues	Fairs, agricultural shows, cattle fairs, industrial exhibitions	Charges for specific services rendered by Union councils
Fees related to school, colleges and health functions	Licenses, permits, and penalties and fines for violations of licensing rules	Remuneration of village and neighborhood guards
Collection, charges for recovery of tax	Charges for execution of specific services such as maintenance of public utilities like drainage system	Charges for execution as maintenance of public utility
Toll on new roads, bridges	Rewards for recovery of tax	
	Fees on cinemas, theatrical show & other entertainment establishments	
	Approval of building plans	

### Election of Local Government officials

The new Local Government Ordinance declares that local government elections shall be held on a non-party basis. It also provides the procedures of elections at the local government levels for a four-year term with no term limits. The law was first implemented during the local elections in 2001.

The following section describes the election of officials in the different tiers of local government, namely, the Union level, Tehsil or Town level in urban centers, and the Zila level.

#### At the Union Level:

A Union Council is elected directly by qualified voters in each Union. The twenty-one member Council is composed of:



the Union Nazim, council head and the Union Naib Nazim, the deputy council head as joint candidates; twelve Muslim representatives who are elected in general seats, *four of which are reserved for women* and eight for other sectors; six sectoral reserved seats, *two of which are for women* and four seats for peasants and workers; and one member elected to a seat reserved for non-Muslim minority communities. *Thus, out of twenty-one posts, six Union Council seats are automatically reserved for women.*

#### **At the Tehsil and Town Levels:**

The members of the Tehsil Councils in the Tehsil and the Town Council in a town in the City districts are not directly elected by qualified voters but by an Electoral College. The Electoral College is composed of all the members of all Union Councils in the given Tehsil or Town. The number of council members vary depending on the number of Unions composing the Tehsil or Town.

To be elected to the Tehsil or Town Councils are the following: the Tehsil or Town Nazim; the Tehsil or Town Naib Nazim; and other members but with reserved seats for the following sectors: 33 percent of the total number of Unions are reserved for women; five percent for peasants and workers; and five percent for non Muslim minority communities.

#### **At the Zila or District Level:**

The Zila Council consists of all Union Nazims in the district and the following members elected on the reserved seats, namely, women representatives composing 33 percent of the total number of Unions in the district; peasants and workers, five percent; and non-Muslim minority communities, five per-

cent of the total number of Unions in the district. For the two last sectors, this is subject to a minimum of one seat each.

Like in the Tehsil level, the Zila Council members are elected by an Electoral College comprised of all the members of all Union Councils in the District, including the Union Nazims and Naib Union Nazims.

### **Qualifications for candidates/elected members**

Universal suffrage is provided for in the country's new Election Ordinance with 18 years as the minimum age to be qualified to vote. But to be elected or to hold an elective office in local government, among others, one must:

- be a citizen of Pakistan;
- be at least twenty five years of age;
- be enrolled in the electoral rolls of the relevant ward;
- be of good character and is not commonly known as one who violates Islamic injunctions;
- possesses an adequate knowledge of Islamic teachings and practices, obligatory duties prescribed by Islam as well as abstain from major sins; provided that these qualifications will not apply to a person who is a non-Muslim, but such a person should have a good reputation;
- possess academic qualifications of not less than secondary school certificate or equivalent from a recognized institution, for contesting the election of a Nazim or a Naib Nazim; not have been declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind;
- not have been dismissed, removed or compulsorily retired from public service on the grounds of moral turpitude; not possess assets which are inconsistent with his declaration of assets or justifiable means;

- not have been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction on a charge of corrupt practice involving moral turpitude or misuse of power or authority under any law for the time being in force; and
- not fail to attend a training course as required under section 189 of the Local Government Ordinance 2001.

Worth noting is that under the new law there is no literacy requirement (reading or writing in any language) in order for one to vote in local elections considering the low literacy rates prevailing in the country. This rule is a big leap from the previous ones, which practically limited the voting exercise to a fewer constituency, excluding the majority comprising the illiterate population, the bulk of whom are women.

## **Philippines**

### **Local Government Levels**

The country is divided into 14 administrative regions, 79 provinces, 115 cities, and 1496 municipalities, under which are 41, 944 barangays as of 2002. The barangay is the smallest political unit.

The Local Government Code enacted in 1991 moved for the decentralization or devolution of five basic services (health, agriculture, social welfare, public works, and environment); increased people's participation in governance and local development provided for the election of local officials every three years; increased the share of LGUs in internal revenue allotments and broadened their tax powers mandated them to undertake creative revenue generation schemes; and underscored the president exercises general supervision, but not control over local officials.

The LGUs are responsible for (1) managing the local administrative machinery and the implementation of national and

local policies and programs; (2) engaging in development planning; (3) delivering basic services to address the welfare of their respective constituencies; (4) formulating and enforcing laws, rules, and regulations affecting various types of activities in their respective jurisdictions. Unlike in Pakistan, Filipino LGU officials have fixed term limits. They can only be elected to serve for three consecutive terms.

The local government structures in the Philippines and Pakistan are shown in Figure 5.

