

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND
“PHILIPPINES 2000 !!!” :
FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN
POWER IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**CELENIA L. Jamig
University Researcher
Local Government Center
College of public Administration
University of the Philippines
PHILIPPINES**

Introduction

As the world looks intently and with great optimism to the bright prospects of the Twenty-First Century looming at a very close distance, central leaderships in developing economies as well as the developed began to realize the important place of human resource development (HRD) in the overall development framework. Thus, more and more countries are now focusing their development efforts on the total development of the workforce in both the public and the private sectors.

The Philippines is no exemption from this global trend and apparent leanings toward “people-centered” or “people-oriented” development, as evidenced recently by such a decisive move to recast her development thrusts towards the improvement of the quality of life of ALL Filipinos by the year 2000. The strategies for achieving this national goal are fleshed in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 1993-1998, now an integral part of “Philippines 2000 !!!,” a “vision,” a “strategy,” and a “movement” rolled into one which seeks to realize for

the Filipino nation the two-fold central objectives of: (1) "global excellence" or "world/international competitiveness," and (2) "people empowerment." Launched by President Fidel V. Ramos, first, on January 21, 1993 and then, again, at the Seventh EDSA Anniversary Celebration on February 25, 1993, "Philippines 2000!!!" is the embodiment of the groundwork or "blueprint" for attaining NIC-hood (newly industrializing country status) at the turn of the century.

Of the "twin objectives" mentioned above, "people empowerment" aims to create conditions favorable to enabling ordinary citizens to take control over all aspects of their lives, including their livelihood, their politics, and their culture and heritage by incorporating the significant component of building people's capabilities that are crucial to their participation in the great task of nation-building. In other words, people (women and men alike) are afforded equal access to their rights and opportunities by giving them a personal stake in national development.

On the whole, the MTPDP 1993-1998 epitomizes the government's commitment to the path of human resource development by laying down the groundwork for people and communities to be substantially involved in assessing their needs and resources, determining solutions by themselves, and trying to work them out. It also makes sure everyone has the needed skills and attitudes to enable him/her more opportunities for achieving higher goals and allow him/her to make significant contributions to a strong national economy which is anchored on sustainable growth and development.

With this scenario at hand, the Government is pouring in additional investments in human resource development, espousing alternative priority programs, such as: (a) strengthening the basic formal education with an increase from 10 to 11 years as well as an emphasis on the English language to make Filipinos "globally competitive;" (b) allocating 2/3 of the President's Social Fund for the establishment of new elementary schools in barangays without primary schools; (c) giving due attention to

the education of the gifted and the handicapped by developing special learning or instructional materials; (d) reprogramming of additional capital outlays which have been regularly shared by state colleges and universities to higher priority development programs; and (e) liberalizing education rules and regulations to encourage and promote responsiveness of private schools to market demands.

What is generally apparent in the foregoing HAD agenda is the great value placed on people and this is anchored on the broader and common goal of developing all the various sectors of society, irrespective of social class, place of residence, age groupings, level of intelligence, physical capabilities, and even sex, the attainment of which requires a "rational and integrated approach" to development.

This brings to the fore a significant hallmark of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1993-1998 which is the assurance that gender concerns are integrated into the various levels of the planning process. Specifically, the Plan identifies four (4) areas of gender concerns which are: (1) the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for and the conduct of an extensive gender advocacy and consciousness-raising program development planning and implementation; (2) reorientation of existing data generation, processing and management systems to include gender-sensitive variables; (3) the provision of education and training opportunities, placement assistance and incentives to women who desire to enter non-traditional fields of training; and (4) the assurance that information, education and communication infrastructure and the basic services are responsive to the needs of women.

While there is no doubt that the women members of society, like their male counterparts, also have inherent rights as movers of development as well as beneficiaries of the fruits of the development process, full utilization of their potentials and active involvement of women in the total development effort is posited as a necessary compelling force for pushing sustainable development. With this naturally goes the concomitant

shared responsibility of planning or shaping the future and controlling major variables that affect them, an essential requirement being echoed in the hallways of a truly enhanced people's empowerment.

That this Plan will bring in overnight solutions and relief to the plight of the Filipino people is too much to expect at this point or within the remaining five years of the Ramos regime ; but definitely it has at least laid down the foundations or guideposts of sustainable growth and development that truly puts people at its very nucleus. Over and beyond this is the establishment of the landmark beginning of a better partnership between the sexes with the recognition that women, who make up half of Philippine society and whose plight, aspirations and concerns should be brought to the forefront of national consciousness, represent a powerhouse of immense wisdom and intelligent decisions and must be placed, therefore, at the center of the development agenda and vital societal activities.

While it remains a persistent reality that from the early 20th Century the Filipino women have been occupying a high position equal to that of men in Philippine society, many of their needs and aspirations have been overlooked and relegated to the background. This may have been due to the concentration of government efforts on priority national issues and concerns such as economic upliftment and political stability, among others. As a result, they have been poorly represented or marginalized in the decision-making process.

For a country aiming to regain her glory that was the early 1960s -- a glory lost under dictatorial rule -- the opportune time to fully integrate women into the mainstream of development has come: NOW! Any attempt at holding back is preposterous ; for, this could be one of the first crucial steps along the "road to a thousand miles" that would deliver the archipelago from the periphery to the center of world economy. After all, it is at the crossroads of the Asian continent, the world's fastest growing region of the '90s.

How to realize this goal, taking into consideration all the legal infrastructures that are in place, is the central theme of this report which focuses mainly on the position of, as well as the indispensable role played by, the women sector in the entire process of national development, especially as major actors in the arena of Philippine public administration.

Women in the Philippines : Some Historical Antecedents

Dr. Jose Protacio Rizal, the greatest Filipino national hero, once said that : "In order to read the destiny of a people, it is necessary to open the book of its past." Thus, a review of previous status and the role of Filipino women in the development of Philippine society, is deemed proper.

To begin with, it is maintained that the present breed of Filipino women must be a mixture of diverse races and cultures : Chinese, Malay, Indian, Arab, Indonesian, Spanish and American which, essentially, is the product of colonization, including 375 years of Spanish rule, 4 decades of American occupation, and a brief interlude of 3 years under a very close Asian neighbor.

Pre-colonial Period

Extant records show that the Philippines of earlier eras was marked by a fitting recognition of the important role and high position of Filipino women in society (Mahel, 1988 : 16-7 ; and University Center for Women's Studies, 1989). They had more rights and enjoyed more liberty and equality with men as exemplified by some women known as "babaylan" who were revered either as counselors, religious leaders, healers or astrologers. They may not change their names even after getting married ; they could own and/or dispose of properties.

Spanish Colonization

In sharp contrast, the colonial period immediately following the rediscovery of the archipelago in 1521 brought about remarkable changes in the situation of the Filipino women. Molded to the image of 16th Century Spanish women, they commanded high respect from the opposite sex but lost their freedom to associate with men. They were tied to the home or the school for religious instruction or training in domestic arts. They lost their family names upon marriage as well as their right to own and/or inherit properties. Soon after, a "double standard" of morality took hold, leading to prostitution which remains a persistent problem of modern times (Mahel, 1988 : 20 ; University Center for Women's Studies, 1989 ; and Zaide and Zaide, 1987 : 103).

But the Filipino women were not to remain docile and helpless human beings, totally deprived of self-confidence. Sick and tired of political oppression and repressed freedom, courageous women whose names now loom high in the annals of Philippine history trooped to the battlefields side by side with men. They led local uprisings and revolts ; some offered social services and goods, intelligence work, logistics or munitions ; others joined secret armies and organized groups, the most radical of which was the Katipunan or KKK, short for Kataastaasan Kamahal-mahalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Supreme and Most Venerable Society of the People's Sons and Daughters), which was organized by the "Great Plebian" Andres Bonifacio on July 7, 1892 ; while a few others waged the "silent war" through education. A zealous goal thus far achieved by this partnership was the proclamation of the Philippines as the first republic in Asia on June 12, 1898, with General Emilio Aguinaldo as first president.

Breaking the chains which tied up the Filipino women to Spanish subjugation was not an easy task ; but it did happen, in 1684, with the founding of the first school for young Filipino girls. The first single exponent of this educational reform was Mother Ignacia del Espiritu

Santo (February 1, 1663–September 10, 1748), who is now a candidate for sainthood. A very contemplative religious woman, she decided to consecrate her entire life to the service of God only to feel the brunt of pious Spanish communities favoring Spanish and Spanish mestiza women over Filipino girls who were allowed membership only to the third order, the lowest rank. In defiance of this traditional practice, she organized a group of young Filipino women, leading to the establishment of the Beaterio de la Compania de Jesus, the first all-Filipino religious congregation of women with 50 initial members called beatas.

The crusade which she started has no doubt made tremendous impact on the Filipino women's struggle for liberty and equality. Inspired by the basic instinct to nurture and care for people, the beatas joined the Red Cross movement and the revolutionary forces of General Aguinaldo in the late 19th Century, nursing soldiers back to health and providing them with christian counsels. Thus, admiring their outstanding virtues and in recognition of their acts of valor, General Aguinaldo wrote them later: "Imprinted in our hearts is our eternal gratitude for your unselfish and meritorious services .. extended to the disabled revolutionaries" (Alvino, 1992 : 10).

Renamed Compania de Beatas de la Virgen Maria in 1902 and then Congregacion de Religiosa de la Virgen Maria in 1932, the institution which Mother Ignacia headed for 53 years, i.e., from its organization in 1684 up to her appointment of Mother Dominga as Superior in 1737, has been elevated to a pontifical status and placed directly under the Vatican in Rome by virtue of the Decree issued by Pope Pius XII on January 12, 1948. Since then, it came to be known as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) for short (Alvino, 1981 : 166 and Madre Ignacia del Espiritu Santo : Isinalarawang Talambuhay, 1981 : 31).

Now on its 311th year of dedicated service for the greater glory of the Creator through nation-building and the salvation of mankind, the RVM

which has, over the centuries, developed and flourished into its present membership of about 600 professed Sisters, postulants and novices, can claim its appropriate place in Philippine history as : the foremost Filipino congregation of women ever founded on Philippine soil by a Filipino woman ; one of the pioneering Institutes in the Philippines to promote Christian education of the youth ; the first Filipino pious community to be raised to a pontifical status ; and the foremost Filipino religious organization to start the retreat movement for women on a worldwide scope (Alvino, 1981 : xi).

Equally important to Philippine life is the crucial role the congregation plays in the education of young women and men. Apart from servicing 2 seminaries, 7 retreat houses, and 6 dormitories, the community also runs 62 institutions of learning, 7 affiliated schools, and about 14 mission/ social action centers and resettlement projects located in various parts of the country. Likewise being operated are : the Generalate House ; its Mother House in Quezon City ; the Novitiate, Juniorate and Infirmary houses ; the Regional Houses for Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao ; and 12 mission houses and schools founded abroad, 4 of which are in the United States of America, 1 in Rome, 3 in New Guinea, 1 in Thailand, 1 in Africa, and 2 in Indonesia (Records of the RVM Regional House, Manila).

Convincingly enough, the great virtues and magnanimous achievements of Mother Ignacia in pious education bind the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines to elevate her to the status of sainthood. With her case now before the Holy Father in Rome, it is fervently hoped that with the Pope's state visit to the Philippines in January 1995 she would be beatified, declaring her to be among the "blessed" in heaven and, subsequently, canonizes to become the country's first female saint ; the second (next to Saint Lorenzo Ruiz¹) from the Filipino race (Philippine Star, 1993 : 1, 2).

Other milestone developments in education during the Spanish regime were : the establishment of the Beaterio de San Sebastian by 4

Filipino women in 1719; the opening, in 1893, of the Superior Normal School (now Philippine Normal University), the highest institution of learning for women teachers in the Philippines (NSO and NCRFW, 1992 : 3); and, much later, the issuance of an entreaty by the "women of Malolos" (Bulacan) imploring government sanction for equal educational opportunities between sexes.

As mentioned earlier, the women participated actively in the armed struggle against Spain. Foremost of the Filipino women who contributed their best efforts to the cause of freedom was Maria Josefa Gabriela Silang (1723-1763), leader of the first female-initiated local revolt against Spain. For her libertarian work following the assassination of her husband, Diego, on May 28, 1763 up to her execution on September 20, 1763, she is hailed by historians as the "Ilocano Joan of Arc" (Ancheta and Gonzalez, 1984 : 248). Princess Urduja of Pangasinan also figured prominently in various uprisings and revolts which she and her followers staged in her own province.

