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Participation of Women in Philippine Politics and Society: A Situationer

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Introduction

This paper is intended to provide an overview of the status of women in the Philippine society especially in the aspect of politics and the labor market. This should be considered as a work in progress which the author aims to further develop as a comprehensive situation paper that can both provide the reader a consolidated picture of the gender equality challenge in the country and motivate them on the need to contribute in changing the so-called "divides and mirages" in Philippine sexual politics.

According to the latest gender disaggregated data, women constitute 37.9-million (49.6%) of the 76.5 million Filipinos as of May 2000. Almost 15.5-million are between ages 15 to 40 reflecting a young female population. However, while women constitute nearly half of the population, its status in the Philippine society is still characterized by sharp contradictions of obvious gains, on one hand, and glaring inequalities on the other.

One can find both major advancements for women's role and graphic gender inequality in specific areas of the society. The Human Development Report 2002 (UNDP) revealed that 35% of Filipino administrators and managers are women -- which is one of the highest in the world. Additionally, approximately 17.2% of all the legislative seats are occupied by women and 2/3 of professionals and technical workers are women. This puts the country's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) of 0.523 as the highest in East Asia. But a dark side of these gains exists. Thousands of women are discriminated in employment by virtue of marriage and parenthood. Many more are contracted for 5 months to avoid regularization of employment while a glass ceiling for women pervades in many sectors of the society – especially in the fields of politics and the economy.

Although the Philippines appears to be ahead of its neighboring countries by having 2 women presidents already, major hurdles are still in place for women to gain a firmer foothold in politics. It is still basically an elite-male dominated political landscape. While there is a perceptible increase in the number of women elected into government posts, assumption to institutional leadership does not necessarily translate into the expected degree of political clout. The question of resources also affects women's access to decision-making positions since women and men do not enjoy the same access to resources that yields power. The lack of economic power, similarly, deprives women of their rights and opportunities.

Even the framework for sectoral political representation has evolved into missed opportunity. The party-list system, which provides for a focused women representation in the House of Representatives, is not useful nowadays due to the failure of any women-based party to get any seat in the 2001 elections. Fortunately, this is compensated by incremental increases in women politicians and bureaucrats at the national and local level. Additionally, the presence of a broad and active women's movement keeps the gender discourse alive with issues like reproductive rights, anti-abuse of women in intimate relationship (AWIR), domestic violence, anti-prostitution and trafficking, anti-rape and incest, equal employment laws, creation of Commission

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on Equality of Employment of Women, amendment of the anti-sexual harassment law and even the effective use of gender and development budget.

However, it must be noted that the Philippines is known for being a “motion is substance democracy”. The consultative nature of government processes and the vocal posture of the women’s movement can be seen as one of the successes of gender discourse. But the slow legislative mill and half-hearted policy reforms makes the discourse somewhat hollow in terms of final outcomes. While the Church has been promoting greater involvement of women, its stance on reproductive health brings it to the opposite side of the women advocacies. Thus, the struggle of the women’s movement for more genuine gender equality and mainstreaming continues.

Gender Mainstreaming in Law

The Philippines is known for its very liberal and progressive Constitution that was formulated during the euphoria of People Power Revolution in 1986. Gender equality is a key element of this Charter and as enshrined in Article II Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution, “the State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.”

Considering the unequal gender relations in the country, the Constitution further provided for women representation (as one of the 9 marginalized sectors) in the legislature through the party-list system (which should cover 20% of the lower house). Finally, Article 13 Section 14 specifically mentioned that the “State shall protect working women by providing safe and healthful working conditions, taking into account their maternal functions, and such facilities and opportunities that will enhance their welfare and enable them to realize their full potential in the service of the nation”.

This legal framework promoting gender equality is in turn elaborated in various legislations and these include the following:

Local Government Code of 1991. Provides for the election of sectoral representation, including women, in local legislative councils.

Party List Law. Provides for the creation of women-oriented or women-based parties to compete under the party-list system. Women is one of the 9 sector identified in the law.

Labor Code (1989). Covers issues such as night work prohibition, specifies that employers must provide special facilities for women, prohibition of discrimination against women in respect to terms and conditions of employment, prohibition of discrimination by reason of marriage of a woman worker.

Women in Nation Building Law. Republic Act 7192 (1991) is an act promoting the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building. The law provides that a substantial portion of government resources be utilized to support programs and activities for women. The law also encourages the full participation and involvement of women in the development process and to remove gender bias in all government regulations and procedures. In relation to gender budgeting, the law specifically mandated all agencies to allocate a minimum of 5%, increasing to 30%, of all official development funds in mainstreaming gender concerns. Through executive directives however, this 5% allocation is further expanded to cover the total budget appropriations, not only development funds, of all government agencies and local government units in the country. This is known as the Gender and Development Budget or GAD.

1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law. Gave Filipino women the right to own land that previously reverted to sons and other male family members.