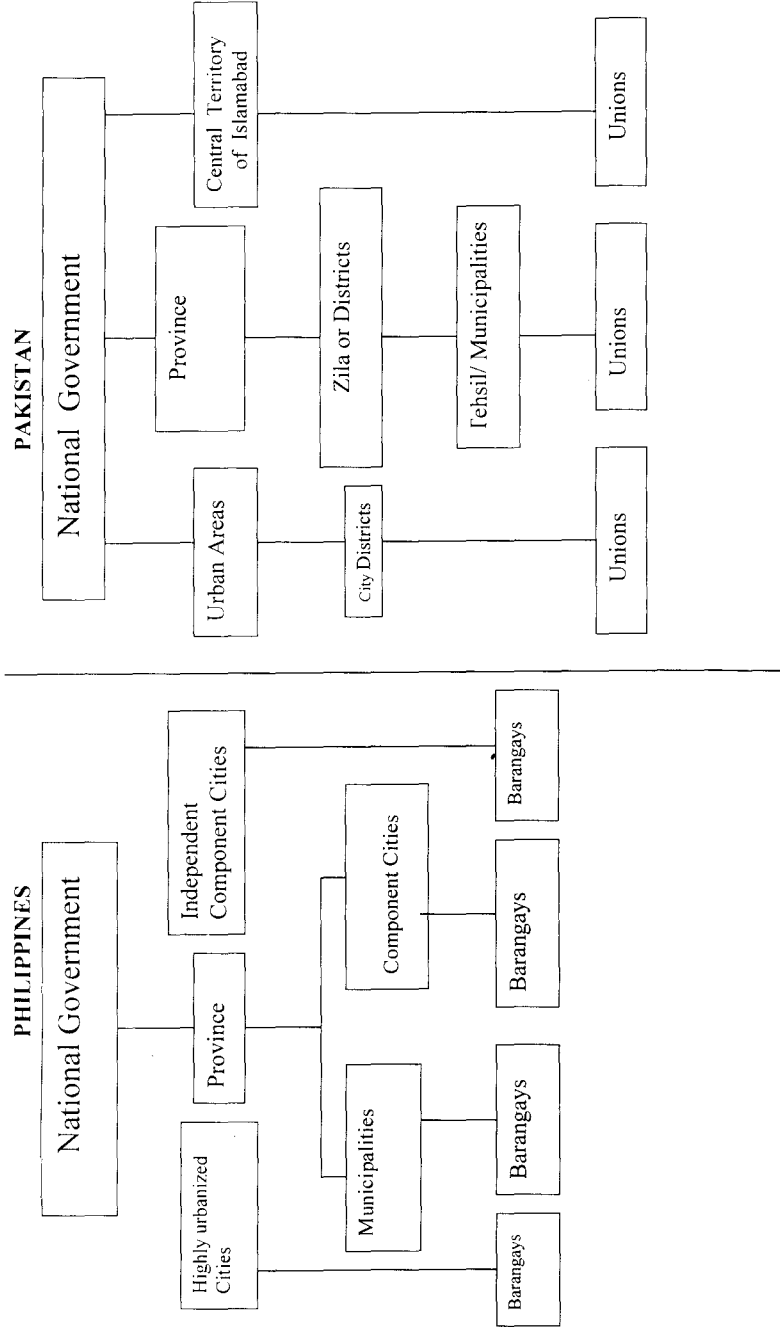
### **Local Government Elections**

Local elections are held every three years by direct elections through secret balloting. Except for residency, citizenship and other minimum requirements, Filipinos can vote and be voted whatever their party affiliations are. Party membership is not a requirement of the exercise of suffrage or for continued tenure in an elective local office.

The base for electoral participation in the Philippines is wider as the minimum age for voting is 15 years old for the Sangguniang Barangay (village youth council) and 18 years old for all other local elected positions.

In order for any citizen to qualify for any elected local position s/he must be a citizen of the Republic; a registered voter in the barangay, municipality, city, or province, or district where s/he intends to serve; a resident for at least one year immediately preceding the day of the election in the area; able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect; at least 23 years old for the position of provincial governor, vice governor, board members, and municipal mayor and vice-mayor; at least 21 years old for city mayor, vice mayor and councilors; 18 years old for punong barangay and barangay council member; and 15 years old for the Sangguniang Kabataan.

Figure 5. Tiers of Local Governments



#### **D. Women's Situation in Pakistan**

Because of economic pressures and the dissolution of extended families in urban areas, more women have entered the labor force. But restrictions on their mobility limit their opportunities, and traditional notions of propriety lead families to conceal the extent of work performed by women. Moreover, the government has been hesitant to adopt policies to increase women's employment options, tenure and benefits, social protection and social security and provide support services for women. Only the poorest of women engage in work—often as midwives, sweepers, or nannies—for compensation outside the home. Few families willingly admit that women contribute to the family economically to avoid being shamed. Thus, very little information about the work women do could be gathered. Poor urban women on the other hand sell manufactured goods through middlemen. A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) commissioned national study in 1992 on women's economic activity showed the poor conditions of work and state of underpayment of women and the wide range of informal-sector work they perform.

As shown in Table No. 3, UN figures place women at 28 percent participation in the labor force and female adult literacy rate at 25 percent. Maternal mortality rate is high at an estimated 340 per 100,000 live births. Predictably, infant mortality is high at 95/1,000 births while under five mortality rate is at 136/1,000 in 1997; prevalence of child malnutrition of those under five years of age is very high at 38 percent. Other important indicators that reflect on how the average Pakistani women live is the access to safe water with only 62 percent having access in 1995 and access to sanitation at a rate of 39 percent of the population. Contraceptive prevalence is at 24 percent between 1990-1998 (World Bank, 2000).

Other than poverty or material deprivation and little public services, Pakistani women experience various kinds of political, social and cultural discrimination and oppression under Islamic laws and traditions. Mobility is restricted to home and among certain Muslim sects, if a woman leaves the house she has to cover herself with a tentlike garment called burqah. These restrictive customs impede the campaign to eradicate illiteracy, and hamper their access to employment opportunities in the economy, in promoting change in the perception of women's roles and status, social interaction and self-development, and their gaining a public voice both within and outside of the political process.

While the Constitution provides that women and men are equal before the law, women have very little economic power and have very slim opportunities for political participation as voters or to vie as candidates for political positions, except for a few women who are born into wealthy and influential families.

Unlike in the Philippines, where Congress has passed a compendium of laws to change discriminatory and iniquitous arrangements, legal reforms in Pakistan came later and slower. Early family laws limited women's rights to inheritance, property acquisition, marriage and divorce, and mobility outside the home. Legal jurisprudence were mostly biased in favor of men. Poverty, arranged marriages, and the dowry system brought suffering to thousands of mostly child or very young brides, early motherhood, and domestic violence.

## **Philippines**

UNDP 1997 figures places women at 38 percent participation in the labor force and female adult literacy rate at 94 percent. Maternal mortality rate is moderately high at an estimated 210 per 100,000 live births. Equally, infant mortality is moder-

**Table No. 3**  
**Comparison of Socio-Economic Development**  
**Indicators between the Philippines and Pakistan<sup>1</sup>**

UN Measures	Philippines	Pakistan
Surface area (1996)	300,000 sq. kms.	796,000 sq. kms.
Population in Millions (1998)	75.1 millions	131.6 millions
Ave. ann. pop. growth rate (1990-98)	2.6%	2.8%
Population density	252/sq. km.	171/sq. km.
Gross National Product (US\$B) 1998	78.9 Billions	63.2 billions
Ave. GNP growth rate % (97-98)	0.1	5.0
Rank 1998	41	44
GNP per capita	US\$1050	US\$480
HDI Rank 1997	77	138
Ave. GNP capita growth rate % (1997-98)	-2.1	2.5
Percentage share of income of Consumption*	(1994 survey)	(1996 survey)
1. Lowest 20% of pop	5.9%	9.4%
2. Highest 20% of pop	49.6%	41.2%
Life expectancy at birth (1997)		
Female	70 years	63
Male	67 years	61
% of those below Poverty Line (1989-1994)	41%	34%
Prevalence of child malnutrition % of children under 5 yrs. old	30	38
Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births	35	95
Under age 5 mortality rate/1000	41	136
Access to safe water (% of pop with access in 1995)	83	62

\* Based on expenditure shares by percentile of population and ranked by per capita expenditure.