It is said that about 20-50 women members of the Katipunan helped nurture the seeds of Philippine Revolution. Notable among them are : Melchora Aquino-Ramos (1812-1919), endearingly called "Tandang Sora" or "Cabesang Melchora," the "Mother of the Katipunan" or the "Grand Old Woman of Balintawak ;" Gregoria de Jesus (1875-1943), wife of Andres Bonifacio and most eminent woman member of the Katipunan, a. k. a. "Lakambini (Princess) of the Katipunan" who organized the Katipunan Women's Chapter; Benita Rodriguez who, together with Gregoria de Jesus, made the official flag of the KKK; Josephine Bracken, Jose Rizal's widow; Marta Saldana, wife of Katipunero Faustino Manalac; Simeona de Remigio, wife of Katipunero Tomas Remigio; Rizal's sisters : Josefa and Trinidad and their nieces : Angelica Lopez and Delfina Herbosa. Heroic deeds of these women included safekeeping of confidential documents of the Katipunan, fund-raising activities, gathering of food and other war supplies, and the provision of services as nurse

and religious counselor to soldiers (Zaide and Zaide, 1987 : 137-8).

Other gallant Filipino women² who have carved their own niches in Philippine history as guardians of national liberty are: Trinidad P. Tecson-Alcantara (1848-1928), who started Red Cross work in the Philippine in 1897, is called the "Mother of Biak-na-Bato ; " Nazaria Lagos (1851-1945), the "Florence Nightingale of Panay ; " Gliceria Marella-Villavicencio (1852-1929), the only woman to be given the title "Matriarch-General of the Revolutionary Forces" by General Aguinaldo his Cabinet ; Patrocinio V. Gamboa (1865-1953), the "Heroine of Jaro ; " Teresa Magbanua-Baldera (1871-1947), the "Joan of Arc of the Visayas" and first woman in Panay to lead a revolt in 1896 ; General Agueda Kahabagab-Ruisenor, the "Tagalog Joan of Arc" and only woman general of the revolutionary army ; Gregoria Montoya, the "Joan of Arc of Cavite ; " Hilaria del Rosario-Aguinaldo (1877-1921), General Aguinaldo's wife and organizer of the first Red Cross organization in the Philippines ; and Marcela Marino de Agoncillo (1859-1946) who, together with 2 other Filipino women, made the first Filipino national flag, the one which was officially unfurled and hoisted for the first time at the balcony of Aguinaldo's residence in Kawit, Cavite during his proclamation of Philippine Independence in 1898.

There are other heroines of the Revolution whose names are less known to historians but are no less part of the Filipino heritage ; they are too numerous to be accommodated here either, but the story of Philippine Independence from Spain would not be complete without mentioning the "ideal mother," Teodora Alonso Mercado-Rizal (1827-1911), who made the Philippines's greatest national hero in her own son, Jose Protacio Rizal.

American Occupation

If Spain succeeded in conquering the Filipinos "with a cross on one hand and a sword on the other," the United States of America literally

used the "book," which proved an effective tool for enticing the people --long thirsty for knowledge--to come to her fold.

The Americans have nonetheless enriched the Filipino heritage. As an US colony, not only was the Philippines made the third English-speaking country in the world but also a witness to the bequeathal of democratic ideals upon the Filipino people, including the emancipation of Filipino women from both social and political restrictions prevalent during the Spanish regime. The women acquired university education, practiced any professional, and associated freely with men. Given the freedom to worship and to criticize, they joined the laborforce, indulged in active sports and got actively involved in politics and public affairs.

During this period, a series of important events which contributed to the development of Filipino women took place.³ As early as 1900, for instance, Florentina Arellano, Susan Revilla and Rose Sevilla came to found a private school exclusively for girls, called Instituto de Mujeres while the following year immediately saw the American public school system taking root on Philippine soil by virtue of Act No. 74, providing for equal opportunities between sexes. In 1903, the state-founded Insular Memorial School was opened and became the first co-educational learning institution for teachers. With the expansion of the coverage of the "Pensionadoship" program to include women in 1904, at least 4 women pensionados or recipient-scholars were given the award.

Early development also included: the entry the United States of the first government pensionada as well as the founding of the first feminists' organization known as the Asociacion Feminista Filipina in 1905; the passage of a bill which established training schools for nurses in the Philippines (1906); the launching of the women's movement for woman suffrage and the establishment of the Centro Escolar de Senorita (now Centro Escolar University), a pioneer modern university for women which first offered courses up to college, in 1907; the opening of the country's premier university (University of the Philippines) which admit-

ted both women and men to its various departments (1908) ; and the founding of the first local magazine entirely addressing or dealing with women's issues and concerns in 1909.

The succeeding decades have witnessed, among other : the organization of the Society for the Advancement of Women (later changed to Manila Women's Club) (1912) ; the holding of the first women covention in Manila which involved provincial women's clubs (1920) ; the issuance of a resolution supporting woman suffrage as well as the founding of the National Federation of Women's Clubs (1921) ; and in 1992, the Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas (National League of Filipino Women) was organized, the twin-objectives of which were (a) the provision of better working conditions for women factory workers, and (b) the country's independence from the United States of America. In the same year, Josefa Llanes-Escoda, who was later to found the Girl Scouts of the Philippines, started social work in the Philippines.

In 1932, the country had its first exclusive-for-women university (the Philippine Women's University), which is also the first university to open a College of Home Economics.

By 1993, the women were enjoying equal political rights as their male counterparts, a development which was followed through by the suffrage workers of the National Federation of Women's Clubs who organized the General Council of Women With Workers in 1934 and, which finally, culminated in the grant of suffrage in 1935. It was not until 1937, however, that this right was exercised by registered qualified women voters.

According to the 1935 Constitution, an affirmative vote of at least 300,000 qualified women voters cast in a plebiscite would fully give them the right to run for and be voted to elective public posts. In pursuance of this constitutional provision, Commonwealth Act No. 34 was passed in 1936, prescribing the simplest and most convenient method of registering voters ; and the required plebiscite was held on April 30, 1937. The result

was overwhelming, with 447,725 women votes in favor of woman suffrage and only 44,307 against it.

Following this significant accomplishment was the general election on December 14, 1937 where a woman (Carmen Planas) was elected for the first time to the city council of Manila and at least 24 other female candidates won seats in some provincial and municipal boards of the country ; then, the organization of the League of Women Voters in 1939.

In 1940, the civic-oriented Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) was formally organized by its founding-head, Josefa Llanes-Escoda who continued her social service activities until the dark days of world War II. Serving as chairman of the GSP'd first Central Committee in the same year was Helena Z. Benitez, outstanding educator and civic leader.

Winning by popular suffrage in the national election of November 11, 1941, Elisa R. Ochoa of Agusan became the first woman representative to the lower house of Congress. She was also the only woman member of the National Assembly during the short-lived Japanese occupation of the archipelago in the early 1940s.

Developments After World War II

Shortly after the Second World War, the Philippines was granted independence by the United States on July 4, 1946 while the latter was commemorating her independence from Britain. In the same year was born the first political Women's Party in the Philippines. Thereafter, landmark achievements in the development of Filipino F. Rodriguez, the first outstanding feminist, received a Republic medal of merit and a diploma of honor ; the first Civic Assembly of Women in the Philippines was organized in 1950 ; in 1954, Geronima T. Peosen was elected the first lady senator of the Philippines ; and in 1956, the country saw the birth of MAKIBAKA, the first women's organization to succeed in politicizing and mobilizing women students, professionals, housewives and workers.

Much later, in 1965, Gemma Cruz was crowned Miss International,

the first international beauty title ever won by a Filipino women ; and in 1969, Gloria Diaz became the first Filipino recipient of the most prestigious beauty queen award, the Miss Universe Title. The Philippine Supreme Court also had its first lady associate justice (Cecilia Munoz -Palma) in the same year.

Recent Developments

With the commencement of the International Women's Decade in 1975 and, coinciding with the observance of the International Women's Year in the Philippines, a mass-based women's organization called the Katipunan ng Bagong Filipina, was organized. By virtue of Presidential Decree No. 633, dated January 6, 1975, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was likewise established to ensure full integration of women into the social, economic, cultural and political mainstreams of development.

An agency attached to the Office of the President, the present NCRFW essentially serves as the government machinery on the development of women by : acting as advisory body to the President and the Cabinet in the formulation of policies as well as the implementation of programs that seek to achieve full integration into and mobilization of women within the overall framework of national development ; conducting periodic reviews and assessments of the extent to which women have been integrated in all aspects of the socio-economic and politico-cultural life at the various levels in respect of women's equality with men ; and talking appropriate measures leading to the enjoyment by both sexes of full equality before the law in areas where such is non-existent. Towards this end, the Center embarks on 4 major programs, such as : the establishment of institutional mechanisms ; training in gender and development ; research and policy studies ; and the development of Philippine data base on women (NCRFW Flyer, 1992).

During the 80s, while the country was at the height of its socio

-economic and political crises, the women's movement responded more actively to the prevailing issues and concerns of the time. Hence, the rapid growth of women's organizations.⁵ Among those founded were: the Women's Health Care Foundation (1980); Ang Kilusan ng Kababaihan Pilipio or PILIPINE (1981); the Center for Women's Resources (1982); the Katipunan ng Kababaihan Para sa Kalayaan, a major objective of which is to liberate women from all forms of exploitation, oppression and discrimination that arise from unjust gender-based, class, and neo-colonial relations (1983); the STOP or Stop Trafficking of Pilipinos Foundation, Inc., an umbrella organization of 24 women groups (1983); Pro-Life Philippines (1983); Institute for Social Studies and Action (1983); the WOMB or Women Giving Life to a New Order (1984); GABRIELA or the General Assembly of Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action, Inc. (1984); the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (1985); the Bagwis, Drop-in-Center (1987); the Kilusan ng Kababaihan na Nagtataguyod ng Democracy or KAPATID (1987); the Women's Movement for the Nurturance of Democracy or KAPATID (1987); the Legislative Advocates for Women (1987); the Women for Women for Foundation (1987); the Women's Health Movement (1987); and the Women in Development (WID) Foundation, Inc. (1988).

Besides the mobilization of women, other significant events which took place since the mid-'80s have greatly affected the present status and condition of the Filipino women. For example, Women Suffrage Day has been observed every 30th day of April since 1984. Recognizing women as a potential force for effectively pushing development, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) established the Bureau of Women's Welfare with the end in view of promoting women's welfare and their skills for employment as well as self-fulfillment through the prevention and eradication at all forms of exploitation.

On February 26, 1986, the first lady President of the Republic,

Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, came to power, bringing to a close the world-renowned 5-day "people power" EDSA Revolution. This event could be appreciated not only for its historic relevance to the Philippines alone but to the rest of the world as well. In fact, no less than U. S. President William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton himself acknowledged that this peaceful "people's revolt" has inspired other peace-loving countries of the world as exemplified by the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the disintegration of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the subsequent installation of the Russian and other independent Republics as well as the birth of new democracies, such as Yugoslavia and Poland.

In 1987, the Maryknoll College Foundation (now Miriam College) established a Women's Resource and Research Center at the initiation of its Women's Working Group. In 1988, a presidential proclamation effected the observance of March 8 of every year as "Women's Rights and International Peace Day." Another landmark development occurred in 1989 as the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) launched the Philippine Development Plan for Women, which became a companion plan of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 1987-1992, pursuant to Executive Order No. 348, dated February 17, 1989.

In 1990, the bicameral legislature passed Republic Act No. 6949, declaring March 8 as a working special holiday throughout the country in observance of "Women's Day." And, for the first time in Philippine history, women in government (GO) and in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) joined together in a national congress which led to the birth of the GO-NGO collaboration on the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW).

In 1991, the military nurse Elvegia R. Mendoza of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) became the first woman with the rank of Brigadier General. The second national congress of Filipino women (Women in Politics) was also held this year. On October 10 of the same

year, Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, was promulgated to take effect on January 1, 1992. Apart from granting expanded powers, authorities and responsibilities to local government units (LGUs), the Code likewise provides for the election of sectoral representatives, inclusive of the women sector, to the legislative councils or boards of provinces, cities, and municipalities; thus institutionalizing the direct involvement of women in local public affairs.

A few days short of the 6th EDSA Anniversary Celebration, on February 12, 1992, Republic Act No. 7192, more popularly known as the "Women in Development and Nation Building Act," was signed into law. It seeks to promote the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building. In consonance with this promulgated act, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) began recruiting female cadets during Academic Year 1993-1994, starting out with an 8-member initial batch. What is more remarkable about this event is that around 128 young women showed their guts to "break the walls" of the country's highest military training institution by competing in the entrance examinations.

At the outset of the same year, a woman presidential candidate lodged the first election protest which questioned the results of the May 1992 presidential elections before the Electoral Tribunal.

On December 15, 1992, the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1993-1998 was approved by the Cabinet and then formally launched by President Fidel V. Ramos on January 21, 1993 and during the EDSA Anniversary Celebration on February 25, 1993. In essence, this document lays the groundwork for the implementation of the government's strategy towards achieving NIC-hood status and sustainable development by the 21st Century. One of its outstanding features is the integration of women into the various planning aspects of the overall development framework.