Republic Act 7688 (1994). An act giving representation to women in social security

commission.

1990 Day care Law (RA 6972) and 1996 Paternity Leave Act. Both of which acknowledge that children is both a parental and state responsibility.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Law. RA 7877 (1995) an act declaring sexual harassment unlawful in the employment, education or training environment.

Republic Act 7822 (1995). An act providing assistance to women engaging in micro and cottage business enterprises.

Republic Act 8353 (1997). An act expanding the definition of the crime of rape reclassifying the same as a crime against persons.

While the constitutional and legal framework acknowledges the need for gender mainstreaming, gender equality is indeed still a work in progress. Thus, one can find a myriad of projects, initiatives, and processes on the gender challenge that are corollary to gender-oriented legislations. This includes:

Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025). The National Plan for Women that consolidates the action commitments of the Philippines during the Beijing World Conference on Women. This is the over-all frame that is also the point of reference for the discussions and monitoring of gender mainstreaming.

Gender and Development Budget (GAD). Integral to the national plan, it is aimed at "institutionalizing gender concerns in the mainstream development process and agenda and not just peripheral programs and projects of the government". Concretely, it prescribes for the allocation of 5% of the government agency's/local government unit's budget on gender-responsive activities and projects. As a result, implementation of the development programs and policies of government also means women partaking a role in governance. As primary stakeholders in the development process, women have the right to maximize their involvement in governance, be it at the local or national level

Framework Plan for Women (FPW). This is part of the Philippine Plan for Women which the current administration developed to focus on three thrust namely: promoting women's economic empowerment; advance and protect women human rights; and promote gender responsive governance. This plan identifies the concrete gender issues that will be addressed, pinpoint targets and indicators, name programs, formulates the implementation plan, and set-up tools for monitoring and evaluation.

It is obvious that the Philippines has a well-developed legal framework for gender equality. This is even reinforced by the ratification of international instruments on women (e.g. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women or CEDAW) and clear commitments to the outputs of the UN Women Conferences. This is already a good handle for gender equality but their implementation and the "real politics" surrounding these legal norms leave so much to be desired.

The Political-Electoral System

The 1987 Constitution describes the Philippines as a "republican and democratic State". Presidential form of government and a multi-party system with regular elections held once every 3 years. There are 3 branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judiciary.

Both the president and the vice-president have 6-year terms. The President presides over a bureaucracy of 27 Departments (Ministry). The single-term President and the Vice-President as well as the Senators and Party-List Groups are elected nationally. On the other hand, their respective constituencies elect District Representatives and municipal/city officials.

The Congress is composed of two houses: House of Representatives (Lower House) and Senate (Upper House). The House of Representatives are composed of district representatives and party-list representatives. There are currently 211 District and 12 Party-List Representatives. Party List Representatives are supposed to make up 20% of the Lower House but current problems in interpretation as well as implementation of the Party List Law remains problematic. Thus, only 5% of House is filled-up by party-list representatives. Each Representative has a term of 3 years. The Senate has 24 seats, half of which are up for elections once every 3 years. Each Senator has a term of 6 years.

The Judiciary system is made up of the Supreme Court and the Lower Courts. The Supreme Court is composed of a Chief Justice and 14 Associate Justices. There is an appeals court as well as regional and municipal trial courts. A Sharia court also exists for the Muslim population.

The electoral system in the Philippines can be described in many ways. Its main character however is the plurality system in which all elective officials (except those under the party-list) are elected by direct vote of the people. This means that a citizen basically vote individuals -- from the President to the village chief and councilors. Elections are held every 6 years for the President, the Vice-President, and for the Senators and every 3 years for the Representatives and the Local Government officials. In sum, it is a mixed system of party-list and direct vote on individual candidates.

But beyond this Philippine electoral politics is still beholden to patronage and the 3Gs – guns, gold and goons. Patronage politics and personality politics are still the norms rather than the exception.

The multi-party system that emerged out of the post-Marcos democratization has not dislodged the traditional politics and elitist democracy that governed the country for many years. Thus, there is a multitude of political parties that exist. Firstly, the main political parties are not ideological or programmatic. They are primarily “personality-oriented” that revolves around a presidential candidate or a political family. This makes the measurement of women membership almost impossible since these parties have “revolving door membership” as individual or organizational alliances constantly shift in every election – with the winning president’s party taking a windfall in membership at the start of his/her term. The main parties are:

Table 1: Main Political Parties in the Philippines

Lakas-National Union of Christian and Muslim Democrats	Party of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and was established as a presidential vehicle of former President Fidel-Ramos
Nationalist People’s Coalition (NPC)	Party organized by Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco as his presidential vehicle in 1992
Liberal Party (LP)	Old party led by the family of former President Manuel Roxas
Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP)	Originally, the informal party of Corazon Aquino but evolved as the allied party of the ousted President Estrada
Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP)	Base party of former president Estrada and is the now political vehicle of his Senator-wife and close allies