<sup>1</sup> Figures were taken from 1999/2000 World Bank World Development Report.



UN Measures <sup>2</sup>	Philippines	Pakistan
Access to sanitation (% of pop with access in 1995)	77	39
Public expenditure on health % of GDP 1990-1997	1.3	0.8
Female % of Labor Force		
1980	35%	23%
1998	38%	28%
Literacy rate % of people aged 15 and above (1997)		
Female	94%	25%
Male	95%	55%
Maternal Mortality Rate/100,000 live births (1990-1997)	210	340
Total fertility rate/woman (1997)	3.6	5.0
Contraceptive prevalence rate 5 of women aged 16-49 1990-98	48	24
Life expectancy at birth (1997)		
Female	70 years	63
Male	67 years	61
Gender Related Development Index (1997) Rank	65	116
Gender Related Development Index (1997) Value	0.736	0.472
Gender Empwt Measure Rank	45	101
Gender Empwt Measure Value	0.480	0.176
Seats in Parliament by women 1997	12.9%	2%
Female administrators/Managers	34.8%	4.3%
Female Professionals and Technical Workers	65.1%	21%
Women's Real Capita Income	\$2,510	\$701

<sup>2</sup>Figures were taken from the UNDP Human Development Report 1999.

ately high at 35/1,000 births while mortality rate among children under the age of five is at 41/1,000; prevalence of child malnutrition of those under 5 years of age is high at 30 percent. Other important indicators that reflect on the common Filipino women is their access to safe water with 83 percent having access in 1995 while 77 percent have access to sanitation. Contraceptive prevalence is double from that of Pakistan at 48 percent between 1990-1998 (World Bank, 2000).

However, despite of the more liberal laws pertaining to family relations, economic and educational opportunities; broader political participation, and Filipinas getting relatively better treatment than many other women in other countries like the Pakistanis, it is a long way before full equality could be achieved. Among the gender issues and concerns identified in the PPGD in 1995 include the following: (a) disproportionate representation in top-level positions; (b) gender-based discrimination from hiring, training, scholarship to promotion; (c) limited opportunities for professional growth of female employees; (d) inadequate support systems/services to ease the multiple burdens of working mothers (day care centers); (e) anti-sexual harassment and other forms of VAW in the workplace; (f) inadequate resource and priority for the implementation of capability building and advocacy activities for top level official and personnel; (g) disproportionate number of women in all governance levels, especially in leadership and decision-making.

## E. Gender Policy through the years

### Pakistan

As early as the 1930s elite women have already campaigned for revision of discriminatory and iniquitous laws. These were like oasis in a desert in a society under Islam. Their goal was to gain better treatment for women under a regime of discrimina-

tory and oppressive laws. They got the support of a few influential gentlemen among whom was Pakistan's founding father, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In a speech in 1944, he stated that:

*“No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live”* (Pakistan NCSW website).

In 1948, the women mobilized support for the passage of the *Sharia* Law, the Islamic canon law based on the teachings of the Koran and Muhammedan traditions as interpreted by men, to recognize a woman's right to inherit all forms of property.

Reforms to promote equality and equity for men and women in legislation was given a boost with the set-up of the Commission on Marriage and Family Laws in 1955. Headed by no less than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Commission was tasked to examine the laws governing marriage, divorce, and maintenance.

Even when the campaign for the inclusion of a Charter on Women's Rights in the 1956 constitution did not succeed, the women persevered in their lobby in parliament succeeding this time in amending the discriminatory 1961 Muslim Family Ordinance that covered marriage and divorce.

Again, women's lobby led to the inclusion in Article 25 of the 1973 Pakistani Constitution of a provision that states that all citizens are equal before the law, are entitled to equal protection and that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex.

In 1975, the government formed the Pakistan Women's Rights Committee chaired by the state Attorney General. Among others, the Committee recommended the (1) improvement of women's socio-economic conditions and (2) modification of family laws to facilitate women's gaining of their children's custody and family support. As divorce can be obtained legally in Pakistan, divorces were more often filed by men than women, leaving the latter the responsibility for the children's care.

During President Zia ul-Haq's military regime (1977-88), educated women, mostly in big cities, formed groups to protect their rights against discrimination under Zia's Islamization program. They articulated their objections to the 1979 enforcement of the *Hudood* Ordinances focusing on the provisions on adultery (*zina*) and rape (*zina-bil-jabr*). Under the said law a man could be convicted of *zina* only if he was actually observed to have committed the offense by other men. But a woman could be convicted simply by getting pregnant. The Sharia law gained international prominence in recent months when it was invoked in the widely publicized case of Amina Lawal in the Islamic regions of northern Nigeria. After having been divorced from her husband, she had a child by another man. The Sharia lower court convicted her for adultery and meted her the punishment of stoning to death. Fortunately, due to international outcry, the Court of Appeals overturned the lower court's decision.

Playing a major role in the legal reforms struggle was the Women's Action Forum (WAF) established in 1981 in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The group worked as a collective formulating policy statements and engaging in political action to safeguard women's legal position such as the impending Penal Code and other proposed legal measures they perceived to be discriminatory to women and compromising women's civil sta-

tus. They questioned various interpretations of Islamic laws such as the argument that women and men cannot participate as legal equals in economic affairs; and published their positions.

With the CEDAW and a growing vocal women's movement, the Pakistani government established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1983. Like its Filipino counterpart, the CSW was a recommendatory body responsible for: (1) studying and identifying the rights and responsibilities of women under Islam; (2) proposing measures to safeguard these rights; (3) recommending interventions to eradicate "ignorance, social evils, poverty and diseases" and (4) identifying policy programs to enable government to provide appropriate education, health and employment opportunities for women. But the CSW was short-lived. It was abolished after a few years only to be resurrected almost two decades later.

WAF continued to lead public protests against the promulgation of the Law of Evidence, and the *Shariat* Bill of 1986, which decreed that all laws in Pakistan should conform to Islamic law pointing out that Islamic law would become identified solely with the conservative interpretation by Zia's government.