Probably one of the most recent developments pertinent to the protection and uplift of women in Philippine society is the installation of

women's desks in the various police stations or offices in Metropolitan Manila and other parts of the country, the main function of which is to handle cases involving women.

Another historic milestone was etched early this year, on January 8, 1994, by the country's flag carrier, Philippine Airlines (PAL), when its first 4-member all-female crew launched an eight-hour run from Manila to the Visayas and some other parts of southern Philippines.

Outstanding Filipino Women

It may be noted that a common but significant feature of the various phases of Philippine history is the emergence of outstanding Filipino women (a lot often neglected by male historians and some contemporary researchers), mostly suffragists, who lent brilliant achievements and gems of exemplary work in different achievements and gems of exemplary work in different fields of endeavor, including those which have been traditionally reserved for men. These women, who figured prominently in various other aspects of Philippine life : from law and the arts to public service and sports, to science and international affairs, are presented below under the specific area where their contributions helped largely in bringing the country closer to its goals of nation-building and development.⁴

Agriculture : Nelia T. Gonzales (1924-), who pioneered in many projects in the local animal industry ; and Leticia Quintos, the country's first female agriculturist ;

History : Encarnacion Alzona (1896-), the first Filipino women to earn a Ph. D. and foremost women historian of the Philippines ;

Civic/community and social work : Margarita Roxas de Ayala (1826 -1869), known as the "Friend of the Poor" and founder of La Concordia College which is now begin ran by the Daughters of Charity (DC) Sisters ; Sister Asuncion B. Ventura, D. C. (1853-1923), called the "Guardian of Orphans" for establishing the orphanage Asilo de San Vicente de Paul ;

Sofia T. Reyes-de Veyra (1876-1953), great civic leader and feminist who founded the first training school for nurses in the Philippines and organizer of the Manila Women's Club; Julia Vargas Vda. de Ortigas (1881-1960) who voluntarily gave her unselfish services to the Philippine Tuberculosis Society; Concepcion Felix-Rodriguez (1884-1967), the first most outstanding feminist, co-organizer of the Asociacion Feminista Filipina and founder of the Federacion Catolica de Mujeres en Filipinas (now the Catholic Women's League); Jacinta Zaera de Cailles (1885-1949), the "Modern Tandang Sora;" Pura Villanueva-Kalaw (1886-1954), the "Queen of the First Philippine Carnival;" Aurora Aragon-Quezon (1888-1949), former first lady and the first woman head of the Philippine National Red Cross; Severina Luna-Orisa (1890-), one of the first 4 Filipino women physicians who became the First Filipino Women Columnist; Concepcion Rafols-Gonzalez (1892-1961), the first national commissioner of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines; Josefa Abiertas (1894-1929), the "Champion of Unfortunate Women" and first advocator of woman suffrage; Josefa Jara-Martinez (1894-), founder of the Philippine School of Social Work, the first school of social work in the archipelago, and organizer of the Council of Welfare Agencies as well as the Association of Red Feather Agency; Asuncion A. Perez (1895-1967), social worker who was appointed colonel in the intelligence service during World War II; Josefa Llanes-Escoda (1898-1944), founder of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines and heroine of World War II; Paz Q. Arguelles-Abalos (1899-), pioneer Girl Scout leader; Fernanda Salcedo-Balboa (1902-), organizer of the Women's Right Movement of the Philippines; Minerva Guysayko-Laudico (1912-), organizer and first president of the Federation of the Asian Women's Association (FAWA); Aurora C. Dino (1913-), the first Filipino woman and first woman from Asia to become recipient of the dean's fellowship at Syracuse University after World War II; Carmen Planas (1914-1964), the first woman councilor of Manila to win a seat in the

Capital City Municipal Board by general suffrage; Josefa Phodaca-Ambrosio (1917-1970), who pioneered in the Family Planning Movement in the Philippines; Lorenza Dalupan, who earned the title "Lady Commander of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher;" and Raymunda Guidote-Abila, intelligence agent during the Second World War;

Business and industry: Narcisa Buencamino Vda. de Leon (1877-1966), the "Grand Old Lady of Philippine Movies;" Dolores H. Vera (1896-1980); Concepcion Maramba-Henares (1898-1981); Eugenia Guidote-Puyat (1907-); Victoria Lopez-Araneta (1907-); Trinidad Diaz-Enriquez (1908-), who pioneered in hotel and restaurant management; Medina Lacson de Leon (1914-); Magnolia Wellborn-Antonino (1915-); Salud Santos-Tesoro (1915-); and Fanny Cortes-Garcia (1920-);

Law and legislation: Felisa B. Francisco (1882-1961), feminist who worked closely with other women leaders toward achieving equal right among women and men; Marua F. Villaceran (1889-1932), the first woman to be allowed to practice law in the Philippines; Natividad Almeda-Lopez (1892-1977), the first woman associate justice of the Court of Appeals and is known as the "Dean of Women Judges;" Nieves Baens-del Rosario (1902-), called the "Champion of Working Women and Children;" Tecla San Andres-Ziga (1906-), the first woman bar topnotcher, first congresswoman to be reelected to office, first woman lawyer to be elected to the Philippine Senate, and first woman lawyer to be elected governor to the Board of Integrated Bar of the Philippines; Lourdes Paredes-San Diego (1910-), the first woman presiding justice of the Court of Appeals; Maria Kalaw-Katigbak (1912 -), the only woman member of the Philippine Senate from 1961 to 1963 and was senator until 1967; Cecilia Munoz-Palma (1913-), the first woman associate justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines; Corazon Juliano-Agrava (1915-), the first of two women judges of the Court of First Instance and first woman bar examiner who chaired the

commission that investigated the controversial Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino murder case, bravely uncovering and denouncing the military’s responsibility for the said case ; Milagros A. German (1915–), an expert in agrarian relations ; and Eva Estrada-Kalaw (1920-1903), former senator and author of revolutionary legislations in education, tourism and social welfare.

Education : Fausta Labrador (1858-1942), whose greatest legacy to the Filipino youth is the Jesus’ Sacred Heart College in Lucena City, which is now being managed by the Daughters of Charity Sisters ; Librada Avelino (1873-1962), founder of Centro Escolar de Senoritas (now University), a modern university for women ; Francisca Tirona-Benitez (1886-1974), who became founder-president of the Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas and the Civic Assembly of Women of the Philippine ; Ramona S. Tirona (1888-1947), who helped establish the Philippine Women’s College (now University) ; Anastacia Giron-Tupas (1890-1972), the first Filipino woman to become chief nurse and superintendent of the Philippine General Hospital School of Nursing ; Pilar Hidalgo-Lim (1893–1973), the first woman to graduate with honors from the University of the Philippines who contributed greatly to the rapid uplift of the status of Filipino women, leading to the grant of woman suffrage in 1937 ; Maria L. Tinawin (1895-1948), honored for her Red Cross work and services before and during World War II ; Asuncion Reyes-Fugoso (1898–), the first woman superintendent of city school, Manila ; Belen Enrile-Gutierrez (1899–), the country’s first woman certified public accountant ; Liceria Brillantes-Soriano (1906–), the first woman head of the defunct Bureau of Public Schools, then the biggest bureau in Philippine government ; Julita V. Sotejo (1907–), recipient of Florence Nightingale Medal and Diploma, the highest international award in the nursing field ; Amparo S. Lardizabal, who earned the title “Teacher of Teachers ;” Beatriz P. Ronquillo, co-founder of the Women’s International League ;

The Philippine arts : Dolores Paterno (1854-1881), talented musician

and composer of the famous song “Sampaguita ; ” Pelagia Mendoza-Zamora (1867-1939), the first Filipino woman sculptor ; Praxedes Julia Fernandez Paredes (1871-1919), the “Singing Sweetheart of Manila” who made the Philippines known abroad through her talents in drama and music ; Maria E. Carpena-Alcantara (1887-1915), singer and stage personality ; Jovita Fuentes (1895-1978), Luisa Tapales and Naty Arellano, all world-renowned Filipino operatic songstress ; Francisca Reyes Aquino (1898-), the “Mother/Preserver of Philippine Folk Dance and Music ; ” Felicing Tirona (1903-1952), to whom credit for the advancement of music and the arts is due ; Honorata “Atang” de la Rama : Hernandez (1905-1991), the “Queen of Zarzuela and the Kundiman” and first Filipino actress-superstar of Philippine movies ; Katy de la Cruz (1907-), talented movies personality ; Dalisay J. Aldata (1912-) opera singer who won international prestige ; Purita Kalaw-Ledesma (1914-), founder of the Art Association of the Philippines ; Lenor Orosa-Goquingco (1917-), pioneer Filipina choreographer ; Lucrecia R. Kasilag (1918-), one of the leading music educators of the Philippines ; Anita Magsaysay-Ho (1924-), outstanding woman painter ; and Lucrecia Reyes Urtula (1929-), who pioneered in introducing and presenting to local and foreign audiences the unique and original dances of various cultural groups in the Philippines. For their outstanding contributions to their respective fields, the following have been proclaimed National Artists : Orosa-Goquingco, Urtula and Reyes-Aquino for dance ; de la Rama for theater and music ; and Fuentes and Kasilag for music.

Until recently, more and more female Filipino artists are making waves in contemporary Philippine music as well as the international scene. Examples are : Lea Salonga a host of young artists who appeared in the celebrated stage play “Miss Saigon.” For her excellent performance in this play, Lea brought home a well-deserved Lawrence Olivier award from London and the very prestigious TONY award from

Broadway. The first Filipino artist to have ever won such awards, Lea was offered to do "Les Miserables" and later, commissioned to soundtrack for Walt Disney's animated movie "Alladin." With her first international album out in the market, Miss Salonga has nowhere to go but up the success ladder.

Other known women artists of the Philippines are : Pilita Corrales, acclaimed "Asia's Queen of Songs ; " Nora Aunor, the "Superstar of Philippine Movies ; " Regine Velasquez, Grand Prize winner in Hongkong's Asia-Pacific Song Festival ; Geneva Cruz, Best Singer and Grand Prize awardee in the 1991 Voice of Asia International Pop Music and Song Festival, held in Kadhikstan, Russia ; Dessa, who romped off 2 major awards : Grand Prize and the FIDOF Award, besting 54 others in the 1993 Voice of Asia-FIDOF Competition, held in Almaty, Kadhikstan, Russia ; and Ivy Violan, the Philippines's "Queen of International Song Festival," who has to her credit the following distinctions : 5 awards, including Grand Prize at the 1993 Third ASEAN Popular Song Festival ; Grand Prize winner in the 1991 Fourth International Midnight Sun Song Festival ; First runner-up, Best Performer and Grand Prize winner in the 1989 First ABU-Golden Kite World Song Festival ; Best Singer and Grand Prize winner in the 1988 First Asia-Pacific Singing Contest ; and Best Performer and First runner-up in the 1985 First Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union Song Festival.

Literature and textbook writing ; Leona Florentino (1849-1884), great Ilocan poetess and first Filipino poetess to win international prestige in Spanish ; Magdalena G. Jalandoni (1891-1978), greatest Hiligaynon (Ilongo) poetess and first lady novelist in Ilongo ; Herminia M. Ancheta (1909-), whose 40 years of dedicated teaching and public service earned for her the title "A Teacher of Teachers ; " Rosalinda L. Orosa (1928-), one of the country's contemporary essayists and critics ; Clemencia Joven, the first Filipino to have written the first short story in English ; Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido and Paz Latorena, both

pioneer Filipino writers in English; and Mena Crisologo, the greatest Ilocano dramatist.

Science and research : Honoria Acosta-Sison (1888-1970) and Olivia Simeona Demetria Salimanca (1889-1913), two of the first four Filipino lady physicians; Maria Ylagan Orosa (1893-1945), pioneer food technologist, war heroine and humanist; Luz Oliveros-Belardo (1906-1980), pioneer woman scientrist; Bibiana Roxas, the Philippines's first female optometrist; Filomena Francisco Guerrero, first Filipino woman pharmacist; Sandra C. Jovero, first female technologist in nuclear medicine in the Philippines; and Catalina Arevalo-Mejia, first female dentist in the archipelago.