Women in Politics: Inching Ahead

Women’s right to vote was granted in 1937. The Constitution of 1935 stipulated that the right of suffrage would be extended to women, only if 300,000 women voted in its favor during a national plebiscite. This consolidated the emerging women’s movement and “...brought to the fore the activism of such women as Concepcion Felix de Calderon who formed the Asociacion Feminista Filipina in June 1905, Rosa Sevilla de Alvero and a young Trinidad Almeda, Miss Constanca Poblete, founder of Liga Femenina de la Paz,

Pura Villanueva Kalaw and Paz Mendoza Guazon, Pilar Hidalgo Lim, President of the National Federation of Women's Clubs and Josefa Llanes Escoda, president of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines" (Ugnayan ng Kababaihan sa Pulitika, 1998).

The General Council of Women was then established in Manila to direct the plebiscite campaign. Its aim was to draw the support of the broadest number of women. As it turned out, 447,725 women voted yes in the 1937 plebiscite. Interestingly, 44,307 women voted against the provision. What followed was a colorful history of women's foray into the various levels of electoral victories but generally pushed by familial affiliation and elite association.

The year 2001 was a watershed in the era of "women in politics". The women sector lost their representation with the failure of any women party to reach the 2% threshold of the party-list elections. The two competing parties garnered less than 200,000 votes amounting to 1% of the party-list vote. In a study commissioned by the Ateneo School of Government and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the amorphous sectoral association did not spare the women's sector that is supposed to be the most cohesive as it deal with a group defined biologically. The study concluded that obviously

"...there exists no sectoral vote. Groups representing sectors cannot rely on their sectoral constituencies to win them seats. Certainly, the sectors have the numbers. Millions of peasants and workers can elect many representatives in the House. However, none of the sectors seem united enough or are aware of themselves as a sector with special interests and a point of unity in the electoral arena. Perhaps their votes are more oriented toward causes, personalities or parties." (Rodriguez, 2002: 41)

This observation is bolstered by the fact that in the 1998 party-list elections the women sector garnered 520,565 votes or 5.7% of the total votes cast. Six (6) women parties competed but only 1 party gained a seat (Abanse Pinay!) only to lose it almost two years ago with mere 135,211 votes of 0.89%. The other competing party --Women Power Party -- lost terribly by getting only 25.9% of the women's vote or a mere 46,831 or 0.3% of the total votes.

This "sectoral defeat" is aggravated by the fact there are more women registered voters than men (17.2-million to 16.9-million). The 2001 elections even showed a female turnout of 76.7% while the males are pegged at 75.9% (COMELEC, 2001). It must be noted that female participation declined from 87.1% in 1998. While this may be explained due to the fact that 1998 was a presidential election -- when turnout is normally higher -- it still underscores the absence of a "women vote" in the country. Nevertheless, this system is still an important venue for political involvement in the context of 3Gs elections.

There are numerous obstacles for women to partake a bigger role and impact in politics. Leadership is still conceptualized in terms of male strength. Social definitions of role still pervade the society with women are pictured as supportive of the "leader-husband" and whose main tasks are to entertain constituents (socialization and diplomacy) and provide charity work (social welfare or even dole-outs). The double-burden challenge also contributes to the "glass ceiling" in politics. Wives are supposed to take care of the next generations of the political family. The "old boys" nature of political relations and transactions also put the role of women in the margins. This reduces the access to resources and decision-making thus diminishes their political clout.

However, we can find consolation of the incremental increase of women in various fields of public service. Table 2 shows that there are indeed many gains in the appointment, election, and career advancement of women. While comparative figures are not available, the conventional wisdom and general observation is that women have become more present in the many fields of governance.

Table 2: Percentage of Women in Government, Congress, and Judiciary

Field	Percentage
Women government personnel by levels of position (CSC, 1999; * NCRFW, 2002)	
First level	34.6%
Second level	71.9%
Third level	34.8%
Cabinet (Head of Department)	18.2%*
Women in government elective posts (COMELEC, 2001; **House of Representatives, 2003)	
Senate	7.7%
Congress	19.0%**
Governor	19.5%
Vice-Governor	13.0%
Board Member	16.5%
Mayor	15.6%
Vice-Mayor	12.4%
Councilors	17.4%
Incumbent women judges in Philippine courts (Supreme Court, 2001)	21.4%

These presences are sometimes consolidated into ad hoc groupings of women. Women judges have a formal national organization while a network of local women officials are grouped under the so-called "4-L" which stand for League of Local Lady Legislators. We have to count also under this category the existing women's party as an interface of politicians and civil society activists. However, the most prominent "semi-politician's" group (or some would say future politicians) is the Congressional Spouses Association Inc. which gathers the husbands and wives of the Representatives. For all intents and purposes, this is a women's group that has made some impact on women's issues like in the creation of women crisis centers around the country.