The women's struggles for legal reforms trained women groups to become more discerning. These gave them self-confidence, the capacity to analyze and join the discourse about women's position in Islam, women's roles in a modern Islamic state, issues of evidence for specific personal laws; and become more visible voices in the public's consciousness. The discussions were sparked by the government's attempts to formalize a specific interpretation of Islamic law which could potentially impinge on every person's personhood and freedoms such as mandatory dress codes for women or issues regarding females

competing in international sports events (Pakistan Government website). All these made them prove that women can play a more active role in politics.

In 1994, the Commission on Inquiry for Women was set-up with a mandate to review all existing laws that are discriminatory to women and which run counter to the Constitutional provision giving equal rights to women and men.

With the revival of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in 2000 and the recent policy changes in the Local Government Ordinance and the Elections Law, women gained greater public spaces for personal development, for political participation and decision-making to transform the cultural environment.

Today, the women's movement has shifted its strategy from reacting to government legislation to focusing on three primary goals: securing women's political representation in the National Assembly; working to raise women's consciousness, particularly about family planning; and countering suppression of women's rights by defining and articulating positions on events as they occur in order to raise public awareness.

Mainstream women's groups like the All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA), the Pakistan Women Lawyers' Association (PWLA), and the Business and Professional Women's Association (BPWA), are supporting small-scale projects throughout the country focusing on instituting legal aid for indigent women, opposing the gendered segregation of universities, and publicizing and condemning the growing incidents of violence against women. The PWLA produced a series of films educating women about their legal rights; the BPWA supports a comprehensive project inside Yakki Gate, a poor area inside the walled city of Lahore; and the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi promotes networking among women who work at home so they

need not be dependent on middlemen to acquire raw materials and market the clothes they produce.

## **Philippines**

Filipino women, like their Pakistani sisters, had long been active in anti-colonial and anti-war campaigns, and also lobbied with Congress for better treatment and in transforming discriminatory laws and disadvantageous policies and programs to women.

Section 14, Article II of the 1987 Constitution declares that “the State recognizes the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.”

In 1975 the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was established as the government machinery for the advancement of women mandated to advise the President and assists the Cabinet on policies and programs affecting women. It serves as the government’s “conscience” on issues affecting women’s status and advancement as well as a resource center for women.

The NCRFW with civil society actively lobbied for legislative changes and policies to promote equality and women’s empowerment. The 1987 Constitution, the Local Government Code of 1991, and the New Family Code (1987) already incorporate gender equality in the public and the private domains. A string of other policies that promote this and women’s empowerment, were promulgated especially after the Women in Development and Nation building Act was enacted in 1992.

Sections 16 and 17 of the **Local Government Code** stipulate that LGUs must promote the general welfare and provide basic services and facilities to their constituents, including the discharge of devolved responsibilities. Thus, because women

constitute half of the population, it is but important that their specific immediate or practical and strategic needs and interests are addressed.

The *Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW)* approved through an Executive Order 1989 was a companion document to the country's Medium Term Development Plan. In sum, the PDPW "served as a mandate for integrating the women's agenda in the mainstream plan, and as grounding for considering gender issues in discussing macro-economic policies as well as in assessing concrete programs and projects" (Hoculada and Pineda-Ofreneo, 2000). Formulated from a series of consultations with women's groups and bureaucrats, the PDPW paved the way for the enactment of many legislative measures that promoted gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, women's issues earned "legitimacy" in national planning and decision making (ibid.).

*Republic Act 7192* known as the *Women in Development and Nation Building Act* was enacted in 1992 to promote "the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building." Among others, it calls on government authorities to allocate funds to support activities for women, ensure that women and men equally benefit and directly participate in development programs and projects, and reexamine all government regulations, circulars, issuances and procedures for gender bias.

The Philippines formulated the *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025* was adopted through Executive Order No. 273 and which spells out the gender-related goals for various sectors and sets policies, strategies, and programs to attain them. Through the PPGD, planners and advocates expect to bring about national development that is "equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of hu-



man rights, supportive of self-determination and the actualization of human potentials” (PPGD, 1995).

In recent years, executive orders and memorandum circulars provide the mandate and guidelines for gender mainstreaming in national government agencies and LGUs. In 1998, Congress started to include and passed a provision in the *General Appropriations Act* (GAA) directing government functionaries to formulate their respective **GAD Plans**, and allocate at least five per cent of their annual budget known as the **GAD Budget**. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) **Memorandum Circular No. 98-148** ordered local government units to mobilize resources to incorporate GAD programs in their local development plans. A 2001 **Joint Memorandum Circular** (JMC-2001) was issued by the DILG, the Department of Budget Management (DBM) and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) providing the guidelines in implementing the gender policy at the local level with the objective to “assist LGUs in responding to ender issues of their locality through the formulation of their GAD Plan and integrating the same in their Local Development Plans” (JMC No. 2001-01).

But while gender mainstreaming is gaining ground in several provinces, cities and municipalities, a big majority have yet to start their own. Based on DBM figures as of July, 2003, only 743 LGUs have formulated their GAD Plans, a smaller number have put in place their respective GAD programs with corresponding budget allocations. Among these are: the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Iloilo, La Union, Ilocos Norte and Antique; the cities of Angeles, San Fernando in La Union, Bacolod, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, and Quezon City. The push for gender policies and programs were the initiatives coming from the local women non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and peoples

organizations (POs), or a partnership of both Local Government Units (LGUs) and NGOs/POs. For a few under gender-sensitive local chief executives, it is the LGU that introduced them. Found in Table No. 5 is the List of LGUs that have formulated their GAD Plans as of July, 2003.

## **F. National and local machineries to promote Gender equality and equity**

### **Pakistan**

The country's National Commission on the Status of Women was revived in 2000 and which has the mandate to realize the vision for an egalitarian and progressive Pakistani society. This is envisioned to be achieved through concerted action by the state and civil society in promoting change and adopting measures to achieve women's advancement and gender equality. NCSW aims to bring about an environment in which women and men realize their full potentials and participate equally to create and sustain a social order enlightened by Islamic values.

At the local level, there are other mechanisms newly set-up for achieving these goals. In addition to the trainings, the Women Interactive Network (WIN) was established as the organization network of women councilors at all levels that will forge closer and more effective communication among them; and twenty community newsletters in pilot tehsils were put up by the women councilors to serve as the voice of women in the community and raise awareness among women. Focal Groups at every local government level were encouraged to be organized. to maintain data for community activities, assist in flow of information, interaction and coordination. To facilitate communication the W3P Website was developed.