Foreign service and international affairs : Geronima Tomelden-Pecson (1896-1970), the first Filipino woman to win distinction in the United Nations and the world's first woman member of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Board. She is also the first elected lady senator of the Philippines; Trinidad Fernandez-Legarda (1899-1970), the first woman ambassador and Chief of Mission of the Philippines to a foreign post; Pura Santillan-Casrence (1905-1970), the first woman minister in the Department of Foreign Affairs; Rafaelita Hilario-Soriano (1915-1970), the first Philippine career woman ambassador to head a Philippine diplomatic mission abroad; Leticia Ramos-Shahani (1929-1970), politician-writer and sister of President Fidel V. Ramos who became a United Nations assistant secretary-general for Social and Humanitarian Affairs; Rosario Gonzales-Manalo (1935-1970), the first graduate of the UP College of Law to become a career diplomat and the first woman outside the foreign service to pass the competitive foreign service test of the Department of Foreign Affairs; Helena Z. Benitez, the first Filipino woman to be elected Chairman of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; she also won international renown as director of the world-famous Bayanihan Folk Dance Troupe; Dr. Concepcion A. Aguila, who was chosen as the

"International Teacher of 1958" by the General Federation of Women's Club of Washington, D. C. ; and Estela R. Sulit, the first Filipino woman to become consul-general and charge d'affaires of the Philippine Embassy in Mexico City and, later, ambassador to Portugal.

Likewise bringing honor to the Philippines are world-class and legendary beauty queens the country has produced overtime. Fabulous Filipino women of "beauty and brains" who brought their country into the mainstreams of international affairs as ambassador of goodwill are : Gemma Cruz-Araneta, 1965 Miss International ; Gloria Diaz-Daza, 1969 Miss Universe ; Aurora Pijuan-Manotocp 1970 Miss International ; Margarita "Margie" Moran-Floirendo, 1973 Miss Universe ; Melanie Marquez, 1979 Miss International, Face of the '80s Finalist in New York, and adjudged Most Beautiful Woman in a Supermodel Search held in Paris ; Baby Santiago, 1968 Queen of the Pacific ; Nelia Sancho, 1971 Queen of the Pacific ; Lalaine Bennett, third runner-up, 1965 Miss Universe ; Cira Avecilla, second runner-up, 1970 Miss Young International ; Evelyn Camus, second runner-up, 1971 Miss International ; Evangeline Pascual, first runner-up, 1973 Miss World ; Ma. del Carmen Ines Zaragoza, 1982 Miss Asia ; Gloria "Bong" Dimayacyac, 1983 Miss Asia-Pacific ; Lorna Legaspi, 1989 Miss Asia-Pacific ; Michelle Aldana, the recently-crowned 1993 Miss Asia-Pacific who bested 22 other candidates from North, Central and South America as well as Asia ; and Sharmaine Ruffa Gutierrez, second runner-up in the 1993 Miss World Beauty Pageant held in Sun City, South Africa.

Most of them were among the 70 loveliest Filipino women featured in a spectacular special "Beauty Secrets of the Philippines's Most Beautiful Women," a tribute to the Filipina which was produced by multi-awarded songwriter Monong Pedero and aired over New Vision Channel 9 last December 27, 1993.

Sports : Mona Sulaiman (1942-), the fastest woman sprinter in the Southeast Asia Regional sports competition where she participated ;

Lydia de Vega-Marcado, who earned the title "Fastest Woman Sprinter in Asia ;" lady bowler Bong Coo-Garcia who was recently named to the Bowling Hall of Fame for her past achievements in sports ; and Elma Muros, the country's "1993 Athlete of the Year."

Other important Filipino women who ventured into non-traditional fields of specialization are: Josefina V. Virata, first lady electrical engineer ; Rosita Dimaya, first female graduate of the Philippine Maritime Institute and believed to be the "worlds first and only nautical officer ;" Mercedes G. Raffinan, first Filipino woman architect ; Edith Dizon, first Filipino aviatrix ; Celia G. Bantegui, first Filipino lady meteorologist ; Colonel Ma. Luisa Dimayuga, the first and only lady colonel and bemedalled officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) ; and Captain Aimee Carandang, the country's first commercial pilot and lead pilot of the 54-seater Fokker 50 Philippine Airlines (PAL) turboprop that made the first all-female crew flight on January 8, 1994.

Women in Contemporary Philippines

People make up every society. Being both prime movers and beneficiaries of social and economic progress, they are a potential force that can be harnessed to effect nation-building and sustainable development. One best way of doing this is to empower people which means enhancing their capability to have choices and control over decisions that affect their lives.

Half of every society is comprised of women, whose place nowadays can be found everywhere, even in the labor force. This situation calls for the full integration of women in the processes of political change, socio-economic growth and cultural enhancement, a fact widely acknowledged in research but not so at all levels of policy making and program planning. Thus, the need for planning from a gender-based perspective.

In contemporary Philippines, where the number of female population living in urban centers far exceeds that of males, the issue is being addressed by incorporating gender concerns in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1993-1998, the Ramos Government's "blueprint" for attaining NIC-hood (newly industrializing country) status for the country at the turn of the century. One major area that needs looking into is the public sector, where women play a very crucial role in shaping the country's future in the same way that public policies are, to some extent, dictating the position and status of women in society.

Before probing deeply into the current status of women in Philippine public administration, it is important to provide an overview of the "other half of Philippine society" which is the female population inhabiting the country.

Today's Filipino Women : A Profile

Results of the May 1, 1990 census of population disclose that the female population of the Philippines, estimated at 30,115,929, accounts for 49.73% of the country's total population of 60,559,116, showing a general picture of the country having a nearly balanced number of males and females, i.e., for every 100 females there are 101.1 males. This trend in male predominance had also been noted in the 1960, 1975, and 1980 enumerations with sex ratios of 101.7, 102.3 and 100.7, respectively. On the country, the 1970 census revealed that the female population outnumbered the male with a male to female ratio of 99 : 100 (See Table 1).

Although majority or 50.57% of the entire female population are rural residents and only 49.43% are living in urban areas, females, in general, outnumber males in urban areas whereas rural areas have more males than females.

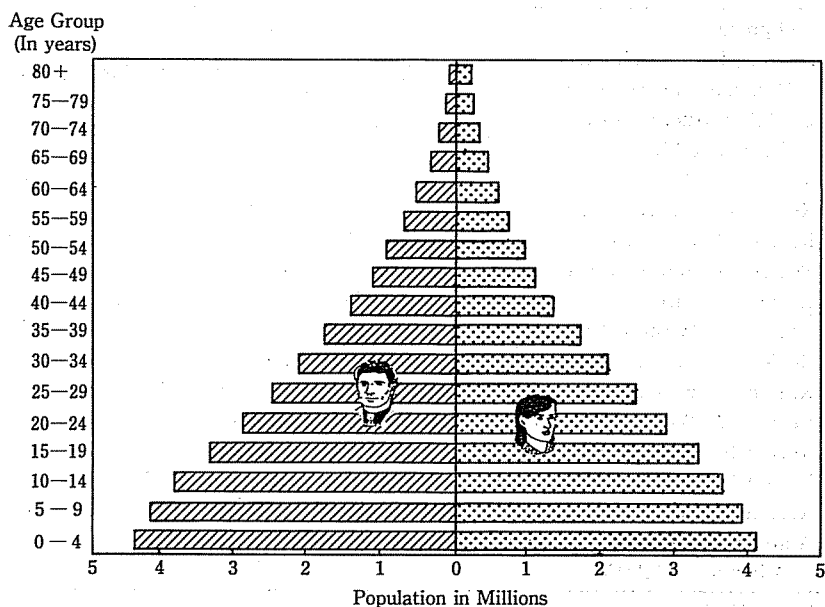
The age-sex pyramid (Figure 1), on the other hand, indicates a relatively young population of the country in 1990, with median ages pegged at 20 years old for females and 19 years old for males, which only

**Table 1. Growth and Sex Ratio of the Population in the Philippines
Censal Years 1960-1990**

Censal Year	Total	Population Male	Female	Percentage		Sex Ratio
				Male	Female	
1960	27,087,685	13,662,869	13,424,816	50.44	49.56	101.7
1970	36,684,486	18,250,351	18,434,135	49.75	50.25	99
1975	42,070,660	21,276,224	20,794,436	50.57	49.43	102.3
1980	48,098,460	24,128,755	23,969,705	50.16	49.84	100.7
1990	60,559,116	30,443,187	30,115,929	50.27	49.73	101.1

Source/s: Various Census Reports of the National Statistics Office, Manila.

Figure 1. Age-Sex Composition of the Household Population, 1990



shows that half of the female population falls under the age bracket 20 years old and above and the other half, 20 years old and below.

Table 2 illustrates the sex ratio and distribution of the population by region for 1990. As could be gleaned therefrom, almost all the regions have predominantly male population, except in the Metropolitan Manila Area or the National Capital Region (NCR) which remained at the bottomline since the 1970s and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). These are the only regions with more females than

Table 2. Sex Ratio and Distribution of the Population by Region May 1, 1990 Census

Region	Totals	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
Philippines	60,559,116	30,443,187	30,115,929	101.1
Metropolitan Manila Area/ National Capital Region	7,907,386	3,835,879	4,071,507	94.2
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	1,141,141	577,366	563,775	102.4
Region 1 (Ilocos)	3,547,269	1,776,834	1,770,435	100.4
Region 2 (Cagayan Valley)	2,336,350	1,191,427	1,144,923	104.1
Region 3 (Central Luzon)	6,188,716	3,118,227	3,070,489	101.6
Region 4 (Southern Tagalog)	8,247,120	4,167,406	4,179,714	102.1
Region 5 (Bicol)	3,904,793	1,984,866	1,919,927	103.4
Region 6 (Western Visayas)	5,385,222	2,708,512	2,676,710	101.2
Region 7 (Central Visayas)	4,582,529	2,291,637	2,290,892	100.0
Region 8 (Eastern Visayas)	3,048,854	1,556,966	1,491,888	104.4
Region 9 (Western Mindanao)	2,454,319	1,248,110	1,206,209	103.5
Region 10 (Northern Mindanao)	3,502,674	1,782,081	1,720,593	103.6
Region 11 (Southern Mindanao)	4,448,616	2,268,158	2,180,458	104.0
Region 12 (Central Mindanao)	1,811,862	924,375	887,487	104.2
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	2,052,265	1,011,343	1,040,922	97.2

Source: National Statistics Office, Census Report, 1990.

males in 1990, thus indicating relatively low sex ratios: 94.2 and 97.2, respectively. As in many other urban centers of the world, the downward trend in Metro Manila may be attributed to the continuously increasing job opportunities and prospects for better living conditions in the area which are more suited to women.

Of the total 30,115,929, Filipino females in 1990, about 22,055,873, (73.24%) are within the age bracket 10 years old and over while the remaining 8,060,056 (or 26.76%) are below 10 years old. Of the 22,055,873 belonging to the 10 years-and-up group, 9,732,286 (or 44.13%) are single or never married; 10,776,402 (or 48.86%) are married; 1,292,720 (or 5.86%) are widowed; 186,441 (or 0.84%) are either divorced or separated; while the remaining 68,024 (or 0.31%) did not indicate their civil/marital status.

In 1990, unmarried males (24.48% of total population 10 years old and over) outnumber unmarried females who represented only 22.10% of the total population 10 years old and over. However, there are more widowed and divorced or separated females than males.

As to literacy, statistics on women compiled by the National Statistics Office (NSO) show a general picture of females 7 years old and over having slightly lower literacy rates than males of the same age bracket in the last 3 censal years: 1970, 1980 and 1990. While the females registered literacy rates of 75.90%, 82.63% and 93.34% in 1970, 1980 and 1990, respectively; the males had 76.90%, 82.80% and 93.70% for the corresponding censal years cited above.

Although rural literacy rates have remained lower than the urban rates, a continuing rise for both is evident but the corresponding gaps have narrowed down over the past 20 years (See Table 3).

The Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) undertaken by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in July 1989, established the functional literacy rate of the female population

Table 3. Literacy Rates of the Population 7 Years Old and Over 1970-1990

Area of Classification and Sex	Literacy Rates		Point Difference
	Male	Female	
1990			
Philippines	93.70	93.34	.36
Urban	97.43	97.02	.41
Rural	90.16	89.56	.60
1980			
Philippines	82.80	82.63	.17
Urban	93.04	92.00	1.04
Rural	76.70	76.35	.35
1970			
Philippines	76.90	75.90	1.00
Urban	86.95	86.29	.66
Rural	72.29	70.63	1.66

Source: NSO. Statistics on the Filipino Women, 1992:44.

aged 10 years and over at 74%, which is a little bit higher than the males within the same age bracket who registered a functional literacy rate of 72.9%, also indicating a difference of 1.1%. However, this situation is reversed in the Metropolitan Manila Area (MMA), where the male urban population exhibited a functional literacy rate of 91% and the female urban population with 89.1% only, or a difference of 1.9%.