Another significant venue for women in politics is the local government unit (LGU). Women have utilized many ways of participating in local decision-making. Since women organizations are spread-out all over the country (either as non-governmental organizations or people's organization), they are constantly included in normal consultations on local issues and concerns. As NGOs and POs, they can participate in the local development council if they are accredited. Some cities even have a Women's Code or Charter that governs the promotion of women participation and the development of programs and services.

To further elaborate the women's presence in the local level, the Department of Interior and Local Government has recently consolidated the women dimension of the local governance. Recent data showed that so far some 90,714 or 25% of the 354,387 total positions in local government units, from governors to Sangguniang Kabataan chairpersons are occupied by women (DILG Website, 2003).

Specifically, out of the 354,387 total elective positions, 90,714 positions are occupied by women which includes 16 governors (out of 79), eight vice governors (out of 79), 97 board members, 16 city mayors (out of 114), nine city vice mayors (out of 114), 182 city councilors, 225 municipal mayors (out of 1,493), 144 municipal vice mayors and 1,731 councilors, 5,350 punong barangays (out of 41,917), 64,142 sanggunian barangays, and 18,794 sanggunian kabataan chairpersons.

Records also showed that a greater number of women are serving in appointive positions as barangay secretaries and treasurers than men. The DILG chief said a total of 49,173 women occupy appointive positions wherein 23,983 serve as barangay secretaries as against 15,988 male, while there are 25,190 female barangay treasurers compared to 14,794 male.

While these improvements in women's involvement in national and local governance are

laudable gains, there are some variables that have to be considered. One is the "push factor" that leads these women to politics. A study made by Dr. Socorro Reyes of the Center for Legislative Development in 1992 revealed that 14 women members of the Congress believe that their blood relationship with a male politician helped them win their electoral seats through the use of the latter's political machinery. Their knowledge of campaign tactics and strategies and the family's political name contributed in their winning. Our 2 women presidents are actually illustrative of this phenomenon. Corazon Aquino is the widow of the assassinated opposition leader and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the daughter of a former president -- both coming from the political and economic elite of the country.

According to the Philippine country report on the State of Women in Urban Local Government, family connection is a major factor in political involvement. The study revealed that of their 17 women respondents "...15 had close relatives in either politics or government. Of the elected officials 8 had been encouraged by close family members to stand for election". Furthermore, "family political experience seems to be the main factor which make Filipino women who, while aware of their own influence from the sidelines, transcend the covert area of politics...to the overt political domain of elections" (UN-ESCAP Website, 2003).

Another phenomenon is the so called "women benchwarmers". Due to term limits, wives and daughters have taken over the positions left by the husbands or fathers for one term and then the man makes a comeback. This has happened in Makati City and in some other localities. Even the wife of the ousted President Estrada's became a Senator due to votes of sympathy and of the loyalist hold-outs who are expecting his political comeback. While this simply reaffirms that the men, to a large extent, still control the political careers of women; there are some instances also where women have carved their own niche and in some cases, have outshone men as leaders of this country. One example is in the continuum of civil society activism and public administration.

Two women who now occupy Cabinet positions in the government held consecutively the presidency of the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) – the biggest NGO network in the country. Another woman Cabinet member was the former Secretary General of the peace advocates network. This demonstrates not only the strong role of women in civil society but also value of the women's movement as a 'political capital'.

Women's expressions of involvement in civil society could be through organizing along gender-specific issues and formation of all-women groups within broad coalitions as power-enhancing mechanisms. Groups such as the PILIPINA feminist movement, the militant GABRIELA women's group, the Ugnayan ng Kababaihan sa Pulitika (UKP-Network of Women in Politics), the KILOS KABARO (Act Sisters Coalition), and SIBOL Legislative Network have trail blazed women advocacies both in policies and in legislations. There also exist a so-called "Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board" which evolved from the National Steering Committee (NSC) of NGOs for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and this lead in the national monitoring of the government's implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Along with other women groups and gender-oriented institutions, they have succeeded in raising gender-specific issues such as domestic violence, prostitution, reproductive health, sexual harassment and rape. Intense lobbying efforts by the women's groups resulted in the passage of several landmark laws, among them the anti-sexual harassment law in 1995 and the anti-rape act in 1997. The gains of the women's movement are basically achieved through various partnerships with the rest of the civil society.

Women's agenda are also integrated in party platforms and even in legislative hearing and consultation. This gives a semblance of integration of gender issues in formal politics. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women works on the national policy of gender mainstreaming. Both houses of Congress have committee on women

that investigates women issues to aid legislative actions. Gender Budgeting (GAD) also has been used widely for gender sensitivity training and on women projects like day care centers and women shelters but some initial assessment also showed that they are sometimes used as “campaign kitty” of the politician’s wife, diverted to social activities like ballroom dancing and even to cover for salaries.

In sum, all these efforts are still on the level of uplifting the status of women rather than a sophisticated gender-balanced approach. There is not much differentiation on gender perspective and women’s agenda. For many it is one and the same.

