

Gender Equality in Public Administration: Study on the Administration Cadre of Bangladesh Civil Service

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Abstract

BCS (Administration) cadre in Bangladesh is the direct successor of the generalist cadre of Pakistan, which was dubbed as the steel-frame of the British Civil Service. In Bangladesh, the door of administration was opened for women in 1982. It was a milestone step that allowed women to give choice for entering administration cadre service. There was a steady progress in the number of women in administration cadre. This study reveals that despite many positive steps by the government, government service is profoundly dominated by male. It is perceived that female officers are not eligible for the apex administrative positions in the government. Moreover, they are less comfortable in the environment of the administrative cadre service than male. Since 1982 female officers are joining the administration cadre regularly. But only a few women have had the opportunity to work in the topmost and lucrative posts. This study was aimed at analysis of present situations and problems of women in administration, by comparing opinions of male and female administration cadre officers in respect of socioeconomic background. The study highlight that despite a very late start, the number of women entering the administrative cadre was steadily rising, from 13 (1.7 percent) in 1982 up to 90 (31 percent) and only 5-6 percent in the highest posts in 2014. Women were better in some aspects of their performance in service and training and also low corruption charges had filed against them. The male officers said that they were supportive to their working wives whereas the female officers viewed that their husbands were not supportive of their job. Female officers viewed there was discrimination in the nomination process for foreign training. Male officers did not face any non-cooperation whereas most of the female officers faced rough behavior from their male boss. Female officers stated less important desks were assigned to them and female officers opined that the government could introduce policy for paternity leave and male officers did not agree. Most officers also opined that six months maternity leave was short. Lack of separate room and toilet, non-cooperation from family members and boss, limited housing and transport facility, lack of child care and pre-schooling facilities and discrimination in posting and training identified as major problems for women officials. Against this backdrop, they recommended to create a congenial atmosphere for women officials in the workplace there should be a comprehensive policy in the civil service to remove the obstacles that hinder the performance of women employees named 'Gender policy guidelines'. There should be housing allotment facilities, separate toilet and day care facilities in every field office and during distribution of responsibility women officials should be consulted.

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