

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study of the socio-economic background of women administrators of Howrah, Hooghly and Kolkata districts of West Bengal was largely motivated by an interest to enquire into some vital dimensions of working women, especially, those at the higher echelons of the bureaucratic system in the state of West Bengal. Issues concerning administrators' socio economic background have started receiving the required academic attention only recently. As such no specific studies concerning women administrators was generally attempted or perhaps glossed over. With the gradual increase in the intake of qualified women opting for higher administrative services, it has become necessary to conduct such studies.

The representative democracy is very much dependent on civil servants, since they are closely connected to the decision making. Nowadays, though women from every corner of our country join the administrative profession, yet, they are not adequately represented in terms of their number. The scenario of West Bengal represents this trend to a great extent.

Despite the constitutional provisions pertaining to gender equality, Indian women failed to get into the administrative services at large due to the socio-cultural practices and perceptions that prevailed in Indian society for long.

In modern democratic system, socio-economic development of a country highly depends upon the performance of bureaucracy. Since ancient times, public administration functioned on its own to implement

public policies. Public administration is a collective process, pursues co-operative effort. The definition of public administration has been evolved over time with its requirements.

The idea of organized civil service was initiated by the East India Company, but, it took over two centuries to be formed, and came into being by the second decade of 20th century. In 1858, when East India Company ended its ruling over India, the British civil service took the administrative responsibilities. Initially the British civil service acted as a key institution in maintaining a colonial type of rule over the provinces of British India, including its law and order functions.

India's governmental administration was essentially a creation of the Indo-British contract. Independent India inherited the concept of centralized civil service from the British India system. The nature of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) its formal structure and tradition were the legacy of Indian Civil Service (ICS), which India accepted from Britishers. But government of independent India confronted a difficult choice, whether to continue the "steel frame", which was efficient but conservative in nature, or to abandon the structure altogether. Therefore, a blend of the former colonial administration and India's new concept and directions established our present administrative system, which marked as British legacy.

The constitution of India declared it as a parliamentary system, where civil service or bureaucracy was the main pillar, but, Indian democracy suffers a lot due to improper adjustment between the political wing and the civil service wing of the administrative machinery.

The British administrative system introduced the federalism based on centre-state relations first time in Indian administration. After independence, the Govt. of India adopted the system consistently. For organizational purposes and transaction of governmental business,

linguistic provinces were required. But, in true sense, central government led and advised the state governments, the states actually took the responsibilities for the welfare of the states.

In August 1970 a separate department of Personnel and Administrative reforms was formed as part of the Cabinet Secretariat for public services. Primarily, The Ministry of Home Affairs of the government of India took the responsibilities. This was not created only for provincial services, but to serve some All India Services, arranged and maintained jointly on behalf of the central and provincial governments.

The Independent Indian government transformed British Indian Civil Service into Indian Administrative service, and for separate state The State Civil Service. The schedule made by the central govt. specified the strength, numbers and character of posts; amendments could be possible with the consultation of the appropriate provincial government. The procedure of recruitment to the IAS was made only by direct recruitment or by promotion of members of a provincial civil service. Direct recruitment to the IAS was made on the basis of the result of an examination held by, or under the authority of, the Union Public Service Commission and appointed to the service by the central govt.

The civil service at the state level is classified into four categories of civil services, namely, the state civil services, the subordinate civil services, the ministerial services, class IV services. In West Bengal, state civil service is called WBCS (West Bengal Civil Service), the recruitment made on the basis of competitive examinations conducted by the state level Public Service Commission.

District administration is considered as inevitable part and major contribution of Britishers to the Indian administration. Warren Hastings (1772-85) first introduced the planning of a uniform system of district administration in modern India. After the passage of the 73rd and 74th

amendments to the constitution of India, a major change took place to the role of the District collector at district level. It is the only strongest medium of direct contact to common people. Since inception of district administration, it has changed from time to time. The designation of District Officer is District Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner. District Magistrate has to supervise sub divisional administration and different local self government organizations and co-ordinate all government activities in the district. Therefore, District Magistrate is the pivot of the district administration.

The status of women in India evolved through the ages. Many eminent scholars established with evidences, that, since ancient time to Vedic period, women enjoyed a highly prestigious status and position in the society. This status took a downturn during the medieval period. Women started to be confined at home, and education kept aside. Male domination and exploitation became the part of their life. Notwithstanding, some women from both Hindu and Muslim religious communities did extremely well in different spheres like, politics, literature, education and religion.

