

Institution: University of East London (UEL)
Unit of Assessment: 19
Title of case study: Promoting Gender Equity in Public Sector Governance
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The findings of empirical research conducted by Professor Jim Barry and Dr Trudie Honour of UEL were shared at two focused capacity building sessions held in 2008 and 2009 for women leaders in middle and senior positions of responsibility and decision-making in the public and third sectors of a number of developing countries. Workshops were attended by women from Albania, Bahrain, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. Participants considered the relevance and application of the research findings for their own countries, and worked together and with the researchers to formulate potential capacity development implementation strategies for women in positions of responsibility in those countries.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research underpinning this case study concerns attempts to move beyond an acknowledgement of the relatively low numbers of women in middle and senior positions of responsibility and decision-making in the public and third sectors, to a consideration of ways in which this situation might be rectified. Drawing on a research investigation and training initiatives developed by the research leaders during the 1990s, it has been used to identify and promote methods of capacity building among women from myriad developing countries around the world. The body of research underpinning these impacts built on earlier work by Professor Barry on women and local politics in London, which demonstrated how women had achieved approximately 30% of political seats in London [1].</p> <p>Subsequent research focussed particularly on the impacts of a 30% (critical mass) seat reservation system for women urban politicians in Mumbai, as well as for the wider panchayati raj system of local governance in Maharashtra, where Mumbai is located. The impacts of this innovation, which was initiated in 1992, on the gendering of governance, management and politics more generally were subject to widespread and intense media and public scrutiny. Women were not the first group to be selected for special attention: quotas for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (known more widely as the 'untouchables', 'Harijans' or God's People') had existed for many years and were already the subject of academic interest as well as media attention.</p> <p>The research project was undertaken during the 1990s and 2000s and involved women from many walks of life, from lawyers to illiterate community activists. The principal findings of the research included its demonstration of the capacity of these women to be extremely able practitioners once given the opportunity, which they readily accepted when it was offered. In short, the findings showed the women to be concerned and committed politicians who acted as facilitators and enablers for the most disadvantaged in their communities [4, 5].</p> <p>The seat reservation (or quota) system for female politicians thus showed that women</p>

performed at least as well as male politicians given the chance, and even being less susceptible to clientalism [4]. As a result, the issue of gender was a concern throughout the urban corporation of Mumbai and embraced the positions of women professionals and managers; gender was clearly on the agenda as the women demonstrated their capacity for change. Drawing on Barry's earlier work [1], the research included comparative analyses of the means by which the similar (30%) quotas in London and Mumbai were achieved [3, 6]. The project culminated in Professor Barry being invited to present findings to the *World Mayor's Conference*, held in Cochin, India, in May 2005 [2].

This in turn derived from a collaborative project involving Professor Jim Barry of UEL and Professor Sneha Palnitkar at the All India Institute of Local Self-Government based in Mumbai. Support from outside UEL came from Professor Susanne MacGregor (now at the University of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine). Professor Barry, along with Professors Palnitkar and MacGregor, were also associated with the Mega-Cities Project, a worldwide network of academics and practitioners, and headed by Janice Perlman (<http://www.megacitiesproject.org/>), which has been examining innovations in Mega-Cities from the early 1990s into the early part of this century. Professors Palnitkar and MacGregor were country representatives of the Mega Cities Project and supported the project with guidance and access to women and men politicians, professionals and managers for purposes of semi-structured interviews for the underpinning empirical research.

3. References to the research

- [1] Barry, J., *The Women's Movement and Local Politics* (1991). Gower, Avebury: Aldershot. Available on request.
- [2] Barry, J. and Berg, E. (2006) Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Experiences of Urban Governance, *Local Government Quarterly*, (2005), LXXIII, 2-3-4, 6-17. Available on request.
- [3] Barry, J., Honour, T. and Palnitkar, S. (2004) Social Movement, Acton and Change: The influence of women's movements on city government in Mumbai and London (2004), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11, 2, 143-162. <http://doi.org/bbt674>
- [4] Barry, J. and Honour, T. (1999) The Quota Innovation, Gender and Indian Politics: Experience and Prospects, *Equal Opportunities International*, 18, 7, 1-16. <http://doi.org/c8npj6>
- [5] Barry, J., Honour, T. and Palnitkar, S. (1998) Gender and Public Service: A Case Study of Mumbai, (1998), *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 11, 2/3, 188-200. <http://doi.org/cm4rz4>
- [6] Barry, J., Honour, T. and Palnitkar, S. (1998) Gender and Urban Governance in Mumbai and London, *International Review of Women and Leadership*, 4, 2, 61-73. Palnitkar. Available on request.