Reasonable Access to Education

The Philippine educational system is a combination of public and private institutions with the State providing free education for elementary and secondary levels. The Constitution provides that without “...limiting the natural rights of parents to rear their children, elementary education is compulsory for all children of school age... (Article VIX, Section 2).

There is no general discrimination of girls in education thus there is no marked differences exist in the educational status of Filipino women and men. Wide disparities exist, however, between urban and rural areas where government schools are few and far between and the peace and order situation often disrupt children’s schooling. In terms of general enrolment (Table 3), recent data indicated that there are slightly more boys than girls in elementary schools though in the 1997 the completion rate of girls was higher by 10%. These proportions were reversed in favor of women in secondary or high school during the same school year. Secondary enrolment rate as well as the completion rate for girls is higher by 10% over the boys. At tertiary and higher education level, women constitute 55.46% of the students.

Table 3: Percentage of Enrolment of Female Students

Level	Number of Female Students	Percentage vis-à-vis to Male
Elementary School (1999-2000)	6,218,176	48.93%
Secondary School (1999-2000)	2,675,213	51.37%
Tertiary and Higher Level of Education (2000-2001)	1,348,273	55.46%

Source, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Education, Culture and Sports

Another issue is the gender stereotyping of fields of study and specialization and its onward translation into the world of work where men generally occupy the highest occupational ranks and the highest paying positions. Women’s larger responsibility for housework and for the family impedes their ability to use their educational training and skills for remunerative work.

One can also cite the issue of child labor. Though there are more male working children, the 1.5-million female working children are mainly sidelined from school due to demands of housework or assistance in family business. The 2001 Philippine Survey on Children revealed that among child laborers more males (59.6% against 40.4% to female) attended school during the school year 2000-2001.

The following further exemplify the extent of women’s share in the educational system:

- **Literacy.** Nationally, the literacy rate of females (94%) stood higher than the male’s literacy rate (93.7%) in 1994. Employing a stricter definition of literacy (by including the ability to perform basic computational procedures), the Functional Literacy and Education and Mass Media Survey (1989) yielded considerably lower national functional literacy rates than those indicated by the censuses.
- **University Enrolment: (CHED, 1997-98).** Generally, there were more women

than men who were enrolled during the School Year 1997-1998 with 53.2% while only 46.8% for men. Specifically, women outnumbered men in Home economics courses (90.1 %), service trades (77.2%) and in Education and teacher training (69.2%). But they were a minority in Engineering (20.6%), Architectural and Town Planning (25.1%) and in Law and Jurisprudence (42.1%).

- **Academic Degree Holders.** During the SY 1996-1997, female graduates outnumbered the males in Trade, Craft and Industrial courses (98.6%), home economics courses (93.6%) and service trade courses (84.1%) but were a minority in Engineering courses (19.9%) and in architectural and town planning courses (29.3%).
- **Skills Training.** There were more men than women who are enrolled in Formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses during the school year 1995-1996 with women comprising only 39.4%. Likewise, there were also more men who graduated during the same school year in formal TVET courses with 61.8%, leaving women with only 38.2%. However, in the non-formal training programs offered by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) during the calendar year 1995, there were more female graduates with 54.4%.
- **Education Institutions Officials.** As of February 2000, 9 out of the total 16 regional directors of the Department of Education were women, or a total of 56.25%.
- **Educational Workforce.** The country's educational workforce is heavily female. In February 2002, three out of 5 (61.48%) school superintendents were women, while 38.52% were men. In the higher education institutions, there are slightly more male than female faculty members, with females covering 46.9%.

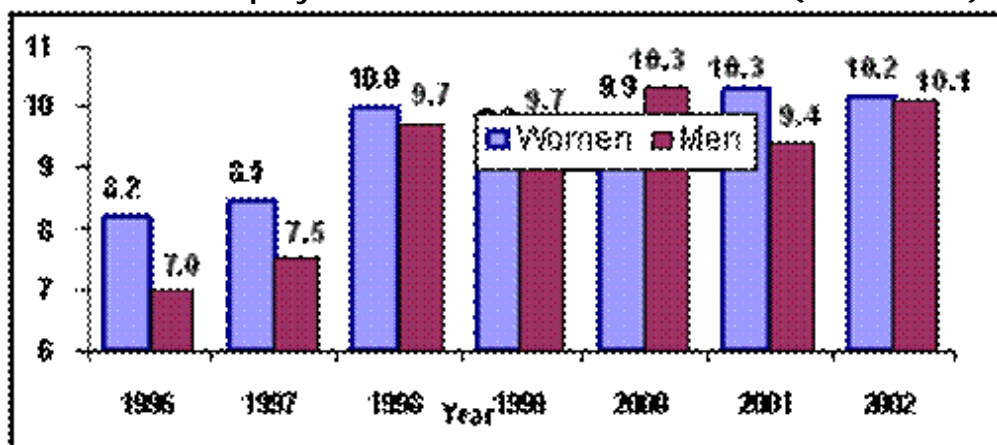
The above figures indicate the reasonable access and success of women in the educational system. But at this stage stereotyping and pre-determined career path can already be discerned.