## **Philippines**

When it was established in 1975, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was mandated to: (1) Formulate and prioritize rural or countryside development programs or projects to provide income and employment opportunities to women in the rural areas and thus, prevent their heavy migration from rural to urban or foreign countries; (2) Assess the extent to which their programs and/or projects integrates women in the development process and the impact of said programs or projects on women, including their implications in enhancing the self reliance of women in improving their income; (3) Ensure the active participation of women and women's organizations in the development programs and/or projects including their involvement in the planning design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation thereof; (4) Collect sex-disaggregated data and include such data in its program/project paper proposal or strategy; (5) Ensure that programs and/or projects are designed so that the percentage of women who received assistance is approximately proportionate to either their traditional participation in the targeted activities or their proportion of the population, whichever is higher; (6) Assist women in activities that are of critical significance to their self-reliance and development.

Since 1986, the NCRFW has reorganized and has redirected its focus to respond to the new mission the new members of the Board of Commissioners has set for the institution. This was "to make government work for gender equality."

From its original functions stated above, the Commission reoriented its new responsibilities to: (1) Institute the gender responsiveness of national development plans and coordinate the preparation, assessment and updating of the national Plan for Women, ensure its implementation and monitor the perfor-

mance of government agencies in the implementation of the Plan at all levels; (2) Undertake continuing advocacy to promote economic, social and political empowerment of women and provide technical assistance in the setting-up and strengthening of mechanisms on gender mainstreaming; and (3) Ensure that the gains achieved by Filipino women due to Philippine culture and tradition shall be preserved and enhanced in the process of modernization.

From then on NCRFW has performed a wide variety of functions which include: (a) promoting mainstreaming gender perspective to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in government policies and services and monitoring the implementation of the five percent GAD Budget Policy. In partnership with civil society, the Commission developed tools for capacity building to establish institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming at all levels of governance and decision making. It formulated guidelines and provided technical support for GAD mainstreaming for national agencies and LGUs. It carried out research on women's situation, legislative measures and executive directives pertaining to equalizing opportunities and development for men and women, performance indicators for gender mainstreaming, etc.. It conducted seminars for awareness raising and capability building for gender responsive planning. It initiated the lobby for new laws such as the Congressional bills on domestic violence, against rape and trafficking, protection for migrant workers, a framework on the integration of women in the economy, and reproductive health, among others ((Honculada and Ofreneo, 2000).

In the bureaucracy, equality advocates later called EQUADS and women workers organized themselves as monitors known as WINGS for Women In Government Service. At the LGU level, the GAD perspective was mainstreamed with GAD Focal

Points set up in the LGUs in the form of GAD Councils, GAD Centers, or GAD Teams. With the active advocacy and participation of organized women in the communities and from sectors working on specific issues, a very participatory process of composing local Focal Points has become a pattern. In most instances the establishment of local GAD Focal Points were at the initiative of NGOs/POs in partnership with LGUs.

The various gender mainstreaming components have been undertaken by LGUs that include: generating sex-disaggregated data for policy and program formulation, gender-responsive planning, allocation of a GAD budget, orienting rank and file personnel for gender-sensitivity and awareness raising on gender and development issues, etc.

### **Successes and Challenges in Policy and Program Reforms in Engendering Local Governance**

Given the equality and equity policies and programs described above, were the goals to involve proportionately more women in governance and to transform their lives achieved? Did these contribute to achieving the third of the seven United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which aim to promote gender quality and empower women by eliminating gender disparity? Do the mechanisms established to pursue those goals address women and men's specific needs and interests?

It may not have been all achieved. But definitely, there has been an increased awareness and commitment by the Philippine and Pakistani governments to address the issues. There are also many opportunities for broadening and improving from what have been accomplished. There are many lessons to be gained as we examine the rationale for instituting their respec-

tive policy initiatives to ensure that women eventually gain equal opportunities to participate in governing their own communities/localities that they increase their capacities for doing so.

Sociologist Debbie Bundler declared that the Philippines was one of the first countries now numbering 40, which gave importance to institutionalize the GAD budget. Pakistan on the other hand was only one of the 14 countries that have passed the policy to reserve seats for women in political decision-making and other underrepresented sectors in society. Two of them, Pakistan and India, are developing countries.

### **A. Implementing Equality and Policy in local governments**

#### **Pakistan**

The country's 33 percent Local Seats Reservation policy was a direct response by the national government to the international advocacy for equal opportunities for decision-making and development efforts for men and women. It was a policy advocacy by the India and Pakistan, the two with strong women's movements in South Asia. The policy is an affirmative action buttressed by the policy for decentralization from the national to local governments. In addition, the new election law has opened the electoral process to the greater majority of the population who are illiterate, and therefore making suffrage now a universal right for its citizens.

The 33 percent local seats reservation policy aims to (1) increase the number of women to participate in local decision making processes; (2) build the knowledge and skills needed by women leaders to participate in local governance; (3) ensure that local development policies, programs and projects equally benefit men and women; and (4) eradicate discrimination, em-

power women, and promote gender equality and equity in government and society.

To enable Pakistan's Ministry of Women and Development to attain these goals, it launched a massive capability building for women local officials elected on the reserved seats at different LGU levels. This project which is discussed below, is in consonance with the capability building program for all elected local government officials in different levels. It is organized by the National Reconstruction Board (NRB), a newly established government body that shall ensure that the Local Government Ordinance of 2001 is enforced effectively and uniformly in the LGUs.

### **Capacity Building for Elected Local Government Officials**

Mandated under the new law is the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) tasked to train LGU officials and develop monitoring mechanism for local administration, with the help of contracted experts. It coordinates with the Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) mandated to monitor the performance of district administration and line departments. In addition to the trainings, the NRB produced and circulated 25,000 copies in Urdu language the brochure that provides a sketch of the new local government system and structure for the common understanding of all elected local officials. These were aimed to enhance the institutional capacity of newly formed local governments.

The training that was launched in 2001 involved the following activities:

Phase 1 — The training of thirty (30) master trainers who were themselves elected officials who will in turn orient

Union Council members for six days in both English and Urdu;

Phase 2 — The formulation of modules, curriculum and syllabus for the training of other categories of elected local functionaries such as the Zila, Tehsil and Union Nazims and Naib Nazims, Tehsil and Zila Councilors on reserved seats of district and Tehsil municipal and Union administration; and

Phase 3 — Follow-up trainings for all categories of elected representatives.

A significant aspect of this capacity building effort was the integration of a gender sensitization and development of pictorial modules for illiterate target groups, particularly women.