That both sexes have equal opportunities for education is firmly established by 1990 NSO figures. Accordingly, almost the same number of females and males attend elementary school; secondary level up to second year college is slightly dominated by females but there are more males in higher collegiate levels. A remarkable point worth noting, however, is the dramatic rise in the population of college graduates between the sexes. Whereas the females registered an increase of 1.1% from 2.7% in 1970 to 3.8% in 1990, the males showed an improvement of

only .8% from 2% in 1970 to 2.8% in 1990. This means that over the last 2 decades, there are more female college graduates than males, a reality perhaps attributable to the perceived needs of most young men to seek early employment.

Women's Rights and Responsibilities for Participation : the Legal/ Constitutional Bases

The 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees equal civic and political rights to both women and men. For instance, Section 14, Article II, provides, that :

"Sec. 14. The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men."

Sections 1 and 2 of Article V also provide, as follows :

"Sec. 1. Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage.

"Sec. 2. The Congress shall provide a system for securing the secrecy and sanctity of the ballot as well as a system for absentee voting by qualified Filipinos abroad.

"The Congress shall also design a procedure for the disabled and the illiterates to vote without the assistance of other persons. Until then, they shall be allowed to vote under existing laws and such rules as the Commission on Elections may promulgate to protect the

secrecy of the ballot.”

People empowerment which can be construed as embracing women empowerment, on the other hand, is guaranteed by Section 9, Article X, which states that :

”Legislative bodies of local governments shall have sectoral representation as may be prescribed by law.”

Giving impetus to this constitutional mandate is Republic Act No. 7160, dated October 10, 1991, more popularly known as the Local Government Code of 1991, which primarily grants expanded roles, powers, authorities and responsibilities to local governments in their quest for autonomy. Implemented since January 1, 1992, this is the latest breakthrough in legislation and the greatest compelling force for women empowerment, particularly at the local government level.

The Code, specifically Sections 446(b), 457(b), and 467(b), provides for the election of sectoral representatives, including one (1) from the women sector, in the sangguniang bayan (municipal council), sangguniang panlungsod (city council), and sangguniang panlalawigan (provincial council), respectively.

Compliance of these provisions would mean a total membership of 1,680 women legislators in the sanggunians (local councils) of the various local government levels, i.e., 76 provinces, 60 cities, and around 1,544 municipalities nationwide. Organizing themselves into a national federation of women local legislators, they would surely constitute a strong group that would push for effective ways of addressing women’s issues and concerns, not only at the grassroots level but also at the national level.

In support of this mandate are related provisions on Section 23, Article II and Sections 15 and 16, Article XIII, which stipulate that :

”Sec. 23. The State shall encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation.

"Sec. 14. The State shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means.

"People's organizations are bona fide associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure.

"Sec. 16. The right to the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms."

Women, particularly the working class, are also assured of protection by the State, as expressed in Section 14, Article XIII of the same constitution, which provides as follows :

"Section 14. 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."

Equally important, of course, is Republic Act No. 7192, more popularly known as the "Women in Development and Nation Building Act," which is appended hereto.

Filipino Women in Public Administration

Women's participation in politics and public administration is one of

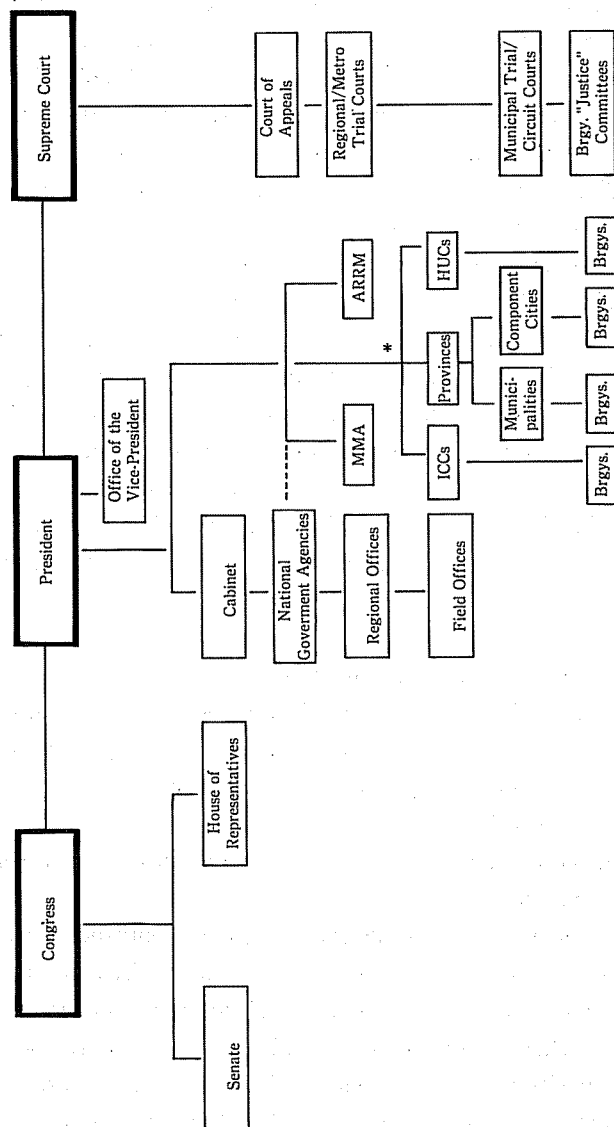
the basic indicators of social progress and development. If there is anything which makes the Philippines different from other developing countries it is that the status of women has, over the decades since the early 20th Century, remained high, i.e., on equal footing with men. As a matter of course, they have already made and are continuously making more significant contributions to national development. Ironically, however, the country lags behind her former competitors in the race to economic growth and development.

Public service is one of the major fields where Filipino women play a multifaceted role : from the ordinary employee and voter to the administrator ; from the executive to the legislator ; and from policy-making to the interpretation and settlement of legal issues. Harnessing the full potential of female civil servants as prime movers of national development is then urgently called for. A better understanding of the current status of women in public administration is, however, a necessary first step toward achieving this objective. Hence, the importance of looking into the formal structure of the system of government within which the Philippine administrative system operates. This is depicted in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 2, the Philippines is a unitary state, i.e., there are no intervening levels of government between the national and the local governments, except in the case of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARRM) which is the country's only regional government. Evidently, too, a presidential form of government with a bicameral legislature is in place.

Local governments in the Philippines comprise of provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays, general supervision over which is exercised by the President of the Republic. Local governments perform varying roles and functions, as defined by the Local Government Code of 1991, the "bible" of Philippine local governance. The province, which consists of a cluster of municipalities, or municipalities and component cities, generally serves as a dynamic coordinative mechanism for developmental

Figure 2. Formal Organization of the Philippine National and Local Governments



* The President exercises general supervision over local governments, with some supervisory powers being delegated to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). The Metropolitan Manila Authority and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao report directly to the national government.

processes and effective governance of local public entities. A city may be created out of existing political units, usually in urban or urbanizing areas, and is primarily responsible for the coordination and delivery of basic services. Like the city, municipalities are composed of smaller political units known as barangays whose main functions are similar to those of an ordinary or component city. Barangays, on the other hand, are the smallest or basic political units.

Every local government unit (LGU) has its own set of elective and appointive officials. At the helm of the executive branch is a local chief executive: governor for province; mayor for the city and/or municipality; and barangay chairman or barangay captain for the barangay while the legislative bodies or councils called sanggunians are composed of board members for the province, councilors for cities and municipalities, and councilmen for barangays. In control of these local bodies as presiding officers are the vice-governor, the city/municipal vice-mayor, and the barangay captain for the province, the city/municipality, and barangay, respectively.

Women in the Civil Service : an Overview

The Philippine Civil Service covers all branches, subdivisions, instrumentalities, and agencies of the Government, including government-owned and/or controlled corporations with original charters (Civil Service Law and Rules, 1993 : 3).

Positions in the Civil Service are of two categories: Career Service and Non-Career Service.

The first category, which is characterized by: entrance based on merit and fitness to be determined as far as practicable by a competitive examination, or based on highly technical qualifications; opportunity for advancement to higher career positions; and security of tenure, includes: (1) open career positions, appointment to which prior qualification in an appropriate examination is required; (2) closed career positions which

are scientific, technical or managerial in nature such as positions of the faculty and academic staffs of state colleges and universities as well as scientific and technical positions in scientific and research institutions having their own merit systems ; (3) positions in the Career Executive Service such as executives, administrators, and managers in national and local governments, government-owned and/or controlled corporations with original charters and other positions of equivalent rank but higher than division chief or as may be identified by the Career Executive Service Board, who are appointed by the President or the appropriate appointing authority ; (4) commissioned officers and enlisted men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who possess highly technical qualifications ; (5) other career officers such as the Foreign Service officers, members of the judiciary and prosecution services who are appointed by the President ; and (6) permanent laborers (Op. cit, 3-4).

Positions in the Career Service are grouped into three major levels, thus permitting lateral admission of competent and qualified individuals into the public service. These groupings are : the first level which covers clerical, trades, crafts and custodial positions appointment to which requires less than four years of collegiate studies and whose functions involve non-professional or sub-professional work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity ; the second level which embraces professional, technical, and scientific positions appointment to which requires at least four years of collegiate work up to Division Chief level and whose nature of job involves professional, technical, and scientific work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity ; and the third level which includes positions in the Career Executive Service (CES) ; a person occupying this position is called Career Executive Service Officer (CESO) (Philippines. Civil Service Commission, 1991 : 17-8).

The Non-Career Service which is characterized by : entrance on bases other than those of the usual tests of merit and fitness utilized for the career service ; and tenure which is limited to a specified period as

mandated by law or which is co-terminus with that of the appointing authority or subject to his/her pleasure, or which is limited to the duration of a particular project for which employment was made, covers (1) elective officials and their personal or confidential staff ; (2) secretaries and other officials with Cabinet rank who hold their positions at the pleasure of the President and their personal or confidential staff/s ; (3) Chairmen and members of commissions and boards with fixed terms of office and their personal or confidential staff/s ; (4) emergency and seasonal personnel ; and (5) contractual personnel or those whose employment in the public service is in accordance with a special contract to undertake a specific job that requires special or technical skills not available in the hiring agency. . Included in this category are specialists, consultants and aliens who are hired for a specific period not exceeding one year and expected to accomplish the particular job with minimum supervision from the employing agency (Philippines. Civil Service Commission, 1991 : 16-7).

Records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) reveal that from a total of 498,814 in 1977, the number of women public servants rose to 525,622 in 1980, to 642,159 in 1985, to 770,249 in 1990, to 1,581,060 in 1991, and to 821,485 in 1992, reflecting an average annual increase of 20,166.94 (or an average annual growth rate of 4.42%). . Combining these figures with those of the National Statistics Office's data on women work force would lead to a conclusion that in 1991, women workers in government made up 50.34% of the civil service with its approximate size of 1,581,060 ; 18.76% of the country's women workforce of 8.424 million ; and 36% of the entire national laborforce of 23.4 million.

In general, the Philippine public service has been predominated by men over the past sixteen years (1977-1992), except in 1977, 1990, 1991, and 1992 when female civil servants accounted for 50.24%, 50.09%, 50.34%, and 50.58%, respectively. . Difference in headcount between sexes notwithstanding, the proportion of women in the public service has been

continuously rising since 1982, as shown by annual growth rates for women far exceeding those of the national as well as the male rates (See Table 4).

Table 4. Proportionate Growth of Women in the Public sector 1977-1992

Year	Number of Personnel			% Increment			% of Total (F)
	Total	Male	Female	T	M	F	
1977	992,79	493,984	498,814	—	—	—	50.24
1978	1,028,710	538,149	490,561	3.62	8.94	(1.65)	47.68
1979	1,064,620	582,313	482,307	3.49	8.21	(1.68)	45.30
1980	1,097,466	571,844	525,622	3.85	(1.80)	8.98	47.89
1981	1,154,541	662,376	492,165	5.20	15.83	(6.37)	42.63
1982	1,179,982	636,381	543,601	2.20	3.92	10.45	46.07
1983	1,205,422	610,386	595,036	2.16	(4.08)	9.46	49.36
1984	1,310,789	662,271	648,518	8.74	18.50	8.99	49.48
1985	1,321,698	679,539	642,159	.83	2.61	.98	48.59
1986	1,364,925	697,148	667,777	3.27	2.59	3.97	48.92
1987	1,408,152	714,757	693,395	3.17	2.52	3.84	49.24
1988	1,451,379	732,366	719,013	3.07	2.46	3.70	49.54
1989	1,494,606	749,975	744,631	2.98	2.40	3.56	49.82
1990	1,537,833	767,584	770,249	2.89	2.35	3.44	50.09
1991	1,581,060	785,193	795,867	2.81	2.29	3.33	50.34
1992	1,624,287	802,802	821,485	2.73	2.24	3.22	50.58
Average Annual Growth Rate :				3.40%	1.96%	3.61%	

Note: Computations were based on Records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

A decreasing trend in growth rate, not only for the women but also in the case of males as well as the size of the entire public service is, however, noticeable which may have been due mainly to the government's policy of streamlining the bureaucracy.