4. Details of the impact

The impacts described below result from the research investigation started in Mumbai in the 1990s and a subsequent series of capacity building sessions for women managers, politicians and local community activists. These were: the "Master Trainer's Training

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Programme” for Women in Panchayati Raj system of Governance, financed and delivered through the British Council, Mumbai and held in Pune, India, in January 1997. Two one-day sessions for the “Women in Management” Training Programme were developed and delivered in 2002 and 2003 through CENTEK in co-operation with Luleå University, Sweden, financed by the Swedish development aid organisation (Sida). Finally, a further three, two-day sessions were delivered in the same programme in 2004, 2005 and 2006 with Professor Elisabeth Berg (Visiting Professor at UEL), who had undertaken research on capacity building for women managers in Sweden.

Key findings of the research outlined above included the identification of both training and networking as important factors in endeavours to support women in positions of responsibility [e.g. 4]. In attempting to move beyond the recording of unequal gender representation in middle and senior levels of responsibility and decision-making in the public and third sectors, Professor Barry, in consultation with Dr John Chandler (UEL) and Professor Berg, developed two sessions focused on capacity building for women in middle and senior positions of responsibility and decision-making in the public and third sectors in a number of developing countries at the invitation of University College, London’s Development Planning Unit in February 2008 and February 2009; the invitation was unsolicited and was based on the reputation of the earlier work.

The sessions introduced a range of strategies and systems regarding equality of opportunity and gender equity more generally, including gender quotas and their implications in bringing about organizational change in public and third sector organisations. They promoted participants’ greater awareness of, and sensitivity towards, gender issues in the workplaces. The countries represented were Albania, Bahrain, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. Organisations represented included women’s charities, NGOs, a Constituent Assembly, a Women’s Affairs Department Ministry of Capacity, a Gender Violence Recovery Centre, a Youth Initiative, Commission of Human Rights, a Ministry of Social development, a Gender Studies Department, a Public Defenders Office, Legal Support for Women and Children, International Human Rights Training, UN Relief and Works Agency, Ministry of Women, Youth Commission, SEDAW, and UNP. The job titles of those involved included Director, Head, Activist, Gender Specialist, Area Officer, Lawyer and Ministerial Advisor [a].

The sessions involved Professor Barry outlining varying approaches to issues of leadership that had been developed historically. In so doing, he drew particularly on the findings the Mumbai research investigation [4, 5], along with comparable research material on local women representatives in London [1, 3, 6]. Participants were then encouraged to discuss the findings in relation to their own experiences and both organisational and country contexts within which they worked. They did this initially in small groups of three or four and then engaged in plenary interaction.

In initial verbal feedback from the sessions, participants indicated that they gained knowledge of gender and public leadership initiatives and strategies in the context in which they were working.

Given the diverse geographical origins of the participants it has been difficult to obtain

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evidence of how it the sessions have affected their work in the longer term. However, one participant (Country Director of the Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud International, NGO, Bahrain) did comment that the course:

“... help[ed] me and our people to change our existing gender perspective at different levels from policy to practice, and vice versa” [b].

Taken as a representative indication of the impacts of the sessions on participants, this suggests their enhanced awareness and understanding of gender equity issues. Furthermore it suggests, in turn, subsequent beneficial effects on their working lives, with attempts being made to enhance gender equity wherever possible in an area of work still largely closed to women.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[a] A list of the participants at the capacity building sessions in both 2008 and 2009 is available on request.

[b] A copy of the statement made by the Country Director, Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud International, NGO, Bahrain in August 2013 is available on request.