### **The training component for women councilors in Pakistan**

The fact that 75 percent of adult Pakistani women are illiterates limits their capacity for political participation. It is admitted that while numbers are necessary, this is not sufficient condition for women to make a difference in decision-making at the local level. While a critical mass of 40,000 women councilors was created, still the challenges are numerous and varied.

Based on a UNDP survey, 79 percent of the women councilors are first timers, and 59 percent of them are illiterate. Thus, education and skills training are basic components of the Ministry's national program for women's political participation.

With the support of the United Nations Development Program Pakistan's Ministry of WDSWSE launched a capacity building project to train 40,000 women councilors in 103 districts in the four provinces. W3P (Women's Political Participation Project) is a two-year project aimed at: (1) fostering soli-



parity, cooperation and consensus between and among the women from different local councils by understanding each other's needs and complementing their perspective; (2) enhance the capabilities of the councilors in fulfilling their legislative functions; and (3) strengthen the bonds with the women's groups.

The first batch of trainers or mentors were District Councilors, who in turn, identified potential training assistants, trainers/mentors for the second phase. They are women councilors at the tehsil and union levels.

In Table No. 4, a comparison of the gender policies in the Philippines and Pakistan is presented.

Because of resource constraints, only one-third of all women local councilors at different levels were trained for the second phase or the "nurturing" phase where the Lead Mentors and their team will share their skills, knowledge and insights with women Tehsil and Union Councilors. From this group, a group of trainors will be chosen and further trained to be able to functions as peer trainers/Mentors for the remaining two-thirds of women local Councilors.

The curriculum for mentoring and nurturing phases was prepared based on a Training Needs Assessment conducted in all provinces in first quarter of 2002. The following topics were deemed priority:

1. Gender sensitivity and Awareness raising
2. Constituency Serving
3. Legislative Agenda Setting
4. Advocacy Skills Building
5. Allocation of Budgetary Resources
6. Legislative Executive Relations

The relay method or peer-mentoring system based on the principle of women learning from women was expected to (1) provide the motivation in building the Women's Political School

for women in politics, who, in turn, will help each other to mentor other politicians; (2) enable women to rise the higher rungs of the political ladder; and (3) increase women's representation and participation in decision making (W3P brochure).

It may be too early to evaluate the program but this initial year, tremendous transformation has been found to be remarkable. For one, it has brought gender equality concerns in the national and local government agenda and public consciousness; two, 33 percent of all local elected government posts are reserved for and now held by women; and three, the development of a critical mass of women to effect significant changes in decision making and policy/program formulation and implementation at the local levels.

It is expected that with more women in local decision making, delivery of basic services such as literacy and education, and health needs among the majority of the population will be prioritized and hastened. Table No. 4 compares the policy implementation in the two countries.

## Philippines

The GAD Budget Policy of allocating five percent of LGU funds for GAD activities was the result of the promulgation of RA 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act that mandates government agencies to allocate five percent of its overseas development aid to GAD programs, project and activities. It was later expanded by way of executive memorandum and directives **that sets five percent of the LGU development fund for allocation to GAD PPAs**. The development fund is calculated as equivalent to 20 percent of the LGU Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). The IRA, in turn, is computed on the basis of proportionate tax earnings of the locality and vis-à-vis its population size.

**Table 4**  
**Gender Policy and Local Governance**  
**in the Philippines and Pakistan**

COMPARISON POINTS	PHILIPPINES	PAKISTAN
Gender Policy	GAD Budget Policy	33% Local Seats Reservation Policy
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote gender equality and equity and achieve women's empowerment in local government and communities.</li> <li>2. Ensure adequate resources made available to mainstream gender in local policies, programs, projects (PPAs).</li> <li>3. Provide the venue for drawing greater participation of civil society for local program planning implementation.</li> <li>4. Make LGUs accountable about where money being collected is spent on and how this is prioritized.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the number of women leaders to participate in local decision-making processes.</li> <li>2. Build the knowledge and skills of women leaders to take part in local governance.</li> <li>3. Ensure that local development policies, programs, and projects equally benefit men and women.</li> <li>4. Eradicate discrimination, empower women, and promote gender equality and equity in government and society.</li> </ol>
Other Gender Policies to promote gender equality and equity	<p>Philippine Development Plan for Women (1989) / Philippine Plan for Gender and Development (1995).</p> <p>The New Family Code (1984).</p> <p>Constitutional Provision Article 25 (1973)</p> <p>Women in Development &amp; Nation Building Act (1992)</p> <p>Local Government Code (1991).</p> <p>Joint Memorandum Circular for LGUs 2001.</p>	<p>National Policy on Women section of National Plan of Action (1998).</p> <p>Amendments to the Sharia Law (1948) and Muslim Family Ordinance (1986).</p> <p>Constitutional Provision Article 14 (1987).</p> <p>Local Government Code (2001). New Elections Law (2001).</p>
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alter traditional concept of a woman's self-worth as being subordinate to men.</li> <li>2. Empower women to fully participate in political structures and processes.</li> <li>3. Transform the economic system to ensure equal access of men and women to productive opportunities.</li> <li>4. Form families that share responsibilities in earning, parenting, domestic work and public service.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the recognition and consistent implementation of the Constitutional provision on the inalienable rights of all citizens as equal human beings.</li> <li>2. Promote genuine women's empowerment and gender equality.</li> <li>3. Review and repeal identified discriminatory legislation.</li> <li>4. Provide conducive and enabling environment for women not to face discrimination.</li> </ol>

COMPARISON POINTS	PHILIPPINES	PAKISTAN
	5. Bring about socio-cultural changes to eradicate women's discrimination.	5. Increase interventions to correct gender inequities in education and health.
	6. Incorporate women's equality and development concern into the legal system (PDPW).	6. Carry out appropriate measures to deal with 12 globally recognized urgent areas for action laid out in the 1995 BPA.
	7. Ensure incorporation of gender perspective in government's human dev't, economic & industrial development sectors.	7. Set-up institutional mechanisms for operationalization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GAD policy and programs.
	8. Situate women's concerns within the wider framework of new developments as globalization, rise of megacities, rapid info & communication development, etc.	
<b>Effects on Local Governance</b>	1. Increased public awareness of GAD issues among LGUs.	1. Brought gender equality concerns in the local government agenda and public consciousness.
	2. More women engaged in LGU development such as running in elections, negotiating with LGU officials for better PPAs and service delivery.	2. 33% of all local elected government posts are reserved for and now held by women.
	3. Strengthened LGU capability to mainstream gender in local policies, programs and projects.	3. Development of a critical mass of women to effect difference in decision making and policy/program formulation and implementation at the local level.
<b>National / Local machineries for implementing policies</b>		Women's Rights Committee (1968).
	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (1975).	Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women (1983).
		Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Special Education (1998).
		National Commission on the Status of Women (2000).
	GAD Focal Points in National Government Agencies.	Women Interactive Network
	GAD Focal Points in LGUs	Focal groups
		W3P website
<b>% of Women Elected to Local Government Leadership posts</b>	13% (2001)	17% (2002)
<b>Problems/Challenges</b>	1. Lack of awareness and commitment among local government officials.	1. Not many women are literate and therefore, the capability to take on local govt posts.
	2. Lack of common understanding of the GAD policy.	2. Reserved seats policy used as an excuse to keep women from contesting directly elected posts.