Specific to women, aside from decreases in real number encountered in 1977, 1978, and 1980, growth rate has declined rapidly from 10.45% in

1982 to as low as .98% in 1985. In 1986, it peaked up to 3.97% and then gradually went down to 3.44% in 1990, to 3.22% in 1992. But nevertheless, substantial annual increase in the Size of the public sector is evidently attributable to the growth of women in government. As can be seen from the above figures, even if the actual size of the male sector had become greater than the women sector, the latter has maintained a constant growth rate that is higher than the males. This finding likewise points to the fact that lesser number of people seems attracted to the government service in recent years, yet more females than males are still joining the public service. One reason for this is the lower salary offered by the government which is insufficient for a man, most especially the family head, being able to provide his family with a comfortable life. Another reason is that more Filipino males are either technically competent, skilled or semi-skilled workers whose best option is to find the right employment market, a "bigger economy" which is the private sector or abroad.

Based on sex-disaggregated data gathered from the Civil Service Commission, women made up 51.46% of the total number of government personnel as of June 30, 1991 (Table 5). It shows that there are more women (57.56%) in the career service while a great majority of men (68.57%) are occupying non-career positions. Again, this points to the fact that because most of the male population are technical people, or skilled and/or semi-skilled workers, majority of them fit into non-career jobs.

In spite of this female predominance in the career service, however, a great majority of them (women) obviously occupy positions lower than those held by men, most (59.35%) of whom have landed at the highest or first level echelon. The same case holds true at the second or middle management level where the females have the largest share (68.46%) but most of the Division Chief items are taken by men at 59.32%; with the rest, e.g., section chief, office head, etc., being left for the women who represent 70.32%.

**Table 5. Gender Profile of Civil Service Personnel* by Class and Level,
June 30, 1991**

Employment by Category & Level	Total Number of Personnel	Percentage	
		Male	Female
Philippines	1,386,783	48.54	51.46
1. Career Service	1,063,023	42.44	57.56
a) First Level	409,011	59.35	40.65
b) Second Level	648,385	31.54	68.46
Division Chief	40,690	59.32	40.68
Others	607,695	29.68	70.32
c) Third Level	5,627	69.68	30.32
2. Non-Career Service	323,760	68.57	31.43
a) Casual	242,019	66.43	33.57
b) Contractual	38,648	56.68	43.32
c) Coterminus	43,093	91.23	8.77

*Includes all personnel of the entire public service.

Note: Computations were based on records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

As could be noted in the non-career service, all three personnel categories: casual, contractual and coterminus are largely male with the women having the least share in the coterminus type. This may be explained in part by the predominance of men in the first level category of the career service who are also the appointing authority in their respective departments or agencies. Against this backdrop, it seems to follow that men generally prefer male appointees, especially to positions that are highly technical or confidential in nature and which are usually coterminus with the term, or the discharge of duties and responsibilities being highly dependent on the pleasure, of the appointing officer. And, because there are no legal impediments or restrictions whatsoever, there are also some women executives who prefer working with male staff members as there are male bosses who consider more female recruits

instead.

As in the overall picture of the Philippine bureaucracy, human resources of the national government consist large of women who make up 57.59% of the total (Please see Table 6). The career service is, again, predominantly (62.08%) female with most of them (71.94)% occupying second level positions other than division chief (72.96%). For the first level, females account for 42.56% while the third level is only 23.35% female.

In the non-career service which is male-dominated, the women represent 41.60% of all contractual personnel, 37.65% of casual employees, and barely 4.45% of staff whose terms of office are coterminus with the appointing authority.

Table 6. Gender Profile of National Government Corporations by Class and Level, June 30, 1991

Employment by Category & Level	Total Number of Personnel	Percentage	
		Male	Female
Total	896,957	42.41	57.59
1. Career Service	761,296	37.72	62.08
a) First Level	251,821	57.44	42.56
b) Second Level	507,249	28.06	71.94
Division Chief	17,232	56.84	43.16
Others	490,017	27.04	72.96
c) Third Level	2,227	76.65	23.35
2. Non-Career Service	135,661	67.60	32.40
a) Casual	87,359	62.35	37.65
b) Contractual	23,980	58.40	41.60
c) Coterminus	24,322	95.55	4.45

Note: Computations were based on records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The general situation in government corporations presents women at a slightly marginal position when compared to men. As reflected in

Table 7, government corporations are largely male, with only 36.16% women representation. It is evident that the career service is dominated by men at 59.42%. At the second level of the career service, however, women still form a majority (50.51%) of those holding positions other than division chief level although the entire second level category comprise mostly of male personnel. In the third level, women are represented by about 37.93%.

As of June 30, 1991, female participation in the non-career service dramatically went down to 25.79% from 31.43% for the whole government service (Table 5) and 31.40% for the national government bureaucracy (Table 6). But, a quite high participation rate in the coterminus category of the non-career service is noticeable: at 46.08% compared to 8.77% of the entire civil service (Table 5) and 4.55% of the national government (Table 6).

In the Philippines, the delivery of education is one of the basic services under the social welfare category, is "traditionally", a function of the fairer sex. In the case of state colleges and universities, this belief does not hold true.

As shown in Table 8, this particular field is becoming male-dominated, with male participation rate pegged at 50.41% as of June 30, 1991 and female educators representing 49.59%, or a discrepancy of .82%. Similar to the case of the national government and the entire government bureaucracy, the career service here remains generally a female domain, with 53.03% participation rate although majority (60.47%) of the first level positions are held by men; so are those of the third level where women's participation rate is only 32.23%. Incidentally, a large majority (59.42%) of women occupies the second level, with 54.46% of the total number of division chief positions and 59.96% of all positions other than division chief held by them.

Table 9 provides summary statistics on the participation of women in policy making in government. On the whole, women represent only 26.

Table 7. Gender Profile of Personnel Government Corporations by Class and Level, June 30, 1991

Employment by Category & Level	Total Number of Personnel	Percentage	
		Male	Female
Total	129,828	63.84	36.16
1. Career Service	90,974	59.42	40.58
a) First Level	46,982	65.54	34.46
b) Second Level	41,369	52.30	47.70
Division Chief	8,532	63.15	36.85
Others	32,837	49.49	50.51
c) Third Level	2,623	62.07	37.93
2. Non-Career Service	38,854	74.21	25.79
a) Casual	32,189	78.49	21.51
b) Contractual	4,304	53.30	46.70
c) Coterminus	2,361	53.92	46.08

Note: Computations were based on records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Table 8. Gender Profile of Personnel in State Colleges/Universities by Class and Level, June 30, 1991

Employment by Category & Level	Total Number of Personnel	Percentage	
		Male	Female
1. Career Service	49,281	46.97	53.03
a) First Level	15,545	60.47	39.53
b) Second Level	33,525	40.58	59.42
Division Chief	3,270	45.54	54.46
Others	30,255	40.04	59.96
c) Third Level	211	67.77	32.23
2. Non-Career Service	11,662	64.96	35.04
a) Casual	7,840	67.87	32.13
b) Contractual	2,981	53.94	46.06
c) Coterminus	841	76.93	23.07
Total	60,943	50.41	49.59

Note: Computations were based on records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

67% of the total number of top policy makers in selected line departments in May 1989. Accordingly, women have the highest participation rate, 95.65%, in the social welfare department, which is considered a traditionally "feminine department." Registered participation rates between 30% and 50% are in tourism (47.73%) ; trade and industry (40%) ; NEDA, the planning agency (32.2%) ; foreign affairs (31.11%) and budget management (30.61%). It is in the area of environmental protection and natural resource management where the women are least represented, as indicated by only 2.76% participation rate.

Table 9. Statistics on Top Policy-Makers in Selected National Government Departments/Line Agencies, by Sex May 1989

Agency/Office	Total	Male	Female	%Female
Agriculture	93	87	6	6.45
Agrarian Reform	64	56	8	12.50
Budget & Management	49	34	15	30.61
Education, Culture and Sports	62	46	16	25.81
Environment & Natural Resources	78	76	2	2.56
Finance	32	24	8	25.00
Foreign Affairs	45	31	14	31.11
Health	54	38	16	29.63
Interior and Local Government	14	12	2	14.29
Justice	47	36	11	23.40
Labor and Employment	77	52	23	29.87
NEDA	59	40	19	32.20
Public Works and Highways	36	35	1	2.78
Science & Technology	25	19	6	24.00
Social Welfare	46	2	44	95.65
Tourism	44	23	21	47.73
Trade & Industry	60	36	24	40.00
Totals	885	647	236	26.67%

With respect to the participation of women in politically appointed public posts, Table 10 establishes a 100% female controlling variable at

the social welfare department and 50% for tourism. The departments of budget and management (40% female) and trade and industry (30% female) rank third and fourth, respectively.

Table 10. Gender Profile of Politically-Appointed Positions in Serlected National Government Agencies 1989

Department/Line Agency	No. of Positions		%Female
	Total	Occupied by Women	
Agrarian Reform	14	3	12.50
Agriculture	15	0	0
Budget and Management	5	2	40.00
Education, Culture and Sports	11	1	9.09
Environment & Natural Resources	13	1	7.69
Foreign Affairs	7	1	14.29
Health	12	3	25.00
Interior and Local Government	7	1	14.29
Justice	6	1	16.66
Labor and Employment	9	2	22.22
National Defense	9	1	11.11
NEDA	3	0	0
Public Works and Highways	12	1	8.33
Social Welfare	4	4	100.00
Tourism	4	2	50.00
Trade & Industry	10	3	30.00
Transportation and Communications	11	3	27.27
Totals	152	29	19.08

It's surprising to note that the DECS, a "traditionally feminine" department, is dominated by men in so far as politically-appointed positions and policy-making are concerned. And, sadly, the women sector is not at all represented in the central planning agency (the NEDA) and the agrarian department.

In a word, not even 30% of the total number of politically appointed

national officials is constituted of female appointees.

Women in the Judiciary

The appointment of the first lady jurist to the Supreme Court of the Philippines in 1973 was a landmark turning point in women's participation in the Judiciary. On her retirement five years later, or in 1978, another female judge succeeded her as associate justice of the Supreme Court. Therefrom, the number of women members in the judicial branch continued to rise, though at a very minimal rate (See Table 11).

**Table 11. Growth of Women Representation in the Philippine Judiciary
9 1981-1991**

Year	Membership in the Judiciary			Percentage	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	1,224	1,148	76	93.8	6.2
July 16, 1984	1,574	1,456	118	92.5	7.5
July 31, 1991	1,655	1,451	204	87.7	12.3

Evidently, the proportion of women judges in the Philippine judiciary had doubled from 6.2% in 1981 to 12.3% by the end of July 1991. A slight increase of 1.3% can also be noted in the July 16, 1984 figure of 7.5% as compared to that of 6.2% in 1981 and a 4.8% growth rate from 1984 to 1991.

Based on the July 31, 1991 data of the National Statistics Office, the general picture of the judiciary reveals women jurists being represented at almost all levels of the Philippine judicial system, with the exception of the court of Tax Appeals, the Shari'a District and Circuit Courts in the Muslim-dominated Mindanao area, and the anti-graft court called Sandiganbayan, which remain entirely "male courts" (Refer to Table 12).

Compared with the courts, women jurists seem to have better participation rate at the Office of the Solicitor General, which serves as the

Table 12. Gender Profile of Members of the Judiciary July 31, 1991

Level	Number of Jurists			Percentage	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Size/Membership of the Judiciary	1,655	1,451	204	87.67	12.33
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court	1	1	1	100	0
Associate Justices	14	12	2	85.71	14.29
Court of Appeals	49	42	7	85.71	14.29
Court of Tax Appeals	3	3	0	100	0
Regional Trial Courts	662	581	81	87.76	12.24
Metropolitan Trial Courts	80	61	19	76.25	23.75
Municipal Trial Courts in Cities	112	98	14	87.20	12.50
Municipal Trial Courts	358	310	48	86.59	13.41
Municipal Circuit Trial Courts	355	322	33	90.70	9.30
Shari'a District Courts	2	2	0	100	0
Shari'a Circuit Courts	10	10	0	100	0

Note: Computations were based on statistics on the Filipino women compiled by the National Statistics office, Manila.

“law firm of the Republic of the Philippines.” This is supported by

Table 13. Gender Profile of Solicitors and Associate Solicitors at the Office of the Solicitor General October 24, 1993

Title/Pank	Total	Female	% Female	Vacancies
Solicitor III	28	6	21.43	2
Solicitor II	21	11	52.38	9
Solicitor I	19	10	52.63	11
Associate Solicitor III	33	14	42.42	7
Associate Solicitor II	9	1	11.11	9
Associate Solicitor I	2	1	50.00	—
Totals	112	43	38.39	38

Note: Computations were based on a report on the Office of the Solicitor General which was published in the October 24, 1993 issue of the Philippine Panorama.

statistics on solicitors and associate solicitors presented in Table 13.