A different environment emerged when Britishers started to reign over India. Britishers came to India as a colonial master for exploiting and accumulating wealth. But their objectives virtually provided Indians with lot of infrastructural as well as social amenities that were then available only in Europe. Indian women also became part and parcel of that change.

During British period Indian women actively participated in National Freedom Movement not only to seclude of purdah, but to emancipate from British colonial rule at large. Most eminent persons like, Ram Mohan, Vidya Sagar, Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, M. G Ranade and others did enormous work for women's emancipation. Beside this Mahatma Gandhi appeared in political field, appealed

women to join Satyagraha and moved for a reform of the status of Indian women through education.

In the first phase of 20th century; progressive movements, modernization and moreover Western education brought a significant impact on women in Indian society. Both political leaders and social reformers took initiatives to change the existing social institutions and traditional practices. In 1931, The Indian National Congress recognized the role of women in the Freedom Struggle, and at Karachi Congress declared that, "all citizens are equal before the Law irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex in regard to public employment, office, power or honour."

As India achieved independence in 1947 it enacted different legal codes and equal rights for women with men, equal opportunities of education, choice of profession and employment. Social, economic and political justice along with liberty of thought, expression, belief and worship, equality of status was assured by the preamble to the constitution of India. Article 14 and 15 ensured equality before law and prohibition against discrimination accordingly. Article 16(1) guaranteed equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

Independence of India opened a new chapter in the history regarding the struggle for developing the status of Indian women. As late as 1950 there was no "equal pay for equal work" to guaranteed British working women, whereas Government of India never believed in disproportionate wage payment on the basis of sex.

Since independence, the government of India have also given emphasis on the higher education of women, established so many general and professional colleges for the improvement of women's education. In 1948-49 University Education Commission made a few

recommendations regarding women's education, and, the most important event was the establishment of National Committee for women's education in 1959.

In 1971-74 the committee on the status of women held the policy makers responsible for their bias towards the urban middle class, and their false prediction regarding women's roles, needs and priorities. The common curriculum for boys and girls, pre- school education, and co-education was recommended by the committee. But the fact was that, more was said than done.

The central focus on women empowerment was the main objective of the different plans since independence. But impediments could be removed only through attempts initiated by the government as well as by women themselves. The endeavour should have been directed towards over- all development of Indian women by giving them their due share.

The nature of employment market in India with regard to women is substantially different from that of men, like in most other countries. The present study revealed that, women in India are gradually getting into the occupations and different professions, but they are inadequately represented in the field of administration.

This is very significant that, a large segment of work that women do everyday remains unacknowledged, their burden of work, either socially and economically is not valued or recognized. But, work that men perform in the society is only recognized as paid work in market place.

Govt. of India has taken initiative to bring women into the mainstream of development. The employment model of our country is divided into organized and unorganized sectors, in which, unorganized sector plays a vital role in providing prospect of employment as well as contributes to the national products. A large segment of Indian women are engaged

in this sector, but, their work is not documented or accounted in the official statistics. In spite of their substantial contribution to the national economy, they remain the most neglected sections of our population. The organized sectors on the other hand are represented by a small percentage of women.

The present study described the evolution of the working women from agrarian to industrial society, and, modern specialized job they are taking after having higher education and training, considered as male domain for long. The study tried to bring out the socio-economic background of women engaged in Indian administrative field and their attitudes towards this profession. The reasons for their inadequate representation to this field were also addressed in this study.

Since 1920s, due to advancement in urbanization, education, economy and technology, Indian women started entering into different professions not only to contribute in economic activity, but to redefine their roles in patriarchal society. India Act 1935 prohibited women's entry into some important class-1 central services, because, ministry of Works and Mines and Power realized, that, women were not appropriate for the higher posts in almost all the departments.

The history of Indian administration witnessed so many changes during last few decades of twentieth century. The Civil List published by the department of Personnel and Training, Govt. of India shows that, since independence the intake of women into civil services were not quite satisfactory, but, gradually improved to some extent bringing hope for women aspirants in administrative field.

The present study revealed that, the age old tradition of parents of Indian society not to support challenging ambition of women was chiefly responsible for the meager participation of them in administration.