Feminization of the Labor Market

The feminization of the Philippine labor market is one of the main manifestations of the country's integration into the global market. The international division of labor and the subsequent globalization as we see it now have transformed the role of women in society. In 1996, the labor force participation of women (LFR) was pegged at 49% but by October 2001 working women has reached 52.8% only to decline to 50.9% in January this year (vis-à-vis 80.6% for men).

As of January 2003, women constitute 13-million of the 33.6 million labor force. Around 1.3-million are without work as compared to the 2.1-million unemployed men though historically women have had higher unemployment rates (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Unemployment Rates of Men and Women (1996-2002)



Source of Chart: National Statistics Coordination Board Fact Sheet 1-2003

The latest available sex-disaggregated figures (Table 4) demonstrate further the role of

women in the economy. Primarily, women have established their presence as labor and unskilled workers therefore reaffirming the graphical representation of women as workers in labor-intensive routine assembly line work. In terms of industry, the social skills of women are of course demanded in wholesale and retail trade where thousands of women are employed as “perpetual contractual” with 5-month cycle.

Table 4: Presence of Women Workers by Occupation Group and Industry (April 2002)

Category	Number of Women	Percentage of Women
By Occupation Group		
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	4.2-million	35.4%
Officials of government and special interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors	1.9-million	16.1%
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	1.4-million	11.5%
Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen	1.1-million	9.2%
By Major Industry Group		
Wholesale and retail trade	3.5-million	29.1%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	3.0-million	24.8%

Source: Bureau of Women and Young Workers Website

On another aspect, the total employed females are predominantly classified as wage and salary workers (5.6-million or 38.2%) and own-account workers (4-million or 35.2%). A total of 2.1-million or 52.2% of the employed women are unpaid family workers indicating a big segment of informal employment. Additionally, out of the total 11.9-million employed female, 2.5-million or 21.4% are high school graduates; 2.3-million or 19.4% are elementary graduates and 2.3-million or 19.1% are college graduates including those who have attained higher education. Women comprise 1.5-million or 39.6% of the total unemployed of 3.8-million. This rate has remained as of January 2003.

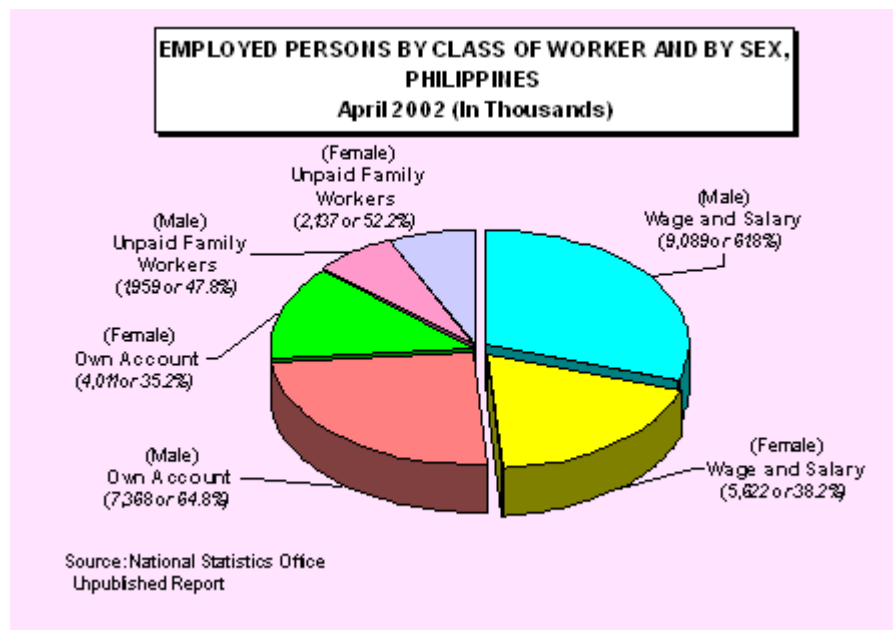


Chart 2: Employed by Class of Worker and Sex (April 2002)

Source of Chart: Bureau of Women and Young Workers Website

Even the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) declares that gender stereotyping by occupation persist. It revealed that “...there were more women than men in October 2001 among the professionals (68.5%), clerks (66.7%), officials of

government and special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors (58.1%), and service workers and shop and market sales workers (54.3%). Men, on the other hand, were mostly plant and machine operators and assemblers (92.0%), in farming, forestry and fishing occupations (83.4%) and in trades (71.7%)” (NCRFW, 2003).

However, while the UNDP data on managers and administrators showed a 35% presence of women it is also instructive to have a look at the disaggregated data on several industries and qualify the extent of decision-making role of women in the labor market.