COMPARISON POINTS	PHILIPPINES	PAKISTAN
	3. Lack of continuity and monitoring system, especially with administration change.	3. Women do not have their own constituency.
	4. Lack of clear guidelines for implementation.	4. Lack of specific guidelines to implement policy at the LGU level.
	5. Lack of technical capabilities of LGUs to integrate GAD.	5. Rigid norms and stifling socio-cultural traditions hampering women's mobility and participation in political and social interaction.
	6. NGOs/POs lack of knowledge and skills and political savvy.	6. Majority of women lack self-confidence to take on leadership roles.
<b>Capacity building being undertaken</b>	On the job training for gender responsive planning and mainstreaming in LGUs.	Training for all local Women in Politics Women Learning from Women. Training for all Elected Local Government Officials.

**Table No. 5**  
**National Summary on LGUs with GAD Plans**  
**As of July 18, 2003**

Region	Province	City	Municipality	Total No.
Region I	4	7	100	111
Region II	0	0	31	31
Region III	0	2	16	18
Region IV-A	3	6	81	90
Region IV-B	2	1	7	10
Region V	0	2	15	17
Region VI	6	4	49	59
Region VII	4	12	121	137
Region VIII	0	0	0	0
Region IX	0	0	19	19
Region X	4	9	45	58
Region XI	4	4	35	43
Region XII	0	3	4	7
CARAGA	4	3	54	61
CAR	4	1	70	75
NCR	0	0	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>743</b>

The 2001 DILG — DBM-NCRFW Joint Memo Circular for LGUs lists the basic standard services and programs for which the GAD Budget could be allocated for at the barangay, city or municipality or provincial levels. It sets the components of the ideal GAD Plan which must contain the following: (1) Identified GAD Related issues, (2) Expected Output and target beneficiaries, (3) Implementation period, (4) performance indicators, and (5) Amount of budget allocated. LGUs implementing the policy are advised to meet the institutional standards set for in assessing the LGU performance in its GAD efforts. These are: (a) presence of a GAD Code and other women-related ordinances; (b) presence of GAD functional mechanisms; (c) representation of women and women organizations in LGU special bodies; (d) presence of sex-disaggregated data; (e) presence of mechanisms for the participation of women in development planning, budgeting and other areas of decision-making.; and (f) increased percentage of women in decision-making positions (Annex E of 2001 DILG-DBM-NCRFW Joint Memo Circular).

Thus, if one has to look closer, the GAD budget is a commitment to ensure adequate resources are made available to mainstream gender in local policies and programs, projects and activities (PPAs); provide the venue for drawing greater participation of civil society for local programming planning and implementation.; and make LGUs accountable about where money is being collected and how this is prioritized.

Based on latest DILG figures, after two years from that directive's issuances a total of 35 out of 79 provinces (44.3%); 54 out of 112 cities (48.2%), 654 out of 1,496 municipalities (43.7%) in fifteen out of 16 regions throughout the country have complied (DILG List of LGUs with GAD Plans in Table No. 4). While the degree of implementation success vary in those LGUs, what is significant at this point is that with this policy a

total of 743 LGUs, not including the barangays, have formulated their respective GAD Plans and invariably allocated a GAD budget.

While the implementation is not all successful and often spiked with numerous obstacles, the initial experiences from the provincial to the barangay levels are encouraging. Take the case of Misamis Occidental province in northwestern Mindanao. It was one of the provinces that adopted a GAD Code and set up a mechanism for gender mainstreaming through its GAD Center. Gender is treated as a cross-cutting concerns in all the provincial departments with priority areas following the acronym CHAMPS that stands for Competence, Health, Agriculture, Maintenance of peace and order, Preservation of environment and Social services. Because of an integrated gender-sensitive health program of the municipality of Balayan in Batangas, it has also won a Galing Pook Award. The program features a continuing education campaign on violence against women and gender sensitivity in partnership with an education institution. Sex disaggregated data are collected and used for planning, design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of provincial programs. The GAD program also includes economic and livelihood assistance, counseling and community organizing for women, and Center. At the barangay level, Brgy. Labangon in Cebu City is a model for having made use of its GAD budget in 2000 for cross-cutting projects for different sectors in the community, mainly for capability building that includes advocacy on children's rights, organizing students against violence, livelihood and productive skills development, medical clinic for senior citizens (Valdeavilla and Manapat: 2001).

The experiences of the above LGUs in the Philippines encourage more LGUs to do the same and replicate them in their respective localities. Overall, these initiatives have (1) increased

public awareness of GAD issues among LGUs; (2) engaged more women in LGU development such as running in election, negotiating with LGU officials for better PPAs and service delivery; and (3) strengthened LGU capability to mainstreaming gender in local policies, programs and projects.

## **B. Summary and Comparative Analysis**

As shown in the background information and data in Table No. 3, the historical colonial context, economic conditions, social development benefits (health and sanitation facilities) and political involvement of majority of women in both countries only differ slightly. It is only in the social aspect such as freedom for physical mobility and social interaction, and therefore, in literacy and training opportunities, that Filipino women have an edge over their Pakistani sisters.

As to the gender policies, while the entry point of the policy and program initiatives in both countries are different, the strategic goals are similar. The focus of the policy in the Philippines is in the local development plan and budget to implement it. In Pakistan, it is to develop more women decision makers and implementers in the LGUs so that mainstreaming GAD PPAs will be possible in the future.

Because of the higher level of literacy and wider base of LGUs knowledgeable and capable of implementing GAD PPAs, it can be considered that the Philippine case has had a higher level of policy implementation success. However, Pakistan's determined and massive efforts to draw more women to get involved and get on the job training for self-improvement, public life, and political leadership, considering the closed culture and the level of functional literacy of the population in general and the women in particular, must be appreciated and recognized.