The study has observed that most of the women joining administrative service voluntarily took the decision and equipped themselves for this service and also achieved success in pursuing their career. This is a significant departure from the conventionally assigned role of women in home management or from being in other traditional workplaces. It is true that quantitatively women at higher level of administration are meager, but one can be optimistic that even this small number would inspire qualified women at large to opt for this service and hopefully this will be the beginning of changes to take place in future.

The study reveals that a substantial number of respondents from national and state civil services are Hindu. Data revealed that all the administrative women in state civil service are Hindu by caste in aforesaid three districts. So a very important finding that has been highlighted by the present study is that, women from Muslim and other minority classes are still staying back for some reason or other. Though in recent times a remarkable number of Muslim girls are pursuing higher education and entering into the work force but no women civil servants from Muslim community were available in the selected area of this study.

Caste is still a significant factor that provides social base and identity to the people. People from schedule castes and schedule tribes in India get additional opportunities for their academic development as well as reservation at workplace. But the study reveals that general caste dominates the administrative profession, thus, holding out that, women from general caste are ahead in taking higher challenges of profession, and they are moving to have required administrative ability.

It is found that most of the women civil servants are post graduates. It proves that majority of aspirants considered post graduation degree as required qualification for their administrative profession.

A large mass of national civil servants are found coming from English medium background, but, majority of state civil servants completed school level education with regional language before switching over to English medium for higher education. Competitive examinations require fair competence in English, thus, most of the aspirants completed their higher education through English medium. Although the study found that, apart from a negligible percentage (7.1) most of the respondents as well as their parents did not use English as conversational language at home.

The study revealed that most of the respondents had interest for extra-curricular activities. Interviews revealed that majority of respondents were interested in different types of events like, debate, recitation, quiz, singing, drama, sports, other cultural activities and also N.C.C. IAS respondents having previous experience of N.C.C. told, that, it helped them a lot at the time of training in Mussourie. Hence the majority of respondents' were found to have preference cultural activities. But a striking finding is that, percentage of national civil servants interest in extra-curricular activities at college showed an increasing trend while that of state civil servants interest in co-curricular activities at college showed a declining trend. So the study concludes that, entry in IAS demands an all-round development of personality which is not that mandatory for entry into state civil service.

The study shows that marriage is uniformly accepted by most of the civil servants. They entered into marital life irrespective of age and were found to continue successfully. Most of them did not find it inconvenient to combine with professional career which gives a very healthy message to the society.

Majority of the respondents were city born. This is significant because till date women of rural area have lesser courage to venture for such utterly challenging job as public administration. Unfortunately women

from rural area cannot receive all the city-benefits, especially in the educational field. As a consequence they cannot pursue such height of ambition as administrative profession. On the other hand, the finding brings out the other important phenomena, that, it is extremely difficult for the city-bred civil servants to understand the true character and solve problems on rural issues. Therefore, the moot question is to equip these city-born civil servants for administrative challenges of rural areas so as to make them both responsive and efficient at every level.

Regarding parental education the study shows that almost fathers of IAS respondents were post graduates, and mothers were graduates. Most interesting finding is that, percentage of non- matriculate mother of state civil servant is higher than the percentage of graduate and post graduate mothers. Therefore, one may conclude that, not mother's educational qualification but professional awareness can make their children future administrators.

Service was the profession of the majority of the fathers of the respondents. Interestingly no teacher (college & school) persuaded their daughter to become an administrator at the all India national level. Significantly housewife mother of the respondents were over represented in the study. It establishes that, mothers, who were not economically self sufficient, but progressive, and realized the value of self sufficiency, had significant influence on their children who took up administrative service later on.

The present study shows that women IAS under the present survey were influenced by administrative environment at home. Data reveals that 50% of the respondents from IAS were groomed by their relatives who were in administrative job. Interestingly this was not the case for civil servants from WBCS category.

The study indicates that 50% of national civil servants selected their career influenced by external source, but, majority of the state civil servants took independent decision with the help of their family members about their occupational career. That means, that the impact of family and kinship networks are relatively more pronounced than other influences.

One of the most interesting objectives of this study is to find out the reasons of selecting the unconventional profession by the respondents. Majority of the respondents selected this job to take challenges in their profession. Irrespective of administrative background they wanted to accept challenging job in their life. No one IAS respondent opted for this job on economic ground, therefore, it can be assumed, that, all the IAS respondents came from affluent families. Out of sixty six incumbents, five did not support the reasons incorporated in the questionnaire, mentioning some other reasons for selecting their profession. Those are, (1) to meet different types of people for human study, to work in different places, to know the administrative milieu, (2) to become self supported, (3) only to get a job, (4) to pursue a career different from parents, (5) from the point of financial security. Hence, this is very much significant, that, most of the civil servants in our society are ready to accept the challenging situation so as to be a part of the nation-building process.