Table 5: Number and Percentage of Women Managers and Executives by Industry

Industry	Number of Women Managers and Executives	Percentage vis-à-vis Men
Agriculture and Forestry	1,247	21.7
Fishery	202	19.9
Manufacturing	30,472	35.3
Electricity, Gas and Water	1,768	25.3
Construction	1,388	19.5
Mining and Quarrying	89	10.5
Wholesale and Retail	16,369	39.5
Transportation, Communication and Storage	5,216	35.8
Financing, Intermediation Establishments	27,603	50.3
Hotels and Restaurants	7,775	55.1
Real Estate, renting and Other Business Activities	6,461	40.1
Private Education Services	8,286	60.3
Health and Social Work	1,961	59.8
Other Community, social, and Personal Services	1,878	40.9

Source: National Statistics Office, 1998 Data

It is the same reality in the government service. As of August 2002, the cabinet included 4 women (18.2%) heading the budget and management, labor and employment, science and technology and the social welfare and development departments. Likewise, the Commission on Higher Education, Civil Service Commission and the National Anti-Poverty Commission are also headed by women. Again, it is must reiterated here that almost 35% of the managerial and supervisory positions in government are occupied by women.

The media sector is not spared from this unfortunate reality. The paper “The State of Women and Media in Asia: An Overview” asserted that even though “...the number of women entering media is increasing, women have not gained much parity with men in terms of participation and decision-making in media. Top management is still largely male-dominated and patriarchal even as a few women hold senior positions in media organizations” (ISIS, 1999). None of the 6 major broadcast networks are headed by a woman and the top 4 newspapers have male chief editors. Women are basically in the high echelon by occupying positions on corporate communications and talent management.

While some newspapers have women section editors, only the Newsbreak magazine has the top 3 editorial positions occupied by women. It must be noted also that the top 3 media NGOs (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, and the Asian Institute of Journalism) are headed by women.

Nevertheless, the paper also cited that even if “...women have become more visible

particularly in radio and television as presenters, announcers and reporters, the gender division of labour is highly pronounced in production, creative and technical departments which are male-dominated. Women are usually announcers and newscasters whose youth and looks are given premium based on socially-defined standards" (ibid).

And this "mirage of gender advancement" is also visible in the share of income. According to the National Women Plan, as of 1993 for every 1 peso earned by a male, a female gets 0.358 in agriculture, 0.371 in wholesale and retail, 0.394 in manufacturing, 0.461 in finance, insurance and business service, and 0.433 in community, social and personal services.

In terms of occupation, sales workers get only 0.355 pesos, production workers have 0.406 pesos, and for professional and technical workers a measly 0.461 pesos. This clearly indicates a violation of the "equal work for equal pay" principle and is bolstered by the fact that 54% of those engaged in unpaid work are women.

Below are illustrations of how women are finally catching-up in the income divide in terms of nominal daily wage (Chart 3) and average real wage (Chart 4).

Chart 3: Daily Wage Development by Sex
(1988-1988, 1988-1988)

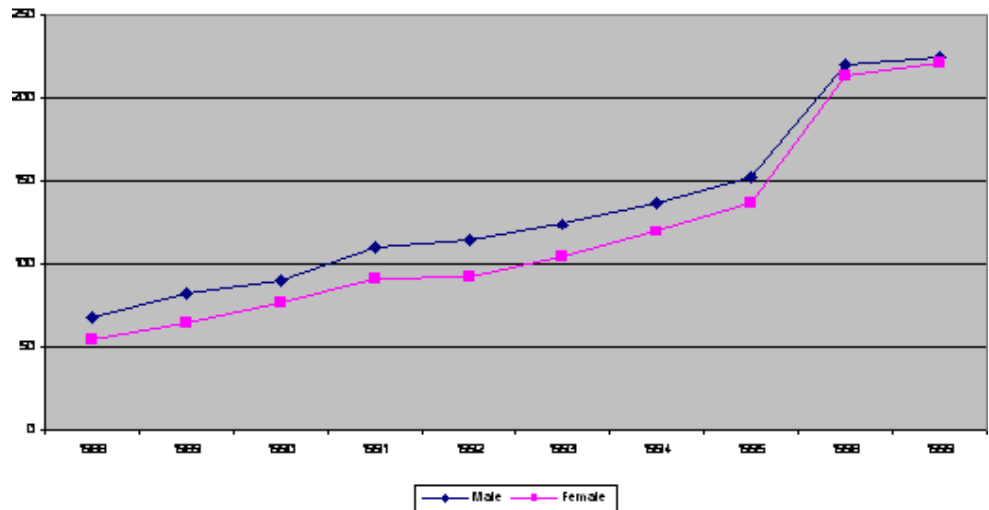
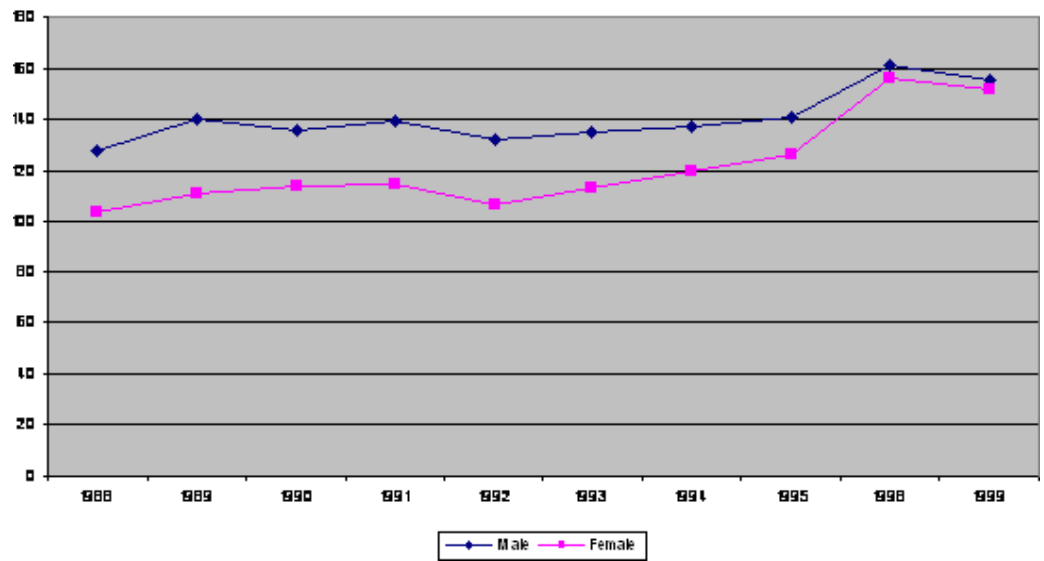