At present, only one out of four Pakistani women can read, write and count. This is not really so different for men whose literacy level is at 55% or just a little more than half of the male population. Finally realizing that only when the greater majority of the people could they attain true democracy and people's empowerment, the Pakistani government passed the corresponding Elections Law and Local Government Ordinance. These interventions are nothing but revolutionary. These are unthinkable for majority of the women just a few years back.

The Philippines is noted for its compendium of legal instruments addressing various specific concerns for women in situation of discriminations and inequity. It has also earned the record as being ahead of other countries in having a law about gender budget and having a substantially decentralized government under the 1991 LGC (Bundler:14). But in Pakistan, amending rigid statutes was a central issue in the anti-discrimination campaigns in the post-colonial period, especially those involving marriage and family relations. As early as 1955, the Pakistani women collectively initiated campaigns for better treatment for women, and changes to less discriminatory laws and practices in the public and private spheres.

In the Philippines, the five percent GAD budget policy was a valuable advocacy tool and in catalyzing GAD programs (Caharian et al: 44-55). It has become the vehicle for bringing gender equality government agenda and public awareness; enabled more women in terms of numbers and capacities to be engaged in governance functions; and paved the way for more gender-responsive public programs and services. Pakistan's policy for women's reserve seats in local councils provides that 33% percent of all local elected government posts are reserved for women, although for now, 17% are held by them. This is necessary to develop a critical mass of women to effect difference in

decision-making and policy/program formulation and implementation at the local levels.

In both the Philippines and Pakistan, their respective women's movements played a significant role in lobbying for the legal foundations and in partnering with the LGUs to implement the policies to advance equality and equity for men and women and women's empowerment. It is worth acknowledging that their women continue to be active catalysts in bringing about legal, social and political and cultural transformation. Despite many social and material limitations and obstacles, the women have persevered to work for changes.

### **The Challenges**

In both situation the challenges are enormous. In both countries, resistance to the concept of equality were strong, especially in Pakistan, where social, religious laws and traditions do not allow women even to leave the home, except for important occasions.

The most serious obstacle for Pakistani policy advocates is the massive rate of illiteracy among women resulting in lack of women's courage to run for the local posts, and lack of capacities and self-confidence for public involvement. Another factor are the strict cultural practices and social norms that limit women's mobility outside the home and therefore stifling women's participation in politics and social activities. It is no wonder that at present, only 17 percent of the target 33 percent reserved seats are now filled. Furthermore, there are only no more than a dozen women elected by their respective electoral colleges as Nazim (local Council head) or Naib Nazim (deputy head). These two posts may be held for women elected through the reserved seats.

The other factors that hamper the full implementation of the policy in Pakistan include: lack of specific guidelines to implement at the LGU level, lack of capabilities for local development planning, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In the political realm, it is apparent that the reserved seats are used as an excuse by male-dominated political parties to keep women from contesting directly elected posts (NCSW Report 2001 in the NCSW website).

Moreover, the government's officials' bias is showing early when women's concerns are lumped with the ministry that is also concerned with other welfare sectors in the title alone. The Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education. Its title expresses it—it takes charge of traditional functions in the areas of counseling services, rehabilitation, services for the elderly, the youth and poor women. However, it has been designated the national focal machinery for women that functions as main lobbyist for gender policies for women empowerment, family protection, gender and poverty programs and women's political participation.

In the Philippines, the implementation of the GAD Budget policy was slowed down by (1) lack of awareness, appreciation and commitment among local government officials, (2) lack of common understanding of the GAD Policy; (3) Lack of technical capability to integrate GAD; (4) lack of continuity and monitoring system, especially with administration changes (Bundler:14-16). Since women NGOs and POs provide the strongest push in mainstreaming gender at the LGU level; good working relations with LGU officials is needed. But in many instances local officials are wary of them or feel threatened. And because of NGOs and POs' lack of political savvy and hardly take time to understand the nuances of local bureaucratic processes, the partnership could also break down.

While the devolution of responsibilities to the local level, as mandated by the LGC, has made a difference in integrating GAD concerns in local development planning, the Code does not provide for the allocation of the GAD budget. Bundler proposes for the amendment of the LGC to provide for such allocation (*ibid*). In assessing the situation, Bundler sums it up: "...there is still a long way to go before budgets are gender-sensitive and budget preparation is truly participatory. They also show the many obstacles that advocates and activities must overcome to ensue sustained integration of gender in budgets and implementation." (*ibid*: 5).

### C. Interventions that Could Make a Difference

Local evaluators in the Philippines propose that more practical, simple and workable tools and guidelines on gender mainstreaming should be developed to respond to expressed needs of LGUs such as training for program and project development, planning and budgeting. Local government units are encouraged to create their respective mechanisms to coordinate local planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GAD budget policy. In particular, local budget officers need to be oriented in gender budgeting and also sourcing GAD funds from local revenues. Other stakeholders are advised to familiarize with local planning and budgeting processes and schedules (Caharian et al.: 43-44) for their advocacy.

In sum, this student finds the need to:

1. Shift policy towards greater openness so that more stakeholders of economic and social development could be drawn to policy and decision-making process;
2. Review of policies and programs to determine differential impact of its decisions and programs to the different

sectors of society, especially to women/men and girls/boys;

3. Mainstream gender in community life;
4. Harness organized and active women's groups (education, policy formulation, community organizing, lobbying, conducting gender sensitivity and gender-responsive planning/budgeting skills trainings, program implementation, monitoring); and
5. Build local mainstreaming capacities by developing more women and men in decision-making positions who will act as powerful champions for GAD in policy debates.

In Pakistan, local women leaders and experts have articulated amendments to the Reserved Seats policy in the future from positions chosen under indirect election (through electoral colleges) into positions under the direct elections by their respective constituents. They emphasized that unless women are elected directly, there will be no substantial impact on the subordinate status of women in political parties.

Looking back into the proposal in the Beijing Platform of Action in the first part of this paper, the women around the world have expressed this interest. That is to be able to get into, increase their membership in, and actively participate in political parties' decision-making bodies, and be involved in a multi-party electoral political system.

While it was acknowledged that for women's empowerment, reserved seats for women was a first step forward. But a number of the very few Pakistani women politicians (in the National Assembly and Senate) have proposed that the Election Commission require political parties to field candidates on general seats. This way, women may be elected directly on reserved seats and not only through the system of proportionate representation. This way they could build their own constituencies.

At the same time that within political parties, more women are recruited into the women's wings/sections and that parties that gets elected must give winning seats to women, not only in token numbers (NCSW Workshop proceedings on Decision Making and Politics, 2002, NCSW website).

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