A large number of respondents from both the categories were self guided when asked about key guidance behind the preparation of administrative service. This is no doubt a very confident approach for the administrative profession. Contrary to the prevailing degradation in the all national educational scenario the present study shows an opposite picture in the field of administration, which may inspire the women aspiring for administrative jobs to be guided by self confidence and self help.

The study revealed some hurdles which respondents had to overcome for achieving success. This is fact that, in Indian society women's first hurdle is to come out of home and join service. When that service pertains to administrative field, other hurdles need to be overcome. Both the categories of civil servants of this study acknowledged the presence of hurdles. The most significant hurdle the respondents of WBCS category had to confront came from their family members, because of the nature of administrative job. Although women are getting into different types of jobs, till date administration is considered as male domain, and women are not considered for this job. And as a result, women civil servants are meager in the workforce.

Perception of women in administrative field differed from other mates due to some reasons. The present study shows that, respondents from IAS category put importance on fixity of purpose. This implies that they are very much target oriented. On the other hand, other decision maker's role and parental influence were much powerful on state level civil servants, which, subsequently, made them different from others.

The study also revealed an interesting statistics directly related to academic awareness of women civil servants. The analyses show that, most of the respondents from IAS category were much familiarized with different types of journals and magazines, and, English medium background since their childhood made them addicted only to particular this language oriented reading. Whereas, a good number of respondents from WBCS category read not more than two journals/magazines, which reflects, competition for national level requires much attention on gathering knowledge.

Reading was the favorite hobby declared by most of the respondents. However, other important revelation is that, women civil servants with highest level of efficiency are not inclined to use internet, as the most essential way of updating them on diverse issues.

Majority of the respondents maintain nuclear family in their post marital days. While table no. 2A revealed that, maximum numbers of respondents of WBCS category hailed from joint family, table no. 20C shows preference to nuclear family for their own, after marriage. Women administrators' preference for nuclear family was found to be more out of compulsion than that of their natural choice.

Respondents from both the categories overwhelmingly declared that, they use mother tongue as their conversational language at home. A very few national civil servants changed their conversational language at home after marriage. The reason may be due to their frequent transfer in different states that compelled them to use English as a matter of convenience for bringing up children.

The study inquired regarding educational qualification of spouse of respondents. It revealed that, although the social modernization is underway Indian society has not completely given up the traditional mentality of husbands to be higher qualified in comparison to his wife, or at least equally qualified husband. The present study also shows that, most of the husbands of the respondents have at least post graduation degree which indicates that women in administration are unlikely to accept a spouse with lesser educational qualification.

The present study explains that, women civil servants are not orthodox about the profession of their spouses. Most of the husbands do not belong to the administrative field. Rather, multifarious occupations are reflected in the survey. Thus, it may be inferred that, women civil servants hardly prefer a similar administrative ambiance in their conjugal life.

A larger number of respondents declared that, they prefer family members from in-laws, in administrative services. It reveals that, women

administrators have distinct preference for families with same culture and status when it comes to marriage.

A substantial number of respondents supported their use of mother tongue for conversation at office. In West Bengal respondents from both the categories use mother tongue with great respect despite being proficient in English.

In post marital affairs, a larger number of respondents substantiated their opinion that, as civil servants, they received total support from their in-laws in family. A very few had views to the contrary. The overall views of majority reflected positive trend, such as, attitudinal change among the in-laws as well as women administrators. The changes might be slow in evolving and strengthening, yet it signifies a noticeable departure from age-old attitudes of inflexibility and smugness driven by stereotypes. Therefore, the finding may represent a positive attitude of the women in administrative field towards accepting marriage as cooperation.

Even though respondents overwhelmingly stated that, due to their professional commitments at workplace they do not find adequate leisure to entertain guests regularly, but, expressed fondness to play the role of ideal hosts at times. Like all other cases, a small number of respondents countered this attitude only to be regarded as exceptions.