Chart 4: Development of Average Real Daily Wage by Sex
 [1988 - 1995, 1998 - 1999]



Quo Vadis?

The last three decades which saw the rise of the women's movement in the Philippines have resulted to mixed impact – with positive ratings in political participation and law reform but minus points in economic empowerment and sexual and domestic violence. The challenge of gender divide still pervades the Philippine society and the institutions and traditions that sustain it are continuously being buffeted by forces of change. However, the national efforts have to be scaled-up to regional and international level. This is where the following groups have contributed in the gains of women empowerment and gender fairness:

- **Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP)**. A non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental regional organization (NGO) dedicated to promoting equal participation of women in politics and decision-making. It was established in 1992 by a group of women from the Asia-Pacific region who share a vision of governance that affirms gender equality, integrity and accountability, excellence, sustainable development and peace. They advocate transformative politics which is the use of power to create change towards economic, social and political equity between sexes and among sectors within the context of shaping a society that is just, humane and promotes a sustainable way of life. Their goals include: a) to create a critical mass of competent, committed and effective women politicians in elective and appointed positions in government; b) to develop a responsible female citizenry; and c) to influence female politicians and electorate to work together to transform politics and governance for the common good.
- **50/50 Asia Pacific Campaign**. This is part of the Global Campaign led by the New York-based Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). The campaign challenges governments all over the world to work for "a provisional minimum target of 30% representation of women in cabinet ministries and legislatures as well as local authorities by 2003 and equal representation by 2005". The campaign aims to improve the status of women worldwide as they are grossly under-represented in the higher echelons of decision making at virtually every political level.
- **Asian Women's Resource Exchange (AWORC)**. An Internet-based women's information service and network in Asia. It is an initiative geared towards developing cooperative approaches and partnerships in increasing access and exploring applications of new information and communication technologies for women's empowerment. AWORC aims to help expand existing regional networks in the women's movement, promote electronic resource sharing and build a regional information service that will support various women's advocacies

specifically those that are very critical for the women in our region. AWORC aspires to contribute to global efforts to address gender disparity on the Internet. It is geared towards building sustainable, as well as promoting Net literacy and enhancing social activism among individual women and women's organizations.

- **Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP)**. This is an international network of feminist groups, organizations and individuals fighting the sexual exploitation of women globally. Sexual exploitation - especially prostitution and trafficking - violates women's human rights and is a severe form of discrimination. CATW brings international attention to trafficking in women and girls, prostitution, pornography, sex tourism and bride selling.
- **Asian Pacific Women's Watch** is another example of different Asia Pacific partners coming together in coalition to work jointly on regional issues. After the Beijing conference, 1995, the efforts of Asia Pacific NGO Working Group were directed towards the monitoring of the Beijing Platform For Action (BPFA).

The existence of these networks is a manifestation of the growing women's movement in the various countries of the region. While most of these groupings are lead by Filipino women, it is evident that common issues are now confronted by women collectively. It is widely said that the Philippines lead in gender equality in East Asia but one cannot ignore the developments in the other countries. In the end, any gain is good news and any advancement is a victory for women and gender equality.

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