As shown by the above figures, brighter prospects for the participation of women jurists are becoming increasingly great, so are the opportunities and challenges confronting them. What remains to be done, first of all, is for these female jurists to prove their worth as competent and dedicated servants of the nation and fighters for justice and equality, making sure that the fruits of these virtues are enjoyed by all Filipino citizens, women and men alike.

Filipino women in International Affairs

According to records of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine diplomatic service had 83 (or 27.48%) females out of its total membership of 302 in 1984. Of the 83 female diplomats, 43 (51.81%) were assigned in diplomatic posts abroad while the remaining 40 (or 48.19%) were based at the home office. Statistics also show a decreasing trend in the number of females appointed to diplomatic posts from 1984 to 1991 (Table 14).

Table 14. Female Representation in Diplomatic Posts 1984 and 1991

Place of Assignmant	% Female, 1984	% Famale, 1991
Home Office	51.81	38.8
Foreign Service	48.19	39.8

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs, Manila.

The participation of Women in Electoral Politics

As of 1992 registration, the Philippines has a total of 32,141,079 registered qualified voters, about 16,197,666 (or 50.40%) are males and the remaining 15,943,413 (or 49.60%) are females. In the May 11, 1992 synchronized national and local elections, around 12,142,090 male voters actually casted their votes, indicating a voter's turn-out rate of 74.96%.

On the other hand, the number of women who actually voted was approximately 12,112,864, representing a voter's turn-out rate of 75.97% which is 1.21% higher than the males.

In the Philippines, the first recorded general elections were held on the first Tuesday of June 1928; first national elections on September 14, 1935; and first local elections on November 11, 1947. (Statistics on pre-world War II elections are not available for inclusion in this report.)

Time-series data on elections gathered from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) reveal that over the years since 1947, women have been slightly more active at the polls than male electors (Refer to Table 15). As shown on the table, the female voters had higher voter's turn-out rates than the males in almost all election years under review, except in 1949, 1957, 1961, and 1970, when males registered higher rates, at : 70.58%, 75.87%, 79.45%, and 68.19%, respectively. Male electors in such areas as the Muslim-dominated Mindanao and the Cordilleras have also proven themselves more active than females as indicated by higher male voters' turn-out rates during political exercises undertaken in the said regions in 1979, 1982, 1989-1990 and 1992.

But these figures on women's participation are not quite encouraging. What seems unfortunate is that voting power has never been translated into actual political power which could obtain for women more elective public posts, the upliftment of their status and promotion of well-being as well as the advancement of women's concerns and rights through practice and/or legislation.

Table 15. Percentage of Qualified Electors Who Actually Voted, by Sex Elections Held from 1928 to 1993

Date of Elections	Type of Election	Voters' Turn-Out Rate in %		Difference in %*
		Male	Female	
June 1928	General Elections	70.58	71.79	1.21
July 10, 1934	Const'l. Convention Delegates Elections	75.87	77.08	1.21

Sept. 14, 1935	National Elections	—	—	—
Dec. 14, 1937	General Elections	—	—	—
Nov. 11, 1941	National Elections	—	—	—
Apr. 23, 1946	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	89.59%	(national rate)	
March 11, 1947	Plebiscite	63.66%	(national rate)	
Nov. 11, 1947	Local & Senatorial Elections	77.11	77.14	.03
Nov. 8, 1949	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	70.58	68.26	(2.32)
Nov. 13, 1951	Local & Senatorial Elections	92.00	92.90	.90
Nov. 10, 1953	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	77.02	77.50	.48
Nov. 8, 1955	Local & Senatorial Elections	77.37	78.38	1.01
Nov. 12, 1957	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	75.87	75.06	(.81)
Nov. 10, 1959	Local & Senatorial Elections	81.52	82.01	.49
Nov. 14, 1961	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	79.45	79.42	(.03)
Nov. 12, 1963	Local & Senatorial Elections	79.14	80.11	.97
Nov. 9, 1965	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	76.19	76.63	.44
Nov. 14, 1967	Local & Senatorial Elections and Plebiscite	81.29	82.09	.80
Nov. 11, 1969	Pres'l, Vice-Pres., Senatorial and Congressional Elections	79.07	80.30	1.23
Nov. 10, 1970	Election of Constitutional Convention Delegates	68.19	68.02	(.17)
Nov. 8, 1971	Local & Senatorial Elections	80.03	81.62	1.59
July 27-28, 1973	Referendum	87.00	(national rate)	
Feb. 27-28, 1975	Referendum	94.75	(national rate)	
Oct. 16-17, 1975	Referendum-Plebiscite	99.72	(national rate)	
Dec. 17, 1977	Referendum	94.55	(national rate)	
April 7, 1978	Interim Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly) Members Elections	85.08	85.97	.89
May 7, 1979	Plebiscite for Sangguniang Pampook (or Regional Assembly) of Regions 9 & 12	75.97	74.01	(1.95)
Jan. 30, 1980	Local Elections and Plebiscite	76.37	77.02	.65

April 7, 1981	Plebiscite	68.76	69.47	.94
June 16, 1981	Pres'l Elections & Referendum	80.53	81.36	.83
May 17, 1982	Barangay Elections	65.86	66.84	.98
June 7, 1982	Election of Members of the Sangguniang Pampook of Regions 9 & 12	65.94	65.46	(.48)
Jan. 27, 1984	Plebiscite	52.08	53.49	1.41
May 14, 1984	Batasang Pambansa (Nat'l Assembly) Members Elections	88.76	90.17	1.41
Feb. 7, 1986	Pres'l & Vice-Pres. Snap Elections	78.04	79.64	1.60
Feb. 2, 1987	Plebiscite on the New Constitution	88.81	90.92	2.11
May. 11, 1987	Senatorial and Congressional Elections	85.22	85.97	.75
Jan. 18, 1988	Local Elections	78.66	79.15	.49
March 28, 1989	Barangay Elections	67.44	67.54	.10
Nov. 19, 1989	Plebiscite on the Organic Act for the ARMM**	56.42	56.20	(.22)
Dec. 27, 1989	Plebiscite on the Organic Act for the CAR***	63.02	61.50	(1.52)
Feb. 12, 1990	ARMM Elections	80.89	79.11	(1.78)
May 11, 1992	Synchronized Nat'l & Local Elections	74.96	75.97	1.01
Nov. 21, 1992	Plebiscite for the Creation of the Province of Sarangani	43.39	45.50	2.11
March 25, 1993	ARMM Elections	82.87	81.68	(1.19)
Aug. 30, 1993	Special Elections for Members of the House of Representatives for the Second District of Agusan del Norte and the First District of Capiz	44.50	48.36	3.86

* Figures in parentheses represent an excess of male over female votes.

** Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

*** Cordillera Administrative Region.

Source: Records and Statistics Division, Commission on Elections.

Clearly illustrative of this sorry state of women in the country's political life are statistics on women candidates and their performance during elections, which are presented in Tables 16, 17, and 18.

Table 16. Number and Percentage of Woman Candidates in Elections Held From 1978 to 1992

Election		Total	Female	% Female
1978	Interim Batasang Pambansa (IBP) Elections	536	33	6.16
1984	Batasang Pambansa Elections	992	54	5.44
1987	Congressional Elections			
	Senator	84	14	16.67
	Congresswoman	1,844	109	5.91
1988	Local Elections			
	Governor	270	21	7.78
	Vice-Governor	272	28	10.29
	Prov'l Board Member	1,913	157	8.21
	City/Mun. Mayor	5,834	423	7.25
	City/Mun. Vice-Mayor	6,373	460	7.22
	City/Mun. Councilor	45,692	4,428	9.69
	Sub-Total (Local)	60,354	5,517	9.14
1992	Synchronized National and Local Elections			
	President	6	2	33.33
	Vice-President	7	1	14.29
	Others (No sex-disaggregated data available)			

Source: Records and Statistics Division, Commission on Elections.

A very important and interesting point worth noting is the high percentage of women who joined the latest presidential race in May 1992, which may be a sign of increased awareness on their part about national issues and concerns as well as a dramatic attempt at overcoming institutional prejudice, claiming their position and asserting their role in public affairs by getting more involved in politics. It is also proof that the

Filipino women can no longer be held "captives of the home" or that part of the conjugal ties which must be kept "tied to the belt of the husband," as previously believed from traditional point of view.

Table 17. Growth of Female Representation in Congress 1946-1992

Date of Election	Position	No. of Seats to be Filled	No. of women Elected	%
1946	Congresswoman	8	1	12.50
1947	Senator	8	8	12.50
1949	Congresswoman	100	1	1.00
1953	Congresswoman	102	1	.98
1955	Senator	8	1	12.50
1957	Congresswoman	102	1	.98
1961	Senator	8	1	12.50
	Congresswoman	104	2	1.92
1963	Senator	8	1	12.50
1965	Senator	8	1	12.50
	Congresswoman	104	6	5.77
1967	Senator	8	2	25.00
1969	Senator	8	0	0
	Congresswoman	109	3	2.75
1971	Senator	8	1	12.50
1978	IBP Member	165	9	5.45
1984	Mambatas Pambansa	181	10	5.52
1987	Senator	24	2	8.33
	Congresswoman	202*	19	9.41
1992	Senator	24	4	16.66
	Congresswoman	(Sex-disaggregated data not available)		

*Includes 2 sectoral representatives who were appointed by the President of the Republic.

Source: Records and Statistics Division, Commission on Elections.

On the whole, the total number of women occupying elective public

posts are not even 10% of the total number of positions. It could be said then that a lot still remains to be desired as far as women's participation in electoral politics is concerned.

Table 18. Comparative Statistics on Elected Woman Public Officials, by Level & Position 1989 and 1991

Position/Office	1989			1991		
	Total	F	% F	Total	F	% F
President	1	1	100	1	1	100
Vice-President	1	0	0	1	0	0
Senator	23	2	8.70	23	2	8.70
Congressman	202	19	9.41	200	17	8.50
Prov'l Governor	73	4	5.48	73	4	5.50
Prov'l Vice-Governor	73	9	12.33	73	8	10.96
Prov'l Board Member	626	62	9.90	620	71	11.45
2 Sub-Provinces**:						
Lt. Governor	2			2	—	—
Asst. Lt. Governor	1			1	—	—
Special Board Member	2			2	—	—
City/Mun. Mayor	1,578	118	7.48	1,591	118	7.42
City/Mun. Vice-Mayor	1,578	102	6.46	1,591	96	6.03
City/Mun. Councilor	12,406	1,305	10.52	12,956	1,255	9.69
Total (Local only)	16,339	1,600	9.79	16,909	1,552	9.18
Grand Total	16,566	1,622	9.79	17,134	1,572	9.18

* Refers to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the country's lone regional government.

* The Sub-Provinces of Biliran (Leyte) and Guimaras (Iloilo) have been elevated to the status of regular province as provided for by the Local Government Code of 1991, which took effect on January 1, 1992.

Source: Records and Statistics Division, Commission on Elections.

Women's Participation in Local Governments

Table 19, which gives an overview of local government bureaucracy

as of June 30, 1991, also explains in part the participation of women at the local government bureaucracy.

Table 19. Gender Profile of Local Government Personnel by Class and Level June 30, 1991

Employment by Category & Level	Total Number of Personnel	Percentage	
		Male	Female
Total	299,055	59.90	40.19
1. Career Service	161,471	52.80	47.20
a) First Level	94,664	61.16	38.84
b) Second Level	66,242	40.64	59.36
Division Chief	11,656	64.05	35.95
Others	54,586	35.64	64.36
c) Third Level	566	78.27	21.73
2. Non-Career Service	137,583	68.23	31.77
a) Casual	114,631	66.06	33.94
b) Contractual	7,383	54.16	45.84
c) Coterminus	15,569	90.91	9.09

Note: Computations were based on records of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

This summary of data illustrates a rather low participation rate of women at the local government bureaucracy, which is 40.10% of the total. Additionally, and in contrast to the national government bureaucracy, career service at the local level is comprised mostly of men at 52.80% with the women accounting only for 47.20%. Figures for the first level under this category reveal a big discrepancy of 22.32% against the females whose participation rate is 38.84%.

The women are generally favored at the second level where they participate at a high rate of 59.36%, although they occupy only 35.95% of the total number of the division chief positions and 64.36% of all positions apart from division chief. At the third level, women's participation dipped down to as low as 21.73%. On the whole, the non-career service is 31.77% female, with the women constituting 45.84% of all contractual

employees, 33.94% of casuals, and only 9.09% of all personnel whose terms are coterminus with the appointing officer.