The respondents in this study were asked regarding their income wise satisfaction. Most of the IAS respondents were highly satisfied with their salary and all other financial benefits, but, respondents from WBCS category did not. They argued that while all the respondents belong to the administrative profession and have to carry out almost equal responsibilities; a substantial difference in income is not desired.

The present study revealed a very significant fact that, honour and respect towards civil servants is on a decline today. Due to certain factors like, development of corporate sectors, politicization of government and red tape system in administration leading to delay in decision making and so on. Although most of the IAS respondents declared that they get social respect, on the other hand, state level civil servants denied this. It is true that the sense of social respect also gets changed. Once it is linked with a huge hike in the salary of different private sectors vis-a vis the civil servants. That is not a very much welcome change particularly in regard to attracting bright and meritorious incumbents into the profession.

A very substantial number of respondents reacted with moderate satisfaction at the power accruing from their office. Theoretically it is true that without assistance of administrators no policy of the government can be formulated, but in practice, policies are formulated and implemented at the behest of the political masters. As such neutrality in administration is compromised due to political pressures and compulsion. Those dissatisfied in this context stated, that, their position involved considerable responsibilities but much less power.

Regarding perception of nature of job, the respondents' experience and response were different. A large number of state level civil servants opined, that, after training period their posting at block for a long duration made them impatient. Working as development officers at block level, where commuting often remained a perpetual problem were mentioned by many. Many also perceived this job to be hazardous and expressed to threats of security. Table no. 1A shows that 55.8% WBCS respondents and 50% IAS respondents were city born; thus, it brings an additional responsibility to cope up with village environment. A woman administrator, if married, is expected to have a sound plan for education of her siblings, which once again, is hard to materialize in blocks'

environments. In the long run turn down their energy and efficiency becomes inevitable.

With regard to the promotion wise job satisfaction, a substantial number of respondents of both the categories indicated their moderate satisfaction. They argued and specified that, in government sector, promotions tend to depend substantially on personal considerations. They firmly stated that, qualified or efficient persons hardly move to the top in administration. A few respondents of WBCS category resentfully argued that, while they are no less efficient than national civil servants, very often they failed to get promoted to Indian Administrative Service cadre due to age barrier. Apart from a few cases, promotion is easier for incumbents who could cultivate personal or kinship links with the top bosses.

Respondents were generally found divided into two broad spectrums like, 8hours and 9-10 office hrs. This is quite satisfactory information that, not more than 3.0% respondents have to work 11-12hours and more than 12hrs.

A routine transfer of government officials is an accepted fact. However, a substantial number of respondents agree that, it disturbs their performance if it occurs frequently. Very often transfer order comes before completion of an assignment; as a consequence, related people directly suffer a lot and the incumbents are subjected to difficulties at their family front. Children in higher education have to face enormous problems due to their mother's transfer. However, 35.7% respondents from IAS and 34.6% respondents from WBCS responded differently in this context. They opined that, transfer does not adversely affect one's efficiency always, rather, increases one's skill, grasping power and adaptability. Different type of people and challenging circumstances, make them experienced in their administrative life. Dynamism adds to their administrative competence. Most of the respondents stated that, in

administrative profession person should accept job related hazards as a challenge.

A larger number of respondents perceived work load as 'high', followed by some identified it as 'medium'. Although the table no. 33 shows that, most of the respondents work not more than 9-10 hours. It indicates women civil servants can manage their high work load within 9-10 hours that means administrative job requires a strong sense of time management, which is significant for new aspirants to this administrative field. Some respondents from WBCS opined that different post carries work load of its own, which national civil servants denied. One interesting finding that has come out from state level civil servants is that, an honest person has to bear more work- load whereas less conscientious person can manage and impress more even by doing much less work. One remarkable note is, in West Bengal, civil servants have to join as Block Development Officer initially, and have to bear a tremendous work load. They also added that this particular post is extremely overburdened compared to other posts. However, others hold the opinion that grooming as BDO (Block Development Officer) make an administrator efficient in dealing with complexities of administration in future.

Women by nature are compassionate, caring and patient and could bring about changes in administrative process. A lot of respondents agree with the facts that, emotional multitasking is possible only by women, as observed from real life; 'emotional intelligence' which is the basic instinct of women helps them in managing relation with the subordinates, and very often motherly attitude and affection mitigates all the controversies at work place. However, a few of the respondents also stated that both male and female administrators could be equally efficient and being women do not carry any special skill as such.

Respondents, representing in terms of number stated that they have perceived some changes in their habits being in administration. Respondents of both the categories said that, there are some basic features like, punctuality, discipline, regularity, tenacity etc., that are parts of one's personality trait. They told that, the reflection of changes may lead an administrator to become an accomplished personality. Most of them confessed to developing both positive and negative qualities. Fulfilling targets, objective orientation, taking quick decision, become tactful in resolving conflicts are some positive qualities they identified with administration, whereas tendency to dominate, sense of supremacy some think may make a woman administrator less suitably placed in the conventional family structure.

Majority of the respondents agreed that, after being in administrative post, they have perceived a moderate change in their temperament, likes and dislikes, and on overall change in their life style. Among all government services, civil services retain the highest social esteem and are most sought after by the educated sections of the society. Women administrators naturally inculcate discretion in expressing their views. Most of the respondents accepted changes in their life style and affirmed that, once in administration they tend to lose easy accessibility to common masses and often behave similarly with their close relatives. Many affirmed that, lack of time and service stipulation compelled them to bring changes in their usual life-style. In course of time, the respondents agree that they come to accept their transformed identity.

A large number of respondents expressed that, they did not change their cultural taste at all even while in administration. Some of them agreed that the influence of job only partially affected their cultural tastes. While previous responses revealed that respondents had to moderately change their habits and life style due to the influence of administrative job, but, it is noticeable that, majority of them did not

perceive any change in their cultural taste. Some of them argued that cultural tastes are in-built factors, related to ones upbringing process. It is generally argued that administrative jobs leave them with little energy and time to participate in cultural activities. Younger generation in administration however argued that, the term 'cultural taste' makes no sense without participation and administrative jobs are not congenial for pursuing cultural activities.

It is assumed that administrative responsibilities generate a particular kind of temperament. Most of the respondents argued that a person cannot change his/her basic nature entirely even though, but this administrative jobs demand a particular type of mental set up. A few respondents however stated that, not only a specific temperament is associated with administration, but also ability to adjust, cooperate and understand are equally important to carry the specific job.

The present study also tried to reveal the amount of time respondents could afford for their home management. Most of them agreed that they required 5-7hours for their household activities. Although majority of the respondents from IAS category were of the view that they could at best squeeze out barely 2-4 hours for home management. Excessive work load may compel them to manage within this time schedule. But in reality, most of them required 5-7 hours because they valued their presence much with the members of their family as much as they valued their commitments in office.

Both categories of respondents substantially supported the view that their home life suffered occasionally due to administrative engagements. It indicates that, most of them are sufficiently efficient to manage their home life. Therefore, it is assumed that, their office is also benefited by their sense of management. A very few respondents stated that, they encounter problems in their personal life due to the

demanding nature of their profession quite regularly. The number of this segment however is negligible.

The respondents over-whomingly supported that, their husbands generally extended a helping hand to them in a variety of household tasks in the family. It revealed that, husbands now- a- days are ready to shed the age old concept of division of household jobs and outside jobs. Moreover, most of the husbands of women administrators were quite aware of nature of administrative jobs of their counterparts. Therefore, it was not an issue to specifically define tasks for spouses but to share the pleasures and challenges together in the family front. This wind of change is very much significant and welcome in Indian society which is used to stereotypes for ages.

A substantial number of respondents argued that, they are not victims of mal-adjustments in conjugal life due to the nature of their profession. Although a few were of the view that, husbands continued with the perception that, they are not compelled to share household activities meant primarily for wives. It amply proves the point that even in 21st century there is a struggle continuing between traditional male expectations and changes in perceptions in today's world.

In an interesting response, substantial number of respondents preferred reading as recreation, while a large number of respondents also expressed their interest in watching movie along with reading. Very few of them showed their interest in internet surfing. Although most of them have to use computer in workplace, no respondent declared internet as the medium of recreation or knowledge update. It implies, traditional way of gathering knowledge is more attractive than latest technology to the respondents.

A significant majority of respondents argued that, they felt comfortable to socialize with self supported women but not with others who lack

independence. Interestingly one out of fourteen IAS women stated her preference to mix with women of same profession. This implies that, most of them had inhibition to mix freely within the common circle but preferred a wider and diverse social life. An Interesting finding in table no. 07A revealed that while majority of the mothers of the respondents were home makers, their daughters were averse to mixing with that category deliberately. The respondent's perception revealed that home making per se was not a worthwhile proposition.