Likewise highly significant to the development and participation of women in local government politics is the institutionalization of the women sector as a potential partner in the administration of local public affairs. This is made possible by the Local Government Code of 1991 [Sections 446(b), 457(b), and 467(b)] which provides for the election of sectoral representatives, including one from the women sector, in the provincial, city and municipal government councils or legislative bodies called sanggunians (See Table 20 for the composition of the local councils).

**Table 20. Composition of Local Legislative Bodies in the Philippines
(Per Republic Act No. 7160)**

1. Provincial Board/Council	
Provincial Vice-Governor (elected)	...Presiding Officer
Regular Council members (elected)	
President of the Provincial	
Chapter of the League of Barangays	
President of the Provincial	
Federation of Youth Councils	
President of the Provincial	
Federation of Council	
Members of Municipalities and Cities	...Members
3 Sectoral Representatives:	
1 from the women	
1 from the agriculture or industrial workers	
1 from other sectors, e.g., urban poor, indigenous	
cultural communities, or disabled persons	
2. City Council	
City Vice-Mayor (elected at large)	...Presiding Officer
Regular Council Members (elected)	
President of the City Chapter of the league of	
Barangays	
President of the Federation of the Youth Councils	
3 Sctoral Representatives :	...Members

1 from the women	
1 from the agriculture of industrial workers	
1 from other sectors, e.g., urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, or disabled persons	
3. Municipal Council	
Municipal Vice-Mayor (elected at large)	---Presiding Officer
Regular Council Members (elected)	
President of the Municipal Chapter of the League of Barangays	
President of the Provincial Federation of the Youth Councils	
President of the Provincial	
3 Sectoral Representatives:	---Members
1 from the women	
1 from the agriculture or industrial workers	
1 from other sectors, e.g., urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, or disabled persons	
4. Barangay Council	
Barangay Chairman	---Presiding Officer
7 Regular Members or councilmen (elected at large)	---Members
Youth Council	

Attention is drawn back to Table 16 for a glimpse of the actual participation of women in local politics.

In the 1988 local elections, females represented barely 9.14% of the total number of candidates. Pertinent data also show that among the various local public posts to be filled by general suffrage, the vice-governorship had the highest participation of women, at 10.29%; followed by members of the city/municipal council at 9.69%; and then provincial board member at 8.21%. Of all candidates vying for the position of governor, 7.78% were women, for city/municipal mayor, 7.25%, and the least, 7.22%, for city/municipal vice-mayor.

As of 1991, elected women local officials make up only 9.18% of the

national total (Refer to Table 18). Provincial board membership is 11.45% female whereas 10.96% of all provincial governors is composed of women. 9.69% of the total number of city/municipal councilors nationwide is represented by women members while the positions of city/municipal mayor and city/municipal vice-mayor have 7.42% and 6.03% female participation rate, respectively.

With respect to the number of elected female officials at the barangay level, the smallest unit of local government, Table 21 reveals an increase of 3.6% from 6.34% in 1982 to 9.70% in 1989 for the position of barangay chairman and 1.79% from 11.67% in 1982 to 13.46% in 1989 for barangay councilor. In general, woman barangay officials constitute a little more than 10% of the national total, i.e., 11.24% in 1982 and 12.92% in 1989.

Table 21. Gender Profile of Barangay Officials 1982 and 1989

Official Titles	1982		1989	
	Total	% Female	Total	% Female
Barangay Chairman	39,443	6.34	41,000	9.70
Barangay Councilor	240,371	11.67	246,000	13.46
Barangay Secretary	4,943	18.34	—	—
Barangay Treasurer	5,055	22.18	—	—
Totals	289,812	11.24	287,000	12.92

Source: Records and Statistics Division, Commission on Elections.

Some Observations and Conclusions

Through the ages, the Filipino women have proven themselves not only worthy beneficiaries of development, but able leaders and effective agents of societal change as well. But their full development as human beings have always been constrained by certain traditions and weaknes-

ses in the cultural fiber. Thus, their significant contributions to national progress and steely courage in dealing with the country's socio-political crises have been taken for granted or perceived less valuable if at all recognized or acknowledged.

Todate, their wisdom and power, not merely to survive, but to balance prevailing socio-political forces is again being put to test by the way Congress has been dilly-dallying about enacting a law which provides for the immediate holding of elections of sectoral representatives to the local government councils. It must be recalled that the legal infrastructure for this political exercise has been laid down in the Local Government Code of 1991. The Code is on its third year of implementation and the Nineth Congress has been in existence for 19 months already but not even a ray of light has come out at the end of the tunnel yet.

More apparent is the seeming hesitance of some members of Congress and other concerned groups in promoting the operationalization of people's participation-- and for that matter, women's participation -- in local governance. As of this writing, for example, certain bills seeking to either oppose or defer the election of sectoral representatives in the various local councils are pending in the House of Representatives. Concerned groups of local government officials, e.g., the leagues of municipalities and local councilors have likewise issued resolutions with the same objectives, citing financial constraints on local government units, increased expenditures pursuant to devolution and creation/appointment of additional positions, and untimeliness of such elections as major reasons.

What are the implications of these measures on the prospects of empowerment, particularly the development of women power in government?

There is no contradiction about the fact that the seeds of empowerment have been sown under the 1987 Constitution and which have taken root with the implementation of the new Local Government Code on

January 1, 1992. But the previously cited measures clearly imply a rejection of the Code's intent to democratize political power by adopting a "representative government" in the Philippines as well as a derision of women's and other marginalized sectors' natural and constitutional rights to participate in the decision-making process, especially in respect of major concerns affecting their very own lives and future.

These moves run but counter to the spirit of local autonomy which seeks to transform local government units into self-reliant communities. Apart from serving as instruments for weakening people's involvement in local public affairs, these "delaying tactics" are but lame attempts at keeping local governments weak mechanisms for promoting autonomy as well as agents of societal change at the community level. The central point being missed is that self-reliant communities are basically founded on fully developed resources -- human and natural -- and strong fiscal capability. The argument for insufficient funds and untimeliness of sectoral elections must be taken as a challenge, a landmark beginning for the development of available potential resources. It is only until this opportunity is seriously taken can the Filipino people be truly empowered and the country better equipped with such resources as are necessary to overcome the challenges of the forthcoming century. And, the transformation of Philippine society into one "where there will be no more women 'tired of acting weak when (they) know they are strong,' as there will be no more men 'tired of appearing strong when (they) feel vulnerable.'"

NOTES

- 1 Lorenzo Ruiz is the first Filipino saint who was executed in Nagasaki, Japan on September 29, 1637 while defending and propagating the Christian faith.

2 Major sources are: the *Leading Filipino Women*, 1953 by Herminia M. Ancheta; *Women of Distinction*, 1967 by Jovita Varias-de Guzman, et al; and *Filipino Women in Nation-Building; a Compilation of Brief Biographies*, 1984 by Herminia M. Ancheta and Michaela Beltran-Gonzalez.

3 This is based mainly on the *Statistics on the Filipino Women*, compiled in 1992 by the National Statistics Office in cooperation with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

4 *Statistics on the Filipino Women and Philippine History and Government*, corrected edition by Gregorio F. Zaide and Sonia M. Zaide, 1987: 29.

5 Based on the *Statistics on the Filipino Women*, 1992 which was compiled by National Statistics Office in cooperation with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

6 Sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females.

7 Functional literacy refers to one's "ability to read, write and do simple arithmetic and to be able to perform needed day to day skills as an employed or self-employed individual."

8 The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides for the creation of autonomous regional governments in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras. Only the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), however, was created because the people of the Cordillera region (except Ifugao Province) voted NO at a plebiscite held for this purpose on December 27, 1989.

9 Philippines. National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. *Filipino Women in Public Affairs*, 1985: 6; and Philippines. National Statistics Office. *Statistics on the Filipino Women*, 1992: 116.

10 Paraphrased lines of Nancy R. Smith's poem "For Every Women," as quoted in an article with the same title that was published in the *Philippine Development*, volume 20, No. 1 (March-April 1993): 2.

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"Appendix"

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7192

AN ACT PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN AS FULL AND EQUAL PARTNERS OF MEN IN DEVELOPMENT AND NATION BUILDING AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled :

SECTION 1. Title. --This Act shall be cited as the "Women in Development and Nation Building Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. --The State recognizes the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. The State shall provide women rights and opportunities equal to that of men.

To attain the foregoing policy :

(1) A substantial portion of official development assistance funds received from foreign governments and multilateral agencies and organizations shall be set aside and utilized by the agencies concerned to support programs and activities for women ;

(2) All government departments shall ensure that women benefit equally and participate directly in the development programs and projects of said department, specifically those funded under official foreign development assistance, to ensure the full participation and involvement of women in the develop-

ment process; and

(3) All government departments and agencies shall review and revise all their regulations, circulars, issuances and procedures to remove gender bias therein.

SEC. 3. Responsible Agency. --The National Economic and Development Authority

(NEDA) shall primarily be responsible for ensuring the participation of women as recipients in foreign aid, grants and loans. It shall determine and recommend the amount to be allocated for the development activity involving women.

SEC. 4. Mandate. --The NEDA with the assistance of the National Commission on

the Role Filipino Women shall ensure that the different government departments, including its agencies and instrumentalities which directly or indirectly, affect the participation of women in national development and their integration therein:

(1) Formulate and prioritize rural or countryside development programs or projects, 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) Include an assessment of the extent to which their programs and/or projects integrate women in the development process and of 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 receive assistance is approximately proportionate to

either their traditional participation in the targeted activities or their proportion of the population, whichever is higher. Otherwise, the following should be stated in the program/project paper, proposal or strategy :

- (a) The obstacles in achieving the goal ;
 - (b) The steps being taken to overcome those obstacles ; and
 - (c) To the extent that steps are not being taken to overcome those obstacles, why they are not being taken.
- (6) Assist women in activities that are of critical significance to their self-reliance and development.

SEC. 5. Equality in Capacity to Act. --Women of legal age, regardless of civil status, shall have the capacity to act and enter into contracts which shall in every respect be equal to that of men under similar circumstances.

In all contractual situations where married men have the capacity to act, married women shall have equal rights.

To this end :

- (1) Women shall have the capacity to borrow and obtain loans and execute security and credit arrangements under the same conditions as men ;
- (2) Women shall have equal access to all government and private sector programs granting agricultural credit, loans and nonmaterial resources and shall enjoy equal treatment in agrarian reform and land resettlement programs ;
- (3) Women shall have equal rights to act as incorporators and enter into insurance contracts ; and
- (4) Married women shall have rights equal to those of married men in applying for passports, secure visas and other travel documents, without need to secure the consent of their spouses.

In all similar contractual relations, women shall enjoy equal rights and shall have the capacity to act which shall in every respect be equal to those of men under similar circumstances.

SEC. 6. Equal Membership in Clubs. --Women shall enjoy equal access to membership in all social, civic and recreational clubs, committees, associa-

tions and similar other organizations devoted to public purpose. They shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges accorded to their spouses if they belong to the same organization.

SEC. 7. Admission to Military Schools. --Any provision of the law contrary notwithstanding, consistent with the needs of the services, women shall be accorded equal opportunities for appointment, admission, training, graduation and commissioning in all military or similar schools of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police not later than the fourth academic year following the approval of this Act in accordance with the standards required for men except for those minimum essential adjustments required by physiological differences between sexes.

SEC. 8. Voluntary Pag-IBIG, GSIS and SSS Coverage. --Married persons who devote full time to managing the household and family affairs shall, upon the working spouse's consent, be entitled to voluntary Pag-IBIG (Pagtutulungan-Ikaw, Bangko, Industriya at Gobyerno), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) or Social Security System (SSS) coverage to the extent of one-half (1/2) of the salary and compensation of the working spouse. The contributions due thereon shall be deducted from the salary of the working spouse.

The GSIS or the SSS, as the case may be, shall issue rules and regulations necessary to effectively implement the provisions and regulations necessary to effectively implement the provisions of this section.

SEC. 9. Implementing Rules. --The NEDA in consultation with the different government agencies concerned shall issue rules and regulations as may be necessary for the effective implementation of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this Act within six (6) months from its effectivity.

SEC. 10. Compliance Report. --Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act and every six (6) months thereafter, all government departments, including its agencies and instrumentalities, shall submit a report to Congress on their compliance with this Act.

SEC. 11. Separability Clause. --If for any reason any section or provi-

sion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause. --The provisions of Republic Act No. 386, otherwise known as the Civil Code of the Philippines, as amended, and of Executive Order No. 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines, and all laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

SEC. 13. Effectivity Clause. --The rights of women and all the provisions of this Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved: February 12, 1992.