A large number of respondents denied having losing their femininity while performing administrative duties. Informally most of the respondents agreed with the view that, women are basically kind hearted, affectionate, compassionate, and receptive, and when these qualities are combined with the leadership, initiative, decision-making, and firmness it makes a better administrator.

A very substantial number of respondents reacted with satisfaction in relation to their motherhood. Respondents from IAS category were very much clear and candid. Some even argued that, enjoyment of motherhood does not depend on leisure hours they provide for their children, rather, it is the joy of giving birth to a child. Motherhood was accepted spontaneously as realization of completeness. Many affirmed their marriage and motherhood made them learn to manage administrative work load and enjoy motherhood simultaneously. Therefore, women administrators firmly establish their enjoyment of motherhood along with all their administrative responsibilities.

In Indian perspective gender discrimination is an important as well as significant issue affecting women. Respondents shared their views on this issue from their own experience. Majority of the respondents from IAS category denied having subjected gender discrimination. They stated people in India usually obey the chair in administrative field irrespective of gender. Whereas majority of the state civil servants

strongly supported the view that, gender discrimination is significantly present even in administrative job. Most of them opined that, postings in rural area make them understand the nature of gender discrimination in the real situation. This is reflected by the fact that in the tradition driven rural society, attitude towards women is markedly different than that towards men. So there are hazards that make women administrators more vulnerable at block level than in towns and cities. A remarkable percentage of respondents who affirmed to gender discrimination indicated that, the age old practice of gender discrimination still exists blatantly in Indian society, even at the highest level of administrative services. Therefore, not only the law, but, educated and open-minded mankind can only bring about positive changes in the long run.

As seen in the preceding statement, majority of the respondents opined that, they did not face gender harassment at the work-place. But, a different state of affair was revealed at the time of responses made on a personal exchange of views with the researcher. A larger number of respondents agreed with the view that, hazards due to gender or sexual harassment are extremely sensitive issues that women especially in Indian society do not want to disclose and, thus, most of the cases remain unreported. Therefore, the present study could collect only the view of the respondents but not the real cases that affected them for the same reason.

Majority of the respondents were unanimous in their views that, women made better administrators than men. They decisively stated that, women have the capacity to administer with greater efficacy and posses the capacity to get things done. On the other hand, a few opined that, very often women administrators failed to give due attention to their administrative jobs, because, domestic distractions create considerable inconvenience and difficulties in managing circumstances. Administrative efficiency suffers as a consequence. A small number of

respondents argued that, irrespective of gender, administration requires only efficiency and performance. Again they added, irrespective of sex; competence, devotion, commitment, sense of honesty, and administrative efficiency can make a better administrator.

Interestingly all the respondents agreed that, more women should pursue administrative career. The reasons assigned by respondents are, women posses the essential qualities for a good administrator. Being more tolerant and considerate, women can sympathetically tackle public grievances. Also women are more dedicated, sincere, can take creative measures to implement welfare programmes and are capable of facing challenges. Honesty is also other valuable quality that women posses. Respondents added that, for emancipation and economic equality women should enter not only into larger workforce but also to administrative services in particular so that they can exercise their latent administrative talents, and objectives of nation-building. This finding will hopefully encourage the women aspirants to opt for administrative career in future.

Based on the hypotheses (refer to Introduction, section no.1.4) the conclusion drawn by the researcher are as follows:

There is predominance of women administrators from urban background and belonging to upper middle classes.

The study revealed that, in the field of civil service, numbers of women are meager. Although, numbers of women in the workforce is gradually rising, latest trend is showing their inclination towards pursuing profession in teaching.

A very large number of respondents were post graduates. Post graduation and combined with additional degree holders occupy a big

share in the present study. Most of them had English as medium of instruction.

The present research reveal a very significant view of the respondents that, after sixty six years of independence, India awfully failed to eradicate gender discrimination from Indian society. Even at the highest level of administrative services, women are not free of this abuse. It also represents the miserable scenario of other government sectors, leaving aside all private sectors. It is a matter of pity that the legal system of a country, unfortunately, fails to provide necessary protection to women against sexual harassments even today.

The study revealed that, women administrators confer a loud support to the statement that women are better in administrative job than their male counterparts. They provided all the basic qualities and instincts, women possess, in support of their view. On the other hand, a few opined, irrespective of gender, the administrative profession may have efficient officers with all necessary qualities to implement the policies of the government.

The present study concluded with an interesting finding, the respondents as a whole expressed their desire that, women should pursue administrative career, so that they have a marked presence in nation building and can bring about significant changes in the approach to administration in the long run.

Recommendations

The main objective of the study was to reveal the socio-economic background of women civil servants covered under the present survey. The survey results underline some pertinent difficulties faced by the women administrators ranging from their placement to independent

professional performance. Unless these issues are addressed in the long run, there is no way we can utilize their potentials. To enable the women civil servants as true nation-builders, certain measures require careful consideration. Therefore, the following recommendations are made to overcome certain problems and to create an atmosphere in which they can serve the nation with their highest possible efficiency and capability.

1. There should be a comprehensive policy in the civil service to remove the bottlenecks which hinder the performance of women, and to identify their basic needs for better functioning.
2. Women administrators from WBCS category, who are posted initially at block level, need to get better living facilities, transport and security.
3. Shortage of manpower in office is a major impediment towards smoothly discharging administrative responsibilities, which require suitable redressal.
4. There is already a rule that allow spouses to work in the same or closer places. The rule should be implemented so that women civil servants can share their family responsibilities as well as enjoy their motherhood without hindrance to their professional carrier.
5. There should be day care facility in every block level to facilitate better childcare and reduce anxiety of the mothers, working in the civil services.
6. Since a poorly equipped and shabbily organized office adds to the disincentive to perform an administrator, the matter should be addressed on an urgent basis.

7. Uniform guidelines in case of promotion are required.
8. Frequent transfers compromise with the initiative and efficiency of an administrator. A transparent policy guideline is required in this regard.
9. Administration should be free from political pressure.
- 10 . Qualities of leadership, efficiency, honesty and integrity of character need to be valued and incentivized.

Researcher's Observation

In course of conducting the survey as the researcher interacted with different women administrators, certain specific traits of the personality of a few of them also came in the open. The observations are summarized as below.

1. WBCS respondents were mostly found warm, receptive and supportive by nature.
2. IAS respondents may be divided in two groups, the direct recruits and the promotees. Promotee IAS women were found hardly different from WBCS respondents in attitude and behaviour pattern. But direct recruits IAS executives may be distinctly divided into two different categories.

One category maintained the politeness and humility that are expected from any public servant despite their administrative power and position. Their dignified attitude and behaviour made them a class apart.

The other category is composed of the arrogant-egoist ones, who by dint of their highly sarcastic tongue and mere flamboyance created an artificial barrier around them and were hardly accessible. The sense of superiority in them, at times, are accentuated to such an extent that their behaviour with common people reflects neither education nor blue blood but sheer sickness and ineptitude as a whole for public service of such highest order. The researcher unfortunately met a few IAS women who even failed to understand the utility of a research work on social issues and extended their blunt non-cooperation and hacking techniques of various forms when requested to supply data for this research purpose. It is easy to visualize, that, they fail to come out of their arrogance of power and position. The researcher is tempted to repeat the old question, 'does power makes one blind, be it a man or a woman?'

The retrospect and the prospect:

An attempt to depict some major socio-economic information as well as views of the women administrators, resulting from the findings of the study, might not be adequate or comprehensive. But it does serve as an indicator towards partial and specific empirical understanding in that regard.

The administrative system in a developing society, like India, long considered as male domain is slowly undergoing changes with the passage of time. The administrative system, primarily and ultimately, would be what administrators make of it. The present study of women administrators in West Bengal, with special reference to three districts, Kolkata, Howrah, and Hooghly is an endeavour to identify some major aspects of the socio-economic profile of the women administrators that bring them to the profession and make them serve with an iron fist and a supple and sensitive heart. After all, all the glamour of power and position lose their relevance unless they are grounded in reality of delivering administration. It is not a question whether our women are

better off than men in this regard. A more pertinent question is how many of our women are willing to take up this challenge and bring about significant changes in the overall administrative scenario.

Therefore, after completing an in-depth inquiry, it is expected that, if the suggested recommendations are implemented, it will create a congenial atmosphere for the women civil servants, so that they are expected to perform better. If they can carry out their administrative responsibilities with courage of conviction, it may be assumed that they would excel in their career, and more women could be seen in the upper stratum of the civil services. Nevertheless, there is infinite scope for further research on